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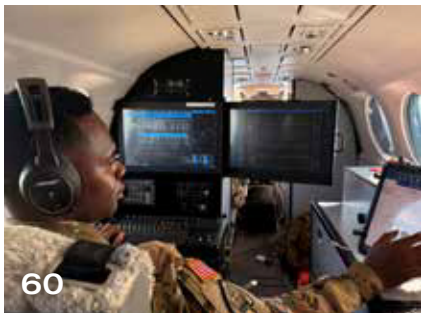



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Deputy Director for Regional Operations,
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CHANGING THE GAME

The 101st Airborne Division, the Army's only air assault division, is poised to become the first unit equipped with the MV-75 Cheyenne, changing the game for air assault operations.

As the Army's first tiltrotor-equipped formation, the 101st will establish a new model for long range air assault giving commanders greater operational flexibility, more options in a multi-domain environment, and the ability to mass combat power at the time and place of their choosing.

bell.co/tiltrotor →

FIGHT DIFFERENTLY

During a February 2026 Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) rotation, the 101st Airborne Division demonstrated the operational value of tiltrotor technology by using the U.S. Marine Corps' MV-22 Osprey to move a Brigade Combat Team element more than 500 miles during a single period of darkness. The objective: accomplish a mission non-stop that traditionally requires approximately three refueling stops using the Division's current enduring rotary-wing fleet.

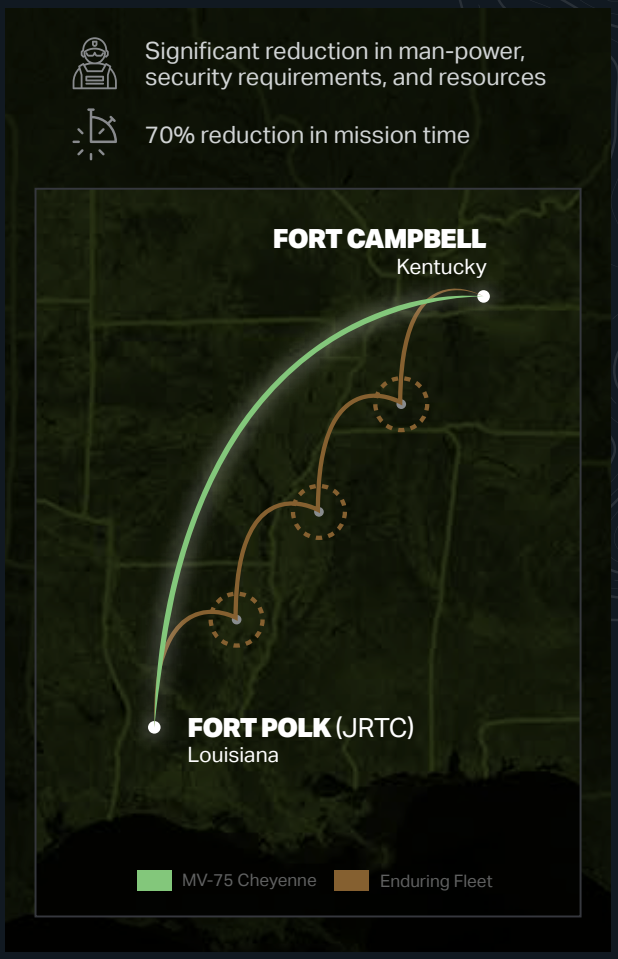
A mission that can consume an entire duty day with current aircraft could potentially be executed by the MV-75 in less than half the time with fewer fuel points, reduced support personnel, and less complex logistical movements.

This is more than an aviation efficiency gain; it is a lethality advantage. The faster the Division can move combat power over extended distances, the less time the force is exposed to enemy detection and engagement.

A SIMPLER, MORE AFFORDABLE PATH

The Modular Open Systems Approach (MOSA) provides a true leap in capability for the 101st Airborne Division. MOSA's open architecture isn't simply an engineering advantage. It gives commanders an edge to gain greater flexibility, upgrading and adapting aircraft as threats evolve. This is a win not just for the 101st Airborne Division but for the Army as a whole. By having freedom to choose from multiple vendors, reducing dependency on priority components and having faster integration, units like the 101st have the ability to maintain and modernize the MV-75 at the speed of relevance.

bell.co/MOSA →



THE SCALE OF FUTURE CONFLICT

The MV-75 is more than a modernization effort or a faster replacement aircraft. It is a strategic operational capability designed to give the Army and Combatant Commanders greater freedom of action in a multi-domain environment.

The JRTC rotation "One Period of Darkness, With Less" provides a compelling proof point. By extending operational reach, reducing the time to generate combat power, and minimizing the logistical footprint, the MV-75 gives commanders additional options to determine when, where, and how they employ their forces.

bell.co/MV-75 →

ARMYAVIATION

Founders /Art and Dotty Kesten

Publisher / William R. Harris Jr.

Managing Editor
CW4 (Ret.) Joseph L. Pisano Sr.
joe@quad-a.org

Editor / Ken Holder
ken@quad-a.org

Director of Design & Production
Anne H. Ewing
magazine@quad-a.org

Contributing Editor / Mark Albertson
mark@quad-a.org

Family Forum Editor / Judy Konitzer
judy@quad-a.org

Copy Editor / Abby Zwilling
abby@quad-a.org

Deputy Director of Advertising & Exhibit Sales
Erika Burgess
erika@quad-a.org

Advertising & Exhibit Sales Manager
Carmen Tuohy
carmen@quad-a.org

Marketing Director / Jennifer Chittem
jenn@quad-a.org

Social Media Manager / Chelsea Jarvis
chelsea@quad-a.org

Director Data Services / Ben Marini
ben@quad-a.org

Circulation Department
Deb Cavallaro
Debbie Coley
Jackie Harris
Jacob Meenan
Genesis Miller

Editorial Address
593 Main Street, Monroe, CT 06468-2806
Tel: (203) 268-2450 / Fax: (203) 268-5870

On The Cover

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Briefings

Fort Rucker Named UAS and Autonomy Center of Excellence



The U.S. Army has designated Fort Rucker, AL, as its Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) and Autonomy Center of Excellence as part of a broader effort to accelerate the development, testing and integration of autonomous technologies. GEN Christopher LaNeve, vice chief of staff of the Army and acting chief of staff, announced the designation Oct. 13. The initiative will build on Fort Rucker's aviation expertise, including ongoing efforts to integrate crewed and uncrewed rotary-wing aircraft. The installation will leverage its operational experience and partnerships with commercial technology developers to advance autonomous capabilities and evaluate systems under realistic operational conditions. The designation positions Fort Rucker to play a central role in developing and integrating next-generation autonomous technologies across Army formations, supporting the service's evolving operational requirements.

War Department Establishes Four-Star Autonomous Warfare Command



Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth announced on Sept. 30 the creation of a four-star Autonomous Warfare Command, or AutoWarCom, to oversee the military's push into autonomous and robotic warfare. AutoWarCom is one of six strategic initiatives announced by Hegseth, along with America's Corps of Cadets, FORTRESS America, the Next Great American Base, the Office of Religious Affairs and Project Meridian.

Department of War Accelerates Counter-UAS Employment



The Department of War issued a memorandum Oct. 2 directing accelerated, lawful and safe employment of counter-unmanned aircraft systems (c-UAS) across the Department to better defend American airspace sovereignty. The memorandum targets four barriers to c-UAS fielding: authorities to operate, spectrum certification and frequency, weapons safety and legal reviews. A department-wide c-UAS approval process is to be established within 30 days, while required legal reviews generally will be completed within 10 days.

War Department Increases Two Hazard Pays



The War Department increased hostile fire pay and imminent danger pay Oct. 1, marking the first increase in the two hazard pays since 2002. Under the new rates, hostile fire pay doubles from $225 to $450 per month, while imminent danger pay increases from $225 to $275. The increase was authorized in a memorandum signed in July and took effect at the start of the new fiscal year. Undersecretary of War for Personnel and Readiness Anthony J. Tata said the increases are intended to provide higher compensation for service members facing combat risks. Hostile fire pay applies to qualifying service in areas involving hostile fire events or circumstances that place service members in grave danger. Imminent danger pay applies to service members subject to threats of physical harm or imminent danger from civil insurrection, terrorism or wartime conditions in designated foreign areas.

SUSPENSES:

December 15 – AAAA Scholarship Foundation Application Submission
January 1 – AAAA National Awards


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AAAA Builds on a Year of Growth and Looks Ahead to 2027

As we approach the end of 2026 and the beginning of the holiday season, I'd like to reflect on a few areas of AAAA success during the previous year and highlight a few of our initiatives for 2027.



COURTESY PHOTO

AAAA National Secretary BG (Ret.) J. Ray Davis, Jr. inducted MG Jack James, Deputy Commanding General, Reserve Affairs, Army Transformation & Training Command into the Gold Order of St. Michael at ceremonies on October 17, 2026.

As you know, AAAA operates through our four core pillars of Networking, Recognition, Voice, and Support, actualizing our mission to "Support the U.S. Army Aviation Soldier and Family."

First, we have successfully sustained the growth of our organization to over 20,000 members. Our membership is diverse and spans broad categories such as Active Duty, National Guard, U.S. Army Reserve, Retirees, Industry Partners, students and civilians. Particularly noteworthy is the recent inclusion of our partner organization, the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA).

I am proud of our over 80 local AAAA chapters located around the world. Having visited a number of these chapters in California, Wisconsin, New York, Kentucky, Tennessee and Alabama over the last eighteen months of my presidency, I am always impressed with the selfless dedication of the leadership teams who are so committed to AAAA, its members and mission.

Under the Recognition Pillar, AAAA's Order of Saint Michael program is at an all time high number of awards. Thanks to our chapters for recognizing all these very worthy individuals. And special congratulations to our two most recent recipients of the Gold Order of St. Michael, MG Jack James and CW5 Samuel Puentes!

A frequent topic during my chapter visits is the impact of our scholarship and TLC foundations. The AAAA Scholarship Foundation and the Tradeschool, Licensing, and Certification (TLC) Foundation continue to make a difference for Army Aviation Soldiers and families, awarding record amounts to deserving individuals as they expand to their largest ever levels.

Our national award programs, along with our industry sponsor partners, continue to recognize Army Aviation's best and brightest in a broad range of categories at our annual symposia events and the Army Aviation Mission Solutions Summit.

At the strategic Networking, Voice and Support levels, our programs include AAAA-sponsored and recently re-energized Congressional Caucus events and the Senior Executive Associates (SEA). We work with our Congressional Caucus co-chairs Rep Rose DeLauro and Rep Dale Strong and their staffs to provide current Army Aviation issues and dialogue with the Army Aviation General Officer Steering Committee (GOSC) chaired by MG Cain Baker. Our SEA is chaired by GEN J.D. Thurman and includes a number of distinguished non-aviator retired three- and four-star general officers that mentor and advocate for the Army Aviation Enterprise on a pro-bono basis.

By the time you read this, we will have concluded our most recent SEA dinner with acting Chief of Staff, GEN LaNeve and the Aviation General Officer Steering Committee in Washington D.C., coinciding with the conclusion of the annual Association of the United States Army (AUSA) Convention.

This magazine issue is being distributed at the Annual Cribbins Symposium in Huntsville. Welcome to all of those of you attending. Pre-registration is at an all-time high and you will be getting the latest updates from Aviation Branch leadership on the Program Acquisition Executive (PAE) reorganization as well as updates on Branch initiatives like Flight School Next, the Organic Industrial Base, Drone Warfare, and of course, the MV-75 Cheyenne.

We are proud to announce that the AAAA-supported Second Annual Army Best Drone Warfighter Competition will be held March 2-4, 2027, in Huntsville, AL at the University of Alabama Test Range. Last year's event was well attended and received well-deserved recognition and accolades from Army leadership. This year promises to be even better!

Finally, our AAAA Annual Summit this year will be in Kansas City, Missouri! It will feature both GEN LaNeve and Under Secretary of the Army Hon. Obadal as keynote speakers and will take place May 5-7, 2027. Registration is now open.

Enjoy the holidays, stay safe and let us know what we can do to make your AAAA experience even better.
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MG Wally Golden, U.S. Army Retired
37th President, AAAA
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Four Decades of Service:

LTG Michael C. McCurry Reflects on a 40-Year Career

By Nelson E. Ballew Jr.



U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY NINA BORGESSON



U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY KELLY MORRIS

Above Left: LTG Michael C. McCurry, commanding general, U.S. Army Futures and Concepts Command, prepares to take flight for his battlefield circulation at Project Convergence Capstone 6 at Fort Irwin, CA, July 18, 2026.

Above Right: Then MG Michael C. McCurry, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker, AL, commander, was joined by his family after he completed his final flight in an AH-64 Apache helicopter at Fort Rucker, July 22, 2024.

For four decades, the rhythmic beating of rotor blades has been the soundtrack of LTG Michael C. McCurry's life. Currently serving as the Commanding General for the U.S. Army Futures and Concepts Command (FCC) at Fort Eustis, VA, McCurry recently achieved a milestone few ever reach:

40 years of military service across all three components. Remarkably, even at his 40-year mark, McCurry remains an active pilot, taking to the skies and bridging the gap between the analog cockpits of the late Cold War and the highly advanced, interconnected fleets of Future Vertical Lift (FVL).

For a man who has amassed over 2,600 flight hours, survived five combat deployments and helped shape the future of the Army Aviation Branch, the hardware has always taken a back seat to the human element. For McCurry, it all comes back to a single, foundational ethos: the Sacred Trust.

"We will continue to uphold our Sacred Trust with the Soldier on the ground," McCurry has often said — a mantra he championed heavily during his tenure as the Aviation Branch Chief at Fort Rucker, AL.

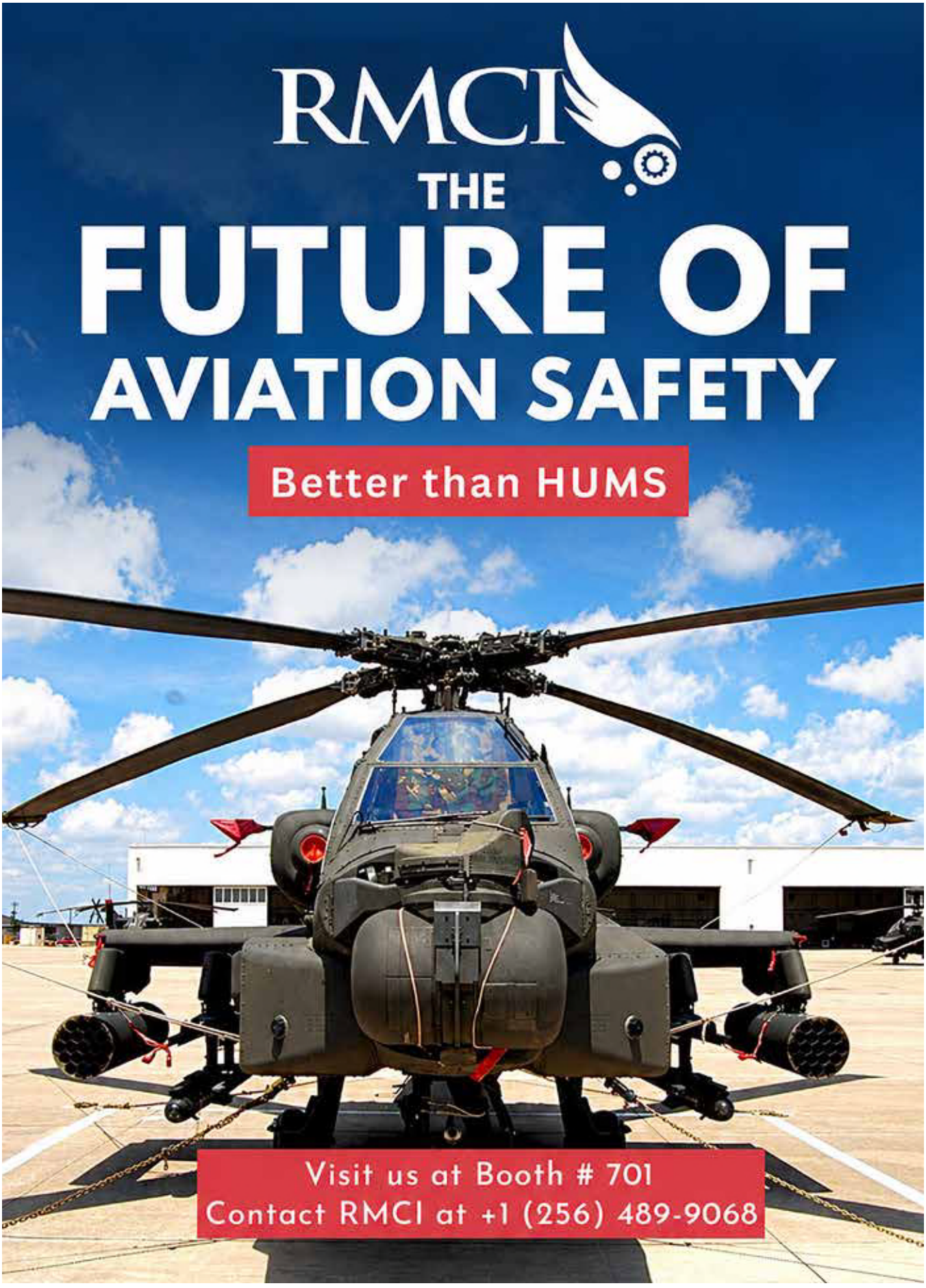
"When that foot Soldier needs to know what's just over the hill, we go find out. When that Soldier needs to be placed in a position of tactical advantage, we will put them there. If they need extra firepower, we will bring it to bear. And God forbid, if our Soldiers are wounded on the field of battle, we are coming to get them."

Deep Roots and Silver Wings

McCurry's journey into the sky was almost a foregone conclusion. Raised in Meridian, ID, he comes from a long line of military servicemen spanning from the Revolutionary War, through the Civil War, and to the horse cavalry of the early 1900s. But it was his father, Michael C. McCurry Sr. — a retired Army Reserve Colonel and fellow Army Aviator — who cast the most immediate shadow.

"My dad's always kind of been my hero," McCurry reflects. He recalls standing on the parade field at Fort Rucker as a six-year-old boy, watching his father's helicopters fly over in a graduation formation. Decades later, he would stand on that exact same field to take the colors as the commander of the Aviation Center of Excellence.

Commissioned out of the University of Idaho in 1988 under the Early Commissioning Program, McCurry already had service under his belt in the Army Reserve and had served in the National Guard briefly before transitioning to active duty. He pinned on his father's sterling silver wings and entered a rapidly changing world. The month he graduated from flight school, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. Shortly after, the young Scout Helicopter Pilot found himself deployed to Operation Desert Storm, flying the OH-58 Kiowa "scout" helicopters.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Lessons from the Cockpit: Combat, Close Calls and Tactical Vigilance

Over the course of the Global War on Terror (GWOT), McCurry deployed four more times as a field grade officer, serving in critical roles including commander of the 6th Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment in Iraq. As an Air Cavalryman through and through, the mission was always about supporting the ground force — often in inherently dangerous environments.

Combat brings inevitable close calls, but one specific mission in Iraq delivered a lasting lesson in vigilance and attention to detail. "You never know sometimes when you're being engaged because of the noise," McCurry recalls. After returning from a night mission at 2:30 in the morning, exhausted after several hours of flying, McCurry conducted his post-flight inspection in the dark and missed the damage. It was only the next day, under the stark exposure of daylight, that he walked out to pre-flight the aircraft and discovered a rotor blade was severely damaged from enemy fire.

McCurry openly admits to the oversight to serve as a vital warning for current and future aviators. "I missed it," he says, explaining how combat fatigue acts as an insidious enemy during operations. He emphasizes that the experience highlights the absolute necessity for uncompromising attention to detail during post-flight inspections, even when exhausted in the dead of night. Because his crew took fire without realizing it and nearly flew an unairworthy aircraft the next day, his message remains clear: "You must fight through the exhaustion because you don't exist for yourself — you exist for the soldier on the ground, and they are counting on your discipline."

His peers recognize that unwavering dedication. The Honorable Mike Obadal, Under Secretary of the Army, went through the AH-64 Apache course with McCurry.

"I met then COL McCurry in 2014 and within a few days realized this was one of the most knowledgeable aviators in the Army — technical skill, tactical experience, and strategic understanding," Obadal said. "For the next few months when with him, I spoke less and listened more. The Army is incredibly lucky to have him still in service."

Technological Leaps and the Human Element

When McCurry flew his first OH-58s in Desert Storm, the technology was barely a step up from the Vietnam era. Today, aviators climb into AH-64E Apaches and UH-60M Black Hawks loaded with advanced sensors and digital networks. While excited about the capabilities of the Army's newly named MV-75 Cheyenne and its integration with unmanned systems, McCurry quickly cautions the next generation of pilots.

"There's a lot of information coming at the pilots in the cockpit right now," McCurry says. "As we look at collaborative teaming, we've got to be really cognizant of the cognitive load on those people. I just encourage aviators to fight the temptation to get 'white scarf syndrome' and maintain their orientation with Soldiers on the ground."

As the leader of FCC, McCurry is currently tasked with ensuring the broader Army does not face a "fair fight" on future battlefields. With his own children serving in the military, the mission is intensely personal.

A Team Sport: Warrants, NCOs and Peers

When reflecting on the vast scope of his career, McCurry is adamant that success is never an individual achievement. "It's more of a team sport for me," McCurry emphasizes. In recognizing the team



sport nature of what he has been able to do, he consistently shines the spotlight on others and their contributions to his story, viewing himself simply as the recipient of the "endurance award."

For McCurry, that team starts with the unique cohorts that drive Army Aviation. While non-commissioned officers (NCOs) are famously the backbone of the Army, he points to warrant officers as another indispensable pillar. "While NCOs are the backbone of the Army, warrant officers are the lifeblood of Army aviation," McCurry says. He explicitly credits leaders like CW4 (Ret.) Al Mays, CW5s Myke Lewis and Michael Cosaro as standard-bearers who relentlessly enforced the flight standards that kept crews safe and sharp.

The "team sport" of his career also features a close-knit group of peers and fellow leaders. McCurry highlighted key teammates like LTGs Hank Taylor and Dave Francis, and MG (Ret.) Wally Rugen. Together, this cohort navigated decades of shifting operational demands, ensuring that the aviation branch evolved to meet peer adversaries while never losing its soul.

A Legacy of People

This deeply rooted belief in a "team sport" was built on the foundation laid by the mentors and leaders who coached him throughout his career. McCurry credits learning from legendary, now-retired leaders like GENs (Ret.) Richard Cody, Robert Abrams, JD Thurman and Stephen Townsend, alongside fellow retired LTGs Kevin Mangum, Mike Lundy and Daniel Petroski with setting the standard. He similarly mentions exceptional non-commissioned officer mentors like CSMs Pat Laidlaw and Richard Mitchell for showing him firsthand how to care for soldiers and lead under pressure.

He also frequently points to COL (Ret.) Ellis Golson, his first cavalry squadron commander, who — along with his wife Rachel — helped raise McCurry and his wife Sadie in the military family. "Mac is the prime example of a servant leader," says COL (Ret.) Golson. "He places other people and their welfare first, providing for them and shepherding them. If someone is struggling, he doesn't leave them behind. He inherently understood early on that taking care of families is just as important as taking care of the aircraft. Watching him rise to become the senior aviator in the Army is no surprise to anyone who served with him in those early days."

Rachel Golson echoes that sentiment, reflecting on when their paths first crossed. "We first met Mac and Sadie when we were stationed at Fort Drum, NY, and they have always been such incredibly special people," she recalls. "They had first met in the Post Chapel at Fort Rucker, and they brought that same shared foundation of faith and care to everyone they encountered. Mac was born with a heart for others, and God nourished it. Together, they have never lost sight of what truly matters."

That legacy of people extends to his own family. In 2021, McCurry had the distinct honor of standing at a flight school graduation to pin the very same sterling silver wings his father wore — and that he wore — onto the uniform of his daughter, marking three generations of Army Aviators.

Looking back at 40 years, McCurry offers simple advice to the young officers climbing into the cockpit today: "Become a tactical and technical expert at your craft early. Never stop learning. And never forget the Sacred Trust."

Nelson E. Ballew is the communications director for the Aviation Future Capability Directorate at Redstone Arsenal, AL.





Army Aviation: Engaging the Future

By MG Phillip C. Baker

It is good to be back at Fort Rucker, AL. There is something unmistakable about this place that makes it feel like "home":

The beating of rotor blades overhead, cadence calls carrying across early-morning physical training formations, and the energy of students still inspired by the spectacle of flight — whether on the airfield or in the classroom — and eager to join their units and put their training to use.

Fort Rucker is the home of Army Aviation. And like any strong home, it exists to prepare its people for the world beyond — to ensure they are trained, disciplined, imbued with a shared culture and ready to accomplish the mission. That mission is straightforward: fight and win. Army Aviation does so in the third dimension of the battlefield, as a critical member of the combined arms team.

That mission extends far beyond Fort Rucker. We are training aviation warfighters not only here, but also at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, VA, and Fort Huachuca, AZ. While the mission remains constant, the way we prepare for it must continue to evolve. Changes in enemy tactics and advances in technology demand nothing less.

We must work to shape our Combat Aviation Brigades (CABs) into integrated, multi-domain formations collaboratively employing manned and unmanned systems, launched effects, resilient mission command and survivability capabilities. Those capabilities must operate with true interdependence through a system-of-systems approach.

But we must approach this work with discipline and rigor, doing the necessary analysis and avoiding the waste of precious resources. And it must start with a strong doctrinal foundation.

FM 3-04 gives us the seven core competencies of Army Aviation. Unique in our ability to maneuver across the full width, breadth and depth of the battlefield framework, our core competencies describe Army Aviation's role as a fully integrated member of the combined arms team. Employing formations that are proficient, lethal and physically and mechanically fit in the execution of our core competencies creates an asymmetric advantage over our adversaries.

The Reality

Army Aviation faces two simultaneous and interdependent requirements. We must preserve our current combat capabilities. And we must field the integrated capabilities for the CAB to win in future contested environments.

In this reality, the CAB is Army Aviation's center of gravity. They bring the branch's core competencies to the battlefield in support of the division and must be the focus of the Aviation Enterprise. We will sustain and selectively modernize the enduring force while funding the future system-of-systems force. As threats and technologies evolve, CABs will require different capabilities.

We do not yet have every answer. But we are developing the analytic foundation needed to make informed decisions about resourcing and prioritization. And because the threat will continue to evolve, we must remain flexible enough to adapt.

The AVCOE is the starting point for the Aviation warfighter's culture. It is here that we introduce Soldiers to the legacy and demands of Army Aviation, preparing our Soldiers to deliver those seven core competencies when our Army needs them most. Our culture demands our absolute best.

Conclusion

I proudly assumed command of AVCOE, and during my tenure I intend to communicate openly, frequently, and value the field's feedback. We need your feedback on where we are getting it right, where we are failing to meet the CAB's requirements and where opportunities exist. I encourage you to leverage our professional forums, periodicals and chain of command to share your insight.

As the 19th Chief of Army Aviation, I am honored to carry forward the legacy of those who came before me. We stand on their shoulders, and from that vantage point we can see the future. Our task is to evolve the Aviation force the Army needs: lethal, survivable and fully integrated as a member of the combined arms team ready to deliver decisive combat power. I look forward to continuing to serve alongside you.

Above the Best!
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Army Aviation Core Competencies

1. Provide Accurate and Timely Information Collection *(See)*
2. Provide Reaction Time and Maneuver Space *(See)*
3. Destroy, Dislocate, Disintegrate or Isolate Enemy Forces *(Strike)*
4. Air Assault *(Move)*
5. Air Movement *(Move)*
6. Aerial Evacuation *(Move)*
7. Enable Command and Control *(Extend)*

MG Phillip C. Baker is the Army Aviation branch chief, Deputy Portfolio Acquisition Executive Maneuver Air and Commander of the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker, AL.

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Organic Industrial Base Partnering Opportunities – A Win-Win for the Army & Industry

Mr. Don Nitti and Mr. Bennett (Ben) Moe

The Army's Organic Industrial Base (OIB) is vital to our national security with the critical mission to manufacture, repair, and upgrade military equipment and ammunition to guarantee the Army can sustain prolonged operations and surge during national crises.



U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY JERRY DUENES

Skilled CCAD artisan performs critical structural component work in support of Army field units.

The criticality and relevance of the OIB is evident by the Army Materiel Command's 15-year Organic Industrial Base Modernization Plan, which is congressionally supported and aimed at expanding industrial capacity and technological capabilities across 23 depot and ammunition plants to drive significant increases in production, innovation, and speed.

Corpus Christi Army Depot (CCAD) is the Army's only rotary wing aviation depot, with the capability to execute heavy aircraft structural repairs, conduct aircraft component overhauls and provide specialty processes and manufacturing capabilities. Extensive and proven authorities exist for commercial industry to leverage the technology, skilled workforce, capabilities and facilities found in the Army's OIB. Specifically, CCAD offers commercial return on investment and opportunities to a wide range of industrial, defense and related firms in search of small, mid and large-scale co-production, repair, test and special processes and services. Partnering with CCAD brings additional work into the OIB and allows industry to leverage a skilled workforce, facilities and capabilities, creating a win-win collaboration that accelerates production, reduces costs, and strengthens national defense.

U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY JERRY DUENES

CCAD – Investing for The Future

CCAD serves as the Army's Center for Industrial and Technical Excellence (CITE) for rotary wing aircraft, the only facility with this designation across the Department of War (DoW). CCAD's 2.8 million square foot production facility, which consists of over 70 industrial centers supported by nearly 2,000 technical artisans and production planning personnel, specializes in airframe structural work, aircraft component repairs and overhauls, and chrome plating and bearing reclamation in its specialty shops. CCAD's final buildout of its multi-year, Multi-Purpose Production



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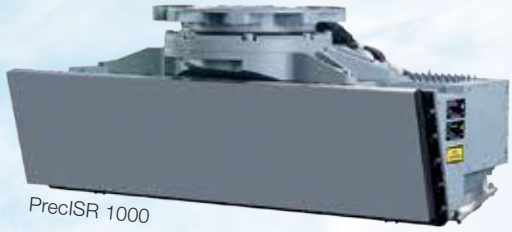

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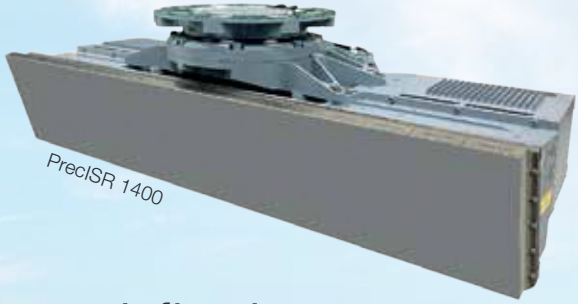

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UH-60s at various stages in the transformation process.

Facility and supporting back-shop operations create extensive opportunities for advanced manufacturing, innovative digital scanning technologies and modernized milling and chemical process capabilities. CCAD's leveraging of Artificial Intelligence and real-time throughput monitoring alongside facility-level technologies provides process efficiencies and scalable solutions for various industrial fabrication and maintenance operations.

Direct Sales Partnership Agreements (DSPA) – a Proven Industry Enabler

DSPA arrangements, executed directly between the depot and commercial partners, are agreements under which an Army depot performs work or produces products for industry. CCAD has DSPAs with nearly every major Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM), including Parker Hannifin, where CCAD supports the manufacturing and delivery of upgraded UH-60 servos. In 2018, servos became a significant Army readiness driver. Partnering with CCAD created a joint industry / Army opportunity to redesign and produce an upgraded servo, with tech data management and fabrication work conducted at CCAD. This joint program rapidly delivered direct readiness improvements to the Army's supply chain while simultaneously creating an enduring, trusted partner for industry.

Additionally, CCAD has partnered with Sikorsky to create the Army's first organic, secondary source, composite blade repair program for helicopter blades in the United States. This expands the industry partner's capabilities for domestic and foreign military sales while simultaneously supporting Army warfighting readiness. Other current industry partners include GE, Boeing, Aviation Blade Services, Overhaul Support Services, and Clearwater Defense, covering parts across blades, gearboxes, swashplates, and input modules.

CCAD's specialty capabilities, such as advanced plating and welding, engine work, bearing reclamation and composite repair expertise offer industry multiple opportunities to engage in partnering arrangements. CCAD currently operates 12 partnerships across 32 active programs with commercial vendors, providing ongoing service support to 25 high-demand items, with an increasing list of commercial partners entering into agreements over the next six months. CCAD, in concert with AMCOM and AMC, continues to work to streamline business processes to try to shorten the time from interest and agreement to production. Streamlined partnership processes will continue to evolve to offer industry a flexible technical activity, from small production runs to enduring needs.

CCAD Partnering – Extensive Upside for Commercial Industry

The Army continues to invest in the OIB and in modernized technologies and processes to ensure it is postured to support future systems. From a business perspective, CCAD's existing (and modernizing) tooling, infrastructure, workforce and facilities offer a rapid return on investment for a wide variety of commercial industries. Partnering with CCAD, via DSPA, allows defense firms the ability to quickly scale production capacity for both new and existing products. Established firms can transition segments of known workload to CCAD to better focus existing resources on new or emerging product lines. CCAD partnering can create opportunities to reduce corporate delivery risk from 2nd / 3rd tier vendors by transitioning production risk to the government for key component development, production, repair and/or maintenance.

CCAD's existing (and modernizing) facilities allow for corporate cost avoidance when transitioning work through a DSPA arrangement, as no corporate investment is required for new production facilities or current facility upgrades. For both enduring and surge workload, industry partners can access a technically oriented and trained artisan workforce, preventing the need to acquire, train, maintain and carry the long-term costs associated with organic company employment. A DSPA with CCAD can even assist a vendor by performing funded work during corporate transitions to new facilities, preventing potential production gaps affecting

both profitability and Army readiness.

Furthermore, CCAD already possesses extensive high-end tooling, component repair and special processes that are expensive and time-consuming to replicate for a commercial firm. From additive manufacturing and advanced composites work to lab analysis and flight critical machining, CCAD offers firms access to highly specialized, certified technologies and production capabilities.

Additionally, CCAD's organizational processes and capabilities, optimized for delivery, are key to commercial product readiness. CCAD not only safeguards critical corporate intellectual property within a government facility, but partners to share innovation and feedback critical to industry product improvement.

Partnering – Significant Benefits to the U.S. Army

Commercial partnering agreements strengthen the OIB by helping to maintain a consistent level of workload which is critical to maintain workforce proficiency and the capabilities needed to execute the most challenging materiel maintenance and sustainment tasks. Maintaining a strong OIB ensures that the depots can help maintain Army readiness and surge in support of Army and Joint Force requirements.

Commercial partnering can supplement and stabilize depot workload, but it is not a substitute for consistent and predictable Army-funded demand. The OIB ultimately depends on sufficient core workload to sustain artisan proficiency, specialized capabilities and the industrial capacity required for wartime surge. When that core workload is supplemented by commercial demand, however, the additional volume can improve utilization and spread fixed costs across a larger workload base.

From a financial perspective, this additional workload can improve cost absorption, reduce overhead rates, and create economies of scale across related sustainment activities. Furthermore, partnering reduces supply chain risks for both vendors and the Army by reducing single points of failure across modern supply chain constructs, driving improved Army readiness for crisis response.

CCAD – Engagements on Potential Future Agreements

We encourage industry to leverage commercial partnering across the OIB, specifically at CCAD. CCAD's available and relevant production capabilities are an industry enabler across many critical phases of manufacturing and sustainment. Whether for ad hoc production challenges or enduring tasks and functions, CCAD's DSPA flexibilities offer firms a strong business case for accelerating throughput while increasing the bottom line.

For more information, or to discuss potential future agreements, please contact CCAD Future Operations, at usarmy.corpuschristi.usamc.mbx.future-operations-office@army.mil; or use the QR code accompanying the article.

Mr. Don Nitti is the Executive Director of the Aviation and Missile Command, at Redstone Arsenal, AL. Mr. Bennett (Ben) Moe is a Senior Strategic Planner, supporting the Command's Strategic Effects Division in the Aviation and Missile Command, also at Redstone Arsenal, AL.





Aviation Maintenance Management Modernization – Digital Environment Mandates Supporting Operational Realities

By CW5 Paul McNeill

Every maintenance officer and platoon sergeant knows the feeling of walking into the hangar at dawn to build the maintenance and mission schedule.



U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY SSG DEAN JOHNSON

U.S. Army Soldiers assigned to Task Force Workhorse, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, conduct maintenance on aircraft scheduled for redeployment at Storck Barracks, Germany, on May 28, 2026. All aircraft scheduled for redeployment maintenance must be inspected and repaired until deemed mission-capable. Tools and opportunities are evolving rapidly, and it is incumbent upon Army aviation to leverage those capabilities.

You stare at a marked-up whiteboard or some Excel spreadsheet, trying to figure out which airframes are truly flyable, which are still down for maintenance, and which are waiting on an actuator that has been on backorder for three weeks. Over the past two decades, we have poured tremendous resources into modernizing our manned platforms, giving the Apache, Black Hawk, and Chinook sophisticated glass cockpits, digital fly-by-wire controls, and advanced sensor packages. Yet the fundamental way we manage the maintenance keeping those birds in the air remains largely manual, reactive, and tethered to legacy continuing to run maintenance off outdated tracking habits will ground our formations far more effectively than enemy air defense systems.

Army Aviation Maintenance – Preparing for Operational Reality

The immediate breakdown will happen at the tactical edge. In a distributed fight, maintenance platoons will not operate out of secure, well-lit hangars with high-speed internet connections and robust tool rooms. Instead, small teams of 15-series maintainers will be scattered across austere Forward Arming and Refueling Points (FARPs) and hide sites, working out of the back of trucks under constant threat of enemy reconnaissance, artillery, and drones. In that kind of environment, the old habit of tearing down complex dynamic assemblies simply because a logbook says an airframe hit an arbitrary hourly interval is completely unsustainable. When a bird returns from a mission with an intermittent avionics glitch or a strange tail rotor shudder, maintainers cannot afford to spend three hours flipping through electronic technical manuals or waiting for a tech rep on satellite reach-back. They need ruggedized diagnostic tools that plug straight into the aircraft's onboard data bus, ingest flight telemetry in a disconnected environment, and tell the crew chief exactly which bearing or line-replaceable unit is degrading before it fails.

Army Aviation Maintenance – CAB-Level Requirements

Step up to the brigade and theater level, and the headache shifts from diagnosing a single tail number to managing the entire fleet's bank time and phase flow. Today, a brigade aviation maintenance officer spends half their day making phone calls, checking multiple disconnected databases, and trying to reconcile conflicting status reports across three or four flight battalions. By the time an operational maintenance slide deck is briefed to the brigade commander, the numbers on the screen are already wrong. Integrating maintenance management directly into next-generation Command and Control (C2) software fixes this by pulling raw telemetry from every dispersed airframe into a live, standardized common operating picture. Operational managers can see precisely how many hours each airframe has burned, stagger heavy inspections so a company does not fly into multiple major maintenance events at the same time and ensure specialized technical teams are right where they are needed most.

Army Aviation Challenge of Contested Logistics

This operational clarity is also our best defense against the reality of contested logistics. In an operational theater where transport aircraft and supply convoys are prime targets for enemy interdiction, waiting for a part to break before ordering it is a recipe for an empty flight line. By utilizing condition based predictive maintenance, our systems can detect micro vibrations, thermal spikes, and chip-detector warnings that signal component durability before an in-flight abort occurs. That window of foresight gives supply officers the lead time required to pre-position high-demand gearboxes, rotor heads, and swashplates along planned axes of advance. If a supply route gets cut entirely, having digital technical packages with alternative acceptable intervals or authorized repairs embedded directly into the operational maintenance network allows forward units to understand risk and keep critical aircraft mission capable.

Strategic Level Data Fusion

At the strategic level, the biggest hurdle has always been the delay and distortion in enterprise readiness data. For years, strategic planners have had to make massive funding and overhaul decisions based on lagging indicators and filtered readiness slides that hide underlying component degradation until an emergency safety bulletin suddenly grounds a fleet. Feeding objective, sensor derived maintenance data directly into an enterprise architecture gives an unfiltered look at how dynamic components wear under real world combat stress across different environments.

The Requirement for an Aviation Digital Thread

That visibility changes everything from depot workload to future platform design. When engineers see empirical wear patterns across thousands of operational flight hours, they can adjust component rebuild lines and raw material purchases to match what is failing in the field, rather than relying on static planning estimates. This information would arm strategic sustainers with the empirical data needed to negotiate more effective sustainment contracts while simultaneously influencing engineering requirements for future platforms, like the MV-75 Cheyenne.

Maintenance Data as an Operational Asset

Pulling this off requires treating maintenance data as an operational asset rather than administrative paperwork. We must enforce modular open systems architectures and maintain strict ownership over our diagnostic data, refusing to let proprietary vendor software lock our maintainers out of their own aircraft systems. Modernizing aviation maintenance is not just about making life easier for production control or clearing backlogs in the hangar. It is about ensuring that when a combat aviation commander gets a tasking to put a company of assault birds in the air tonight, the maintenance team has the tools, the data, and the parts ready to make that mission happen.

Conclusion

Acknowledging the operational realities of combat environments, forward (austere) sustainment of Army aircraft is right lens to drive investment across sensors, data fusion, and software investments, supporting tactical, operational and strategic decision-making to effect mission outcomes. Existing sensor data, coupled with engineering enhancements and further platform investments, will continue to develop data points – points that we must continue to explore for data fusion opportunities. Platform-based data remains the key operational asset; one failure can be fused to inform an individual repair in support of an operation, serve as the first sign of a fleet-wide problem, or signal the need to shift the supply chain (vendor, engineering community, sustainment community action), across multiple theaters. Tools and opportunities are evolving rapidly, and it is incumbent upon Army aviation to leverage the capabilities of NGC2, open systems architectures, and app-based digital environments to outpace our adversaries.

CW5 Paul McNeill is the Aviation Material Officer for the U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command, at Redstone Arsenal, AL.





Beyond Flight Hours: Rethinking How We Measure Aviation Readiness

By CSM Christopher Doss



U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY SSG DEAN JOHNSON

U.S. Soldiers assigned to Task Force Workhorse, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, conduct maintenance on aircraft scheduled for redeployment at Storck Barracks, Germany, on May 28, 2026. All aircraft scheduled for redeployment maintenance must be inspected and repaired until deemed mission-capable.

For most reading this, flight hours are a useful and understandable measure of Army Aviation activity. They help resource training, track aircraft use and provide commanders with a common reference point for discussing aviation readiness.

Measuring flight hours will always remain important. They are tangible, familiar and directly connected to experience required by our aircrews. But as U.S. Army Aviation prepares for increasingly demanding operations, the community has an opportunity to ask a broader question: What amount of readiness does each flight hour produce? Every flight hour costs — so how do we ensure we get the most out of every hour and balance the current mission vs. future readiness? This is an invitation to complement an established and necessary resource model with a clearer picture of the readiness that model is intended to generate.

In future conflict, aviation formations will be judged not only by how much they fly during a reporting period, but by how well they can sustain combat power over time — often with limited maintenance capacity, complex and disrupted supply lines, and very limited external support. A flight hour can contribute to readiness in several ways. They improve individual pilot proficiency, build crew coordination, rehearse collective tasks and help maintainers gain experience. Yet flight hours generate scheduled and unscheduled maintenance, put a demand on repair parts, and if not managed correctly, can leave aircraft unavailable for future missions. None of these effects are inherently negative; they are part of operating and sustaining a combat aviation force. The key is to understand their relationship and make decisions with the full picture in view.

A more useful readiness model would therefore consider flight hours as one input among several — not as the sole proxy for combat capability. One possible approach is an Aviation Readiness Efficiency Quotient: a composite, data-informed measure that helps commanders assess whether the resources invested in aviation are producing durable operational capability. Rather than replacing existing readiness reporting, such a measure could serve as a companion tool for commanders, sustainers and resource managers. At its core, the quotient would connect five factors.

First, it would account for aircrew proficiency. Not all hours have the same



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Enlisted Aviation Soldier Spotlight

Each month we will feature a past AAAA National or Functional Enlisted or NCO Award winner as part of our ongoing recognition of the Best of the Best in our Aviation Branch. The CY 2024 National winners were featured in the May/June AAAA Army Aviation Mission Solutions Summit issue.



AAPA FILE PHOTO

SFC Vertin P. Guilfoil

1st Battalion, 58th Aviation Regiment. Fort Rucker, Alabama

AAAA AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER OF THE YEAR, 2023

SFC Guilfoil is the most efficient and resilient air traffic controller in the 1st Battalion, 58th Aviation Regiment. His hard work and dedication to the unit set him apart from his peers and leadership. His dedication and work ethic was a critical component of maintaining safe operations and a high level of readiness at Baledogle Military Airfield, Somalia, and at home station at Fort Rucker. While deployed in support of Combined Joint Task Force — Horn of Africa, SFC Guilfoil skillfully integrated policies and procedures to effectively manage a high density, multinational and multi-use airfield. He developed and endorsed safety procedures through coordination with joint partners and built capacity through the professional development of two peers and two non-specific aviation MOSs on advisory, emergency procedures, airfield maintenance, and joint and partner force coordination procedures. Upon redeployment, he designed and implemented a rigorous training plan to build readiness and proficiency on the Tactical Airspace Integration System (TAIS) and Tactical Terminal Control System (TTCS). His efforts enabled the battalion to provide TAIS support to Northern Strike 23-02 within six months of returning from deployment. His achievements and dedication to excellence identifies him as the 2023 Army Aviation Association of America Air Traffic Controller of the Year.

training value. Hours flown in support of meaningful progression, crew development, mission-essential tasks and collective training should carry more weight than activity that simply satisfies a numerical requirement. The objective is not to discount routine flying, but to better understand how the flying program advances combat tasks.

Second, it would include maintainer development. Aviation readiness depends on Soldiers who can troubleshoot, repair, inspect and sustain complex systems under pressure. Protected time for deliberate technical training and progression is not separate from readiness; it is one of its foundations. A formation with experienced maintainers who can diagnose faults methodically may be better prepared for austere operations than one that achieves short-term production at the expense of technical depth.

Third, the model would capture phase maintenance health. Aircraft phase requirements are predictable, but their effects on readiness are often felt months after a period of high utilization. Tracking bank time trends across a fleet helps commanders anticipate capacity requirements, balance aircraft use and avoid avoidable turbulence in future availability. This would encourage a shift from managing today's aircraft status to managing the fleet's long-term operational potential.

Fourth, the quotient would use sustained availability rather than relying exclusively on a single reporting-day snapshot. A rolling average of Fully Mission Capable aircraft, viewed alongside maintenance and supply trends, can provide a more representative picture of what a unit can generate consistently. Commanders need both the immediate status of the formation and an understanding of whether that status is sustainable.

Finally, the model would incorporate a burdened cost factor. Aviation leaders already track fuel, repair parts, maintenance actions and funding. Bringing those elements together would improve visibility of the resources required to generate readiness. It could also illuminate where changes in training design, maintenance practices or fleet management produce better returns without reducing necessary flying.

Importantly, this approach should not create another manual reporting burden for units. Much of the underlying data already exists in Army enterprise systems and aviation management tools. The long-term aim should be automation: a dashboard that draws from authoritative sources and presents trends in a form useful to company commanders, battalion staffs, sustainment leaders and senior decision-makers. The value of such a tool is not about a single score. Its value is the conversation it enables. At the company and battalion level, leaders could better balance training schedules with maintenance windows and maintainer development. At brigade level, staffs could identify emerging constraints in phase capacity, repair-part demand or fleet distribution before they become operational limitations. At the enterprise level, resource decisions could be informed by demonstrated readiness outcomes as well as historical consumption patterns.

Army Aviation does not need to choose between flying and sustaining. It must do both — deliberately, simultaneously and with a clearer understanding of how one affects the other. The objective is to ensure that every dollar allocated and every flight hour logged builds enduring combat lethality. By synchronizing aircrew proficiency, maintainer development, airframe phase health, sustained aircraft availability and fully burdened generation costs into a single governing metric, the aviation community can build a resilient, disciplined force prepared to fight and win across the modern combat environment.

The future aviation force will require more than aircraft that can fly today. It will require formations that can generate combat power repeatedly, repair intelligently, manage finite resources and remain effective when the operational environment becomes unforgiving. Measuring readiness more comprehensively is one practical step toward building that force.

CSM Christopher Doss is the Command Sergeant Major of the U.S. Aviation and Missile Command at Redstone Arsenal, AL.



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The Near Miss Safety Awareness Program

By Dana Brewer

Most Army aviators understand that aviation mishaps must be reported to the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center (USACRC) through the Army Safety Management Information System 2.0 (ASMIS 2.0).

However, some may not be as familiar with another aspect of the system that is just as vital to maintaining safe aviation operations: the Near Miss Safety Awareness Program.

The Near Miss Safety Awareness Program is an initiative, required by Department of War instructions, designed to report those incidents where no damage or injury occurred, but the circumstances indicate a hazard or a series of events that could lead to a mishap were present and, if not corrected, could lead to a future mishap. These reports can then be analyzed at the local level, as well as being used for trend analysis Army-wide. ASMIS can collect incidents reported by personnel across flight, ground, and maintenance operations. By analyzing lessons learned and detecting mishap precursors, leaders and aircrews can implement effective controls to prevent future mishaps.

The Near Miss Safety Awareness Program relies on confidential and non-punitive reports from Soldiers, aviators, crew chiefs, and maintenance personnel. This open reporting system allows personnel to document errors and close calls without fear of reprisal, giving leaders a transparent look at localized hazards before they escalate into costly mishaps. Anyone with a Common Access Card (CAC) can — and is encouraged to — submit near-miss reports in ASMIS. You do not have to have an ASMIS account. Simply log in to your computer, go to https://mishap.safety.army.mil/home, hit the Near Miss button on the screen, and then start answering the questions as they are asked.

The USACRC's Aviation Division conducted a review of nearly 2,600 aviation near-miss cases reported in ASMIS between April 2020 and August 2026. While in-flight emergencies and environmental factors present constant challenges, human error during maintenance and ground handling remains the most preventable threat to fleet readiness. The review identified five primary hazard categories shown in Figure 1.

The ASMIS Near Miss Safety Awareness Program acts as a tool for aviation formations. It maintains a transparent, non-punitive ability to report hazards to flight and ground operations, ultimately preserving vital combat power. A culture that encourages near miss reporting is a healthy, safe culture that prevents mishap loss.

Mr. Dana Brewer is the Safety and Occupational Health Manager, Directorate of Analysis and Prevention, U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center, Fort Rucker, AL

HAZARD CATEGORY	KEY ASMIS EXAMPLES	RECOMMENDED ACTION/MITIGATION
MAINTENANCE-INDUCED & FOD	iPad jammed cyclic controls; tool left in tail rotor driveshaft; uninstalled magnetic pickup	Conduct exhaustive preflight inspections. Physically check secure panels and cowlings; never assume a clean logbook means the aircraft is free of foreign object debris (FOD).
AIRSPACE DECONFLICTION (NMACS)	CH-47Fs converged due to wrong frequency; close call with civilian skydivers; unauthorized drones	Maintain aggressive visual scanning. Actively monitor frequencies, utilize TCAS/ADS-B, and overcommunicate intentions, especially at non-towered airfields.
IN-FLIGHT SYSTEM FAILURES	Engine chip lights; generator failures causing cockpit smoke; complete hydraulic pressure loss	Maintain absolute proficiency in emergency procedures. Trust your cockpit indications and execute the appropriate FADEC-F/Flight Reference Card procedures without delay.
ENVIRONMENTAL (WILDLIFE/WEATHER)	Severe icing causing low rotor RPM; undetected bird strikes to windscreens and engine inlets	Review BASH advisories. Plan routes to avoid migratory zones, understand aircraft deicing limits, and establish clear escape routes.
GROUND HANDLING & TOWING	Blades striking hangar doors; tug losing traction on snow and sliding into the aircraft	Enforce safety during movement. Ensure adequate wing-walkers, verify towing configurations (e.g., tailwheel unlocked), and intervene if unsafe.

USACRC GRAPHIC

CRC Hazard Category Chart Fig. 1



USACRC GRAPHIC

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Still Alive and Well:
The UH-72 Lakota and the Army National Guard (ARNG)

By Kevin G. Sherrer





U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY MSG BECKY VANSNUR

Idaho Army National Guardsmen and the Boise Fire Department's Swiftwater/Dive Team conduct hoist rescue training at Gowen Field in Boise, ID. The training is designed to allow the Swiftwater/Dive Team to become familiar with an aircraft's hoist while wearing river rescue gear.

"Every now and then
I know it's kinda hard to tell,
but I'm still alive and well."

Johnny Winter, 1973,
from the studio album "Still Alive and Well."

How We Got Here

Around the turn of the century, it became apparent that flying two people in the back of a Black Hawk was cost-stupid, and that a Light Utility Helicopter (LUH) was needed to replace the Huey and the Alpha-Chuck. To avoid large development costs, a Commercial Off The Shelf (COTS) solution was sought, and the military variant of the very popular, civilian Eurocopter EC-145 was selected.

It came with some baggage. It had FAA parts. It was for "permissive environments" only, given its projected poor survivability in a combat environment. It was sustained by the contractor, with a hybrid scheme for the National Guard. And it turned out to be a suboptimal trainer (a role it was never intended to fill).

But we made it work.

Where We Stand Now

The Lakota is still alive and well in the fleet. Fort Rucker, AL, still flies it for initial entry training, though it will be phased out in favor of the much less expensive R-66. In the active component, a few TDA-organizations still fly it. But in the Guard, we have around 200 airframes, and it's the mainstay of our Security and Support (S&S) Battalions.

If you look at Force Management System (FMSWeb), you see that the mission of the S&S Battalions (first fielded in 2008) is to *"perform air movement, aerial sustainment, search and rescue, reconnaissance / observation, and command and control in support of Homeland Security / Defense requirements and select OCONUS operations."* Given an adequate Mission-Equipment-Package, the Lakota is very well suited to this mission. Since 2012, it has been the go-to platform on the Southwest Border, racking up thousands of hours supporting Customs and Border Protec-

tion (CBP) and other law enforcement agencies as they curb illegal immigration and cross-border narcotics flow.

This mission is right up the Guard's alley, fitting into our Domestic Security Operations portfolio and the Homeland Defense priorities of the 2025 National Security Strategy and 2026 National Defense Strategy.

Where We're Headed

Given competing aviation priorities (MV-75) and the evolving nature of war (drones), any realist will conclude that a new start to replace the Lakota is unlikely. And one could argue unnecessary. While Airbus no longer produces the A-model, they can support it until the fleet is modernized with the UH-72B. Congress seems willing to make this happen, however slowly. The Guard now owns 18 UH-72Bs with another 12 under contract.

Just as important as the aircraft is its Mission Equipment Package (MEP), which includes advanced electro-optical and infrared sensors, civilian-compatible communications, cabin and cockpit video displays and a high-powered searchlight.

Another often overlooked benefit of the UH-72 is its operating cost. Yes, it was expensive relative to other training aircraft, but it's *much* cheaper than our Black Hawks, Chinooks and Apaches. So, for those FAC-2 aviators in flying positions above the battalion level, it makes more sense for them to fly the Lakota.

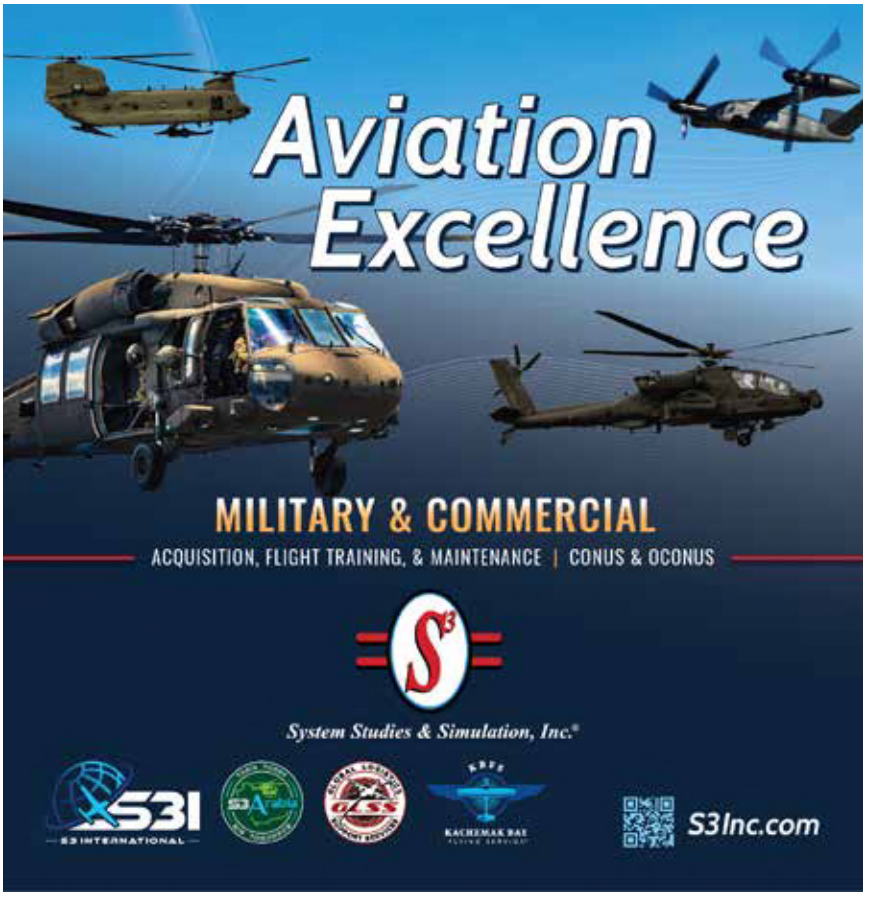
The question often arises: now that the R-66 will replace the Lakota at Fort Rucker, what will the Army do with those rode-hard UH-72As? A multi-component planning team is currently working that out. Options include beefing up or expanding Active Component TDAs, growing the Western ARNG Aviation Training Site fleet, selling them and establishing a Theater-Provided-Equipment set for the enduring Southern Border mission.

Finally, an opinion on that "permissive environments only" constraint. There's a saying around the Army that "everything is waiver-able." If the bad guys are inside the wire, I can guarantee that the Lakota will be in the fight. ***Everything*** is about risk management.

Fly Army, Fly Guard, Fly Lakota.

Kevin Scherrer is the Deputy Chief of the ARNG's Air & Space Division.





Air Data Problems: Part 2 – Angle of Attack

By Dr. Thomas L. Thompson

On February 23, 2008, as the Spirit of Kansas, one of four B-2 bombers deployed to Guam, was preparing for takeoff from Andersen AFB, the aircraft's flight management computers called for an internal air data calibration.



COURTESY PHOTO

As pilots waited, computers checked signals from each of the B-2's 24 flush-mounted pressure transducers used to calculate the aircraft's airspeed, angle of attack (AOA), and altitude. The process was intended to adjust or fine-tune calibration coefficients in the software to help ensure reliability of the air data displayed to pilots and used by the aircraft's fly-by-wire control system. When the process completed, pilots resumed takeoff procedures for the aircraft, which was loaded with full fuel for its return to Whiteman AFB, MO.

After initiating the takeoff roll, the captain rotated the nose at a speed of 142 Knots Indicated Airspeed (KIAS), however later review of data would show the actual speed was about 12 knots slower. As the aircraft lifted off the ground, the air data system computed a large negative aircraft AOA and the fly-by-wire control system responded by commanding an abrupt 30-deg nose-up change in pitch attitude. The combination of high AOA, high gross weight and relatively low airspeed caused the aircraft to stall and lose altitude. As the aircraft descended, it yawed and rolled to the left, and as the left wing scraped the runway, both pilots ejected safely. The $1.4B aircraft then slammed into the ground and erupted in flames.

The investigation team determined that the cause of the accident was erroneous AOA and airspeed data. The team explained that moisture in the pressure transducers caused significant bias to be programmed into the air data system during the calibration performed prior to takeoff. The moisture then dried as heat to the transducers was turned on as part of the normal checklist prior to takeoff, resulting in a large skew in the computed AOA and airspeed data (because of the high humidity in Guam, some B-2 crews applied heat to dry the transducers prior to calibration, but this practice was not documented in aircraft manuals).

Erroneous AOA data was also at the center of widely publicized investigations of two deadly crashes of the Boeing 737-8 MAX aircraft. In both accidents, Lion Air Flight 610 on October 29, 2018 from Jakarta, Indonesia, and Ethiopian Air Flight 302 from Addis Adaba, Ethiopia, on March 10, 2019, erroneous data from one of the two aircraft AOA sensors activated the Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System (MCAS), new software that was added to the 737 MAX flight control computers (FCCs) to improve longitudinal stability and stick force gradient at high angles of attack (MAX aircraft have larger engines that changed the 737's aerodynamic lift and pitching moment at these conditions).

In both flights, the sensors reported AOA values that were more than 20 degrees higher than the actual aircraft angle of attack, which was only a few degrees. However, the MCAS software, which was intended to be activated only at high angle of attack conditions, commanded the stabilizer to push the nose of the aircraft down. Pilots, unaware that MCAS was repeatedly commanding airplane nose-down inputs to the stabilator based on data from an erroneous sensor, applied manual inputs to attempt to level the nose of the aircraft. They eventually lost their struggle with MCAS, as both aircraft entered a high-speed dive that was unrecoverable. Following the Ethiopian Air accident, the FAA and other civilian agencies around the world grounded all MAX aircraft.

737 MAX aircraft remained grounded for about 20 months, as Boeing designed and tested modifications to the flight control computer software, including changes to MCAS and AOA sensor processing (the modified software uses AOA values from both sensors to trigger MCAS). Aircraft manuals were also updated, and specific pilot training requirements were added to address MCAS operation and how to respond to a runaway horizontal stabilizer.

In Part 3, we will discuss problems with low-airspeed measurement in rotorcraft.

Dr. Thomas L. Thompson is the Chief Engineer, Aeromechanics for the Systems Readiness Directorate of the U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command Aviation & Missile Center, Redstone Arsenal, AL.

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Heat Illnesses

By CPT (Dr.) Tiffany A. Carlson and LTC (Dr.) Jennifer A. Benincasa

Q: My unit is scheduled for a rotation at the National Training Center with a follow-on assignment to CENTCOM. I am concerned that I will not tolerate the heat as I recently PCSed from Fort Wainwright. How can I mitigate the risk of becoming a heat casualty when flying in extreme heat?

FS: The Army is an outdoor sport where the competitors must fight and win in the extremes of environment. At one extreme, the Army has the highest incidence of heat-related injury in the Armed Services. In 2023, the heat stroke incidence rate was 54.2 cases per 100,000 person-years and a heat exhaustion rate of 274.6 per 100,000 person-years. Furthermore, the Army averages about two to three heat-related deaths annually. Many heat-related injuries and deaths are preventable. Therefore, it is imperative both Soldiers and leaders understand the types of heat injuries and the associated risk mitigation options for these injuries in garrison and deployed environments.

Types of Heat Injuries

There are three major types of heat-related illnesses. Heat cramps, the mildest heat-related injury, are painful muscle spasms often occurring in the abdomen and legs that can occur during or after intense exercise in the heat. Heat exhaustion is a more severe condition which results from the loss of water and electrolytes from the body. Recognizing the signs and symptoms such as heavy sweating, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea and a rapid pulse can prevent further injury. The most severe and life-threatening heat injury is heat stroke. Heat stroke occurs when the temperature-regulating system becomes overwhelmed, which leads to a core body temperature above 104°F (40°C). Heat stroke symptoms include confusion, loss of consciousness, seizures and very hot skin. If not quickly recognized, death can rapidly follow.

Prevention and Treatment

The core principle in preventing heat injury is reducing heat load and maximizing heat loss. This occurs at the individual, leadership and systematic levels. The individual is responsible for proactively hydrating, not just drinking when they feel thirsty, replacing electrolytes lost by prolonged sweating and intense activity, and avoiding intake of alcohol, caffeine and sugary drinks. Leadership can facilitate this by providing training and resources on recognizing early signs of heat injury such as headache, dizziness, nausea, weakness, muscle cramps and heavy sweating, and by encouraging battle buddies to check on each other. Leaders are responsible for a period of acclimatization (usually about 10-14 days) and are responsible for checking the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) Index to adjust training and mission times. Additionally, leaders can also provide logistical support during outdoor activities such as cooling stations and access to rehydration drinks. Units may also consider purchasing wearables to monitor heat burden, such as the Heat Illness Prevention System (HIPS). HIPS utilizes sensors to track skin temperature and heart rate. It then estimates core temperature which can alert leaders before a heat injury occurs.

How does this affect my Aviation Career

Prevention is the key when dealing with extreme environments and temperatures. The helicopter itself is an extreme environment travelling through extreme environments. The individual aircrew members and unit leadership must mitigate the impact of these environments by ensuring proper hydration, nutrition and work-rest cycles. If an Aviator still sustains a heat-related illness after applying proper counter measures, the Flight Surgeon may not have to submit a waiver for minor heat and/or exertional injuries when it is fully resolved without residual effects.

Much like with traumatic brain injuries, susceptible aircrew members are at risk for recurrence of heat injury. Operating in high-heat environments can compromise the safety of the individual, other crew members, passengers and the mission. Additionally, the aircrew member is now more susceptible to exertional rhabdomyolysis, a potentially life-threatening syndrome resulting from rapid skeletal muscle breakdown. For the aviator to continue flying after a severe heat injury, there cannot be residual effects or end organ damage.

Fly safe and Stay Cool!

Question for the Flight Surgeon?

If you have a question that you would like addressed, email AskFS@quad-a.org and/or consult your local provider. Note that the APL Guide, Aeromedical Technical Bulletins, and Updates can be accessed at https://vfso.rucker.amedd.army.mil/ via a network-compliant computer. The views and opinions offered are those of the authors and researchers and should not be construed as an official Department of the Army position unless otherwise stated.

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CPT (Dr.) Tiffany A. Carlson, D.O., M.P.H. is a Resident in Aerospace Medicine at the U.S. Army Department of Aviation Medicine; LTC (Dr.) Jennifer A. Benincasa, D.O., FAsMA, M.P.H., M.S.H.C.A. is the Command Surgeon at the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center. Both are located at Fort Rucker, AL.

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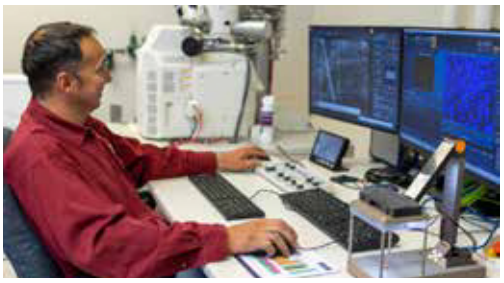

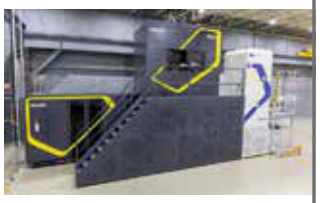



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Accelerating Modernization and Easing the Burden: Inside the Army's Latest Aviation Initiatives

By Donald Sanders



U.S. ARMY PHOTO

Members of the 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment perform maintenance on a CH-47 Chinook helicopter at Panamá Pacifico International Airport, Panama, July 18, 2026. Standardizing MIL-PRF-87257 offers a practical solution to the maintenance/logistics challenges, delivering the "best of both worlds" in hydraulic fluid performance,

In an era of rapid technological advancement and dynamic global threats, Army Aviation constantly seeks ways to maintain its tactical and strategic overmatch against peer adversaries. Achieving this overmatch requires a dual approach: fielding state-of-the-art equipment at speed and ensuring that this new technology does not overwhelm the Soldiers who maintain it. To hit these targets, Army leadership recently approved two distinct but complementary initiatives.

The Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology (ASA(ALT)) spearheaded the first initiative, a comprehensive overhaul of the Materiel Release (MR) process designed to cut bureaucratic red tape and speed up capability delivery. The second initiative transitions the tactical helicopter fleet to a standardized hydraulic fluid (MIL-PRF-87257). This engineering and logistics effort reduces the physical maintenance burden and footprint on field maintainers and logisticians. Together, these initiatives reshape how the Army equips and sustains its modern fighting force.

The Need for Speed: Streamlining the Materiel Release Process

Historically, the MR process, the rigorous certification that ensures new equipment is safe, suitable and supportable created a massive administrative bottleneck. While acquisition leaders designed this strict oversight to protect Soldiers,



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Bell.co/407M

the legacy "one-size-fits-all" approach subjected minor component upgrades to the same exhaustive, multi-year reviews as entirely new helicopter platforms. Consequently, critical technologies languished in administrative limbo while warfighters waited on the flight line.

The newly revised ASA(ALT) Streamlined Materiel Release Policy eliminates this bottleneck. This policy centers on a clear goal of getting advanced capabilities into the hands of Soldiers significantly faster without compromising safety or operational integrity. Under this new paradigm, the Army transitions from blanket approvals to a tailored, risk-based approach. The overarching MR Authority will now require a traditional, full-scale MR decision only for major, system-level modifications that significantly impact an aircraft's form, fit, function or safety.

For most upgrades, the Army has instituted a focused "Delta Review" process. Rather than forcing program managers to start the safety, suitability and supportability certification from scratch, the new process evaluates only the specific changes, the "delta" between the legacy system and the new upgrade.

Furthermore, minor upgrades that do not impact aircraft-level safety or core operations bypass the MR and delta review processes entirely. Thus, component reliability improvements, software patches, obsolescence fixes and minor Modification Work Orders (MWOs) can proceed straight to the field. This change empowers the Portfolio Acquisition Executive Maneuver Air and associated PMs to deploy incremental upgrades rapidly, keeping pace with commercial technological cycles.

Giving Time and Resources Back to the Warfighter: The Single Hydraulic Fluid Transition

While the streamlined MR process speeds up equipment delivery, the aviation enterprise must also reduce the downstream workload and logistical footprint of the Soldier. The proposed fleet-wide transition to MIL-PRF-87257 fire-resistant synthetic hydraulic fluid highlights this operational focus. This transition simplifies supply chains, reduces maintenance complexity and eliminates low-value, repetitive labor on the flight line.

The Multi-Fluid Logistics Nightmare

Currently, Army Aviation operates in a fragmented hydraulic fluid environment, primarily using MIL-PRF-83282 (standard fire-resistant fluid) and MIL-PRF-5606 (petroleum-based cold-weather fluid). The MV-75 Cheyenne brought this logistical challenge to a head, as its manufacturer, Bell Helicopter, designed the MV-75 to use the advanced MIL-PRF-87257 fluid.

Without a fleet-wide consolidation, a mixed Army Assault Battalion flying both MV-75 and CH-47F aircraft would face an increased logistical burden. Maintainers would have to:

- Stock and track three separate hydraulic fluids across the Class III(P) petroleum, oil and lubricants supply chain, complicating inventory management in austere environments.
- Maintain separate, dedicated Aviation Ground Support Equipment (AGSE) and Aviation Ground Power Units (AGPU) to service different aircraft, which increase procurement costs and maintenance hours.
- Manage complex cross-contamination risks during split-



fleet operations, since accidentally mixing different fluid types triggers mandatory, labor-intensive system flushes.

Superior Fluids to Eliminate Seasonal Labor

Standardizing on MIL-PRF-87257 solves these issues by delivering the "best of both worlds" fluid. It works flawlessly with legacy fluids and combines their best characteristics: the high flashpoint and auto-ignition safety of MIL-PRF-83282, and the outstanding low-temperature performance of MIL-PRF-5606.

For the Soldier on the flight line, this technical upgrade drastically reduces physical labor. Currently, when units deploy to cold-weather environments (where temperatures dip below -20°F), mechanics must drain aircraft and ground service equipment such as the (AGPU) to replace MIL-PRF-83282 with MIL-PRF-5606, only to repeat the entire process when summer arrives. Standardizing on MIL-PRF-87257 eliminates these seasonal fluid swaps.

Furthermore, a single-fluid fleet prevents cross-contamination. If maintainers accidentally mix MIL-PRF-5606 and MIL-PRF-83282, they must perform intensive system flushes to restore system integrity. Eliminating this risk directly reduces unscheduled maintenance and aircraft downtime. Additionally, the Army will adopt MIL-PRF-87257 for all AGSE to truly go to a one hydraulic fluid solution.

To ensure safety and build Soldier confidence, the Combat Capabilities Development Command Aviation & Missile Center's Systems Readiness Directorate (SRD) recommended a multi-phase User Evaluation:

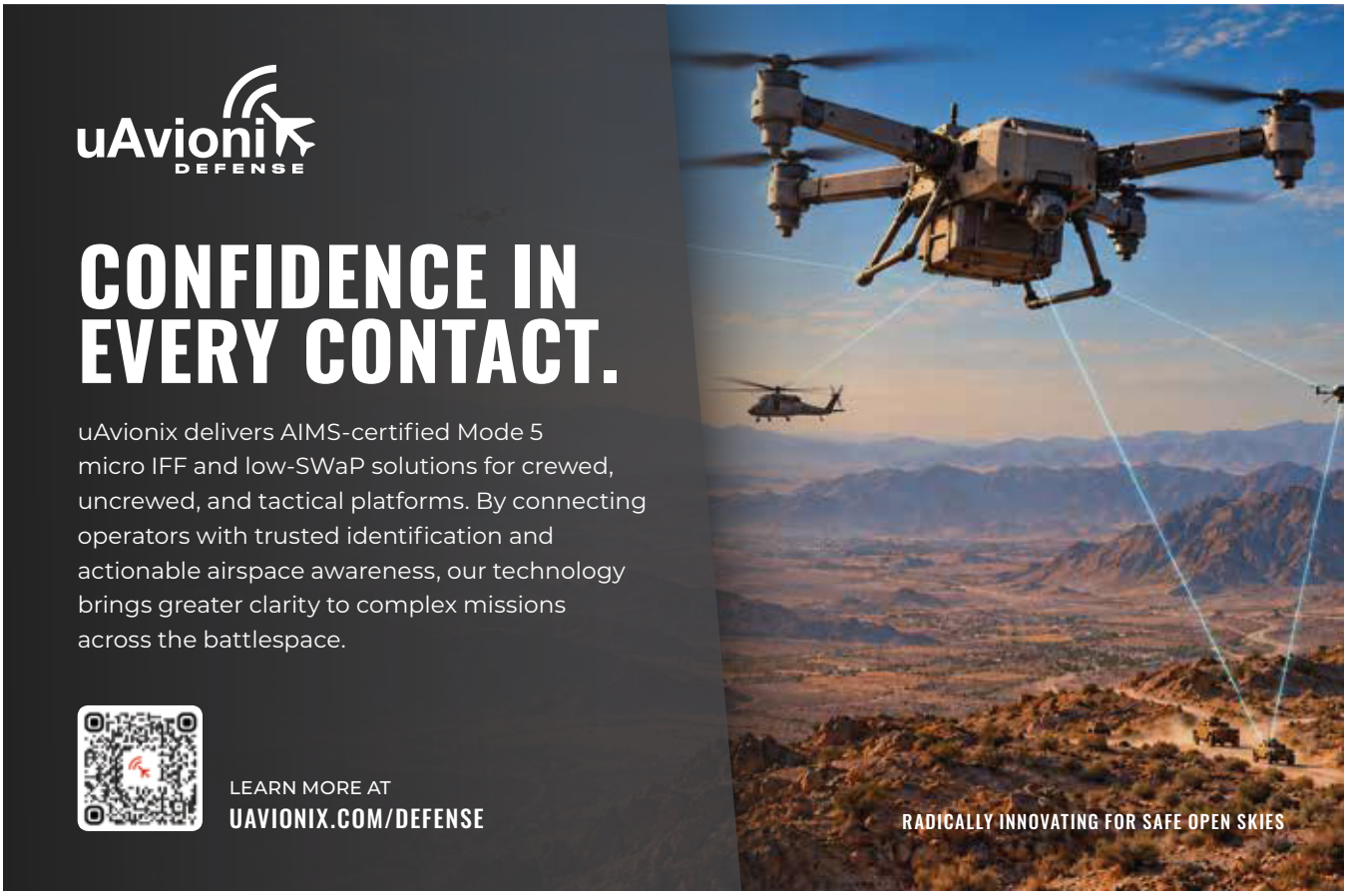
- Phase 1 (User Evaluation): AMCOM and units at Fort Rucker, AL conduct user evaluations on AH-64E, CH-47F and UH-60M aircraft to build "Soldier Confidence" under real-world operational conditions. Simultaneously, the Corpus Christi Army Depot (CCAD) evaluates the fluid's performance on CH-47F and UH-60M blade dampeners.
- Phase 2 (Three-Fluid to One-Fluid Fleet): The Army will transition the entire tactical helicopter fleet from three fluids down to MIL-PRF-87257 via an Aviation Maintenance Action Message (AMAM).

Conclusion: A Synergistic Approach to Readiness

Synchronizing these two initiatives highlights a holistic approach to Army modernization. The ASA(ALT) Streamlined Materiel Release process guarantees that when PMs develop a new technology or safety upgrade, it bypasses bureaucratic hurdles to reach the warfighter swiftly.

Meanwhile, the MIL-PRF-87257 hydraulic fluid transition ensures that maintainers can easily sustain these advanced aircraft, directly reducing the maintenance hours and logistical footprints that weigh down aviation units. Together, these efforts multiply combat readiness, building an aviation force that is more agile, more lethal and unburdened by legacy processes.

Donald Sanders is the Logistics and Sustainment Acquisition Logistics Chief, Portfolio Acquisition Executive Maneuver Air, located at Redstone Arsenal, AL.



Aviation Mission Systems and Architecture Project Office Update

By Mr. James A. Bamburg

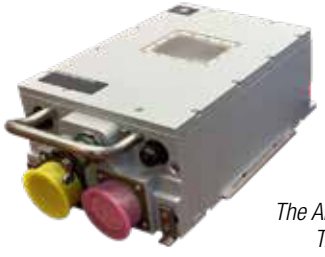


U.S. ARMY PHOTO

Soldiers from the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB) at Ft. Campbell, KY perform maintenance operations on an AH-64 aircraft utilizing the AGPU 1.1 during a New Equipment Training practical exercise in May 2026.

Equipping Soldiers with an undisputed operational advantage drives the Aviation Mission Systems and Architecture (AMSA) Project Office. We empower Army Aviation by designing, developing and fielding advanced technologies that guarantee warfighting dominance. Our integrated solutions form the backbone of Assured Airspace Access Systems, Aerial Communications and Mission Command, and Aviation Architecture and Environment Exploitation operations.

As Army Aviation modernizes, the AMSA team is bridging the gap between today and tomorrow. We balance rigorous management of fielded legacy systems with aggressive pursuit of future capabilities while laying the technical groundwork required for next-generation platforms. We ensure immediate Warfighter readiness now and throughout the transition.



The AN/APX-128 Transponder

Delivering transformational capabilities at the speed of relevance requires close collaboration with our user community and industry partners. Driven by an exceptional workforce, AMSA is accelerating alongside the broader Aviation Enterprise's evolution — positioning our forces to dominate multi-domain battlefields.

Product Manager, Assured Airspace Access Systems (A3S)

The A3S Product Manager executes a multi-pronged modernization strategy to maintain dominance in increasingly complex, contested airspace, focusing on enhancing navigation, identification and Air Traffic Control (ATC) integration to guarantee global operational readiness.

The A3S Product Office continues to accelerate AN/APX-128 next-generation micro-transponder development to enhance interoperability and lethality. Component testing is ahead of schedule, enabling fast-tracked platform integration to offset legacy transponder shortages. As production begins, the team prepares for expedited fielding across the UH/HH-60M Black Hawk fleet. Concurrently, the team collaborated with the Utility Helicopter Project Office (UHPO) and Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (UAS) Project Office to deliver critical software updates for the legacy APX-123A, keeping both crewed and uncrewed aircraft compliant with evolving airspace requirements.

The Army's new Military Code Navigator, the EAGLE-M, continues to revolutionize Assured Positioning, Navigation, and Timing (A-PNT). In

environments hindering or degrading GPS signals, such as complex terrain or hostile conditions, the EAGLE-M fortifies Army Aviation's precise navigation and timing capabilities, enabling safer operations. By leveraging a backward-compatible hardware modification, the Army rapidly fielded M-code capability years ahead of schedule, saving tens of millions of dollars. Today, over 250 Army aircraft, including PACOM Black Hawks and National Guard Apaches, operate with this technology, increasing operational capabilities in contested environments. We are advancing EAGLE-M Pre-Planned Product Improvement (P3I) to achieve full airworthiness qualification in FY26 through software-only updates, with fleet-wide deployment starting in FY27.

Underpinning these modernizations is the urgent need to synchronize with the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) transition to an all-Internet Protocol architecture. With FAA mandates for radar and automation consolidation, it is critical we upgrade systems like the DoW Advanced Automated System (DAAS)/Standard Terminal Automation Replacement System (STARS). Leveraging the FAA's limited funding window to field NEXTGEN radios and refresh hardware positions Army Aviation to secure uninterrupted, high-fidelity airspace control for the Warfighter.

Product Manager, Aerial Communications and Mission Command (ACMC)

Project Convergence – Capstone 6 (PC-C6) experimentation furthers aviation software interoperability, equipping Army Aviation with agile, interoperable software solutions empowering Aviators across multi-domain battlefields. Leading into the June 2026 PC-C6, the ACMC team completed the herculean feat of fully integrating mission-critical Next Generation Command and Control (NGC2) Air-to-Ground Communication (A2GC) technologies into AH-64E Apaches in less than a year.

Validated by the 4th Infantry Division (4ID), 4th Attack Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment during pre-PC-C6 force-on-force testing, these NGC2 capabilities expand the Battalion's ability to battle-track and communicate beyond line-of-sight (BLOS). This rapid technology injection significantly enhances real-time situational awareness (SA) for crews in flight and improves attack aircraft integration into the battlespace, enabling lethal fires with real-time airspace deconfliction.

At the June PC-C6, the ACMC team provided robust, on-the-ground support to the 4ID and III Corps to operationally evaluate the Realtime Airspace Management Suite (RAMS), enhancing mission planning and airspace management. PC-C6 provided an exceptional venue for Soldiers to test the system during complex joint and NATO-partnered operations. Aviation Mission Survivability Officers demonstrated the system's ability to seamlessly download Airspace Control Orders to maintain critical SA. Operators used the integrated suite to share mission flight plans, increasing synchronized coordination across tactical operations centers. By embedding with the Warfighter, PdM ACMC successfully captured the tactical feedback needed to continue refining RAMS.

The Aviation Tactical Communications Systems ARC-231A program continues modernizing air-to-air and ATC communications, providing Aviators greater communication capabilities via a software-defined, crypto-modernized radio. The 25th CAB, 2nd Infantry Division, 1st Armor Division, and 12th CAB now operate with the ARC-231A radio. FY27 includes gaining an airworthiness release for Apache fielding, and software updates with the latest secure voice protocol and the NATO version of the advanced tactical radio to enhance secure tactical interoperability.

Product Manager, Aviation Architecture and Environment Exploitation (A2E2)

In FY26, the A2E2 Product Office (PO) reorganized and absorbed the Aviation Ground Support Equipment (AGSE) PO, expanding A2E2's core mission of advancing multi-sensor-based capabilities into pilotage solutions to include Army Aviation's portfolio of fielded ground support equipment.

After achieving both Full Materiel Release (FMR) and Initial Operational Capability (IOC) for the Army's newest Aviation Ground Power Unit (AGPU) in early FY26, the AGSE team continued AGPU 1.1 fielding and training for Air Cavalry and Aviation Brigades at home and abroad. To date, the team has fielded over 20 AGPU 1.1s and trained over 250 Soldiers in the modernized AGPU 1.1 protocols. Designed with the maintainer in mind, the quieter AGPU 1.1 increases user safety, streamlines maintainer workload, lowers fuel costs and provides an entirely new hydraulic fluid evaluation and purification system.

The Degraded Visual Environment (DVE) team and UHPO continue UH-60M DVE Pilotage System (DVEPS) prototype A-Kit development, with aircraft integration and installation continuing through the end of FY26. Upon successful test, validation and verification, the Army will install this configuration in FY27 on 101st CAB Black Hawks at Fort Campbell, KY. Congressional support accelerated procuring additional DVEPS B-Kits for Active Component (COMPO 1) UH-60Ms and expanding DVE support to the National Guard Bureau (COMPO 2). The multi-sensor DVEPS system elevates Aviators' operational safety and tactical reach by enabling tactical navigation and enhancing SA in visually obscured conditions.

The Improved Data Modem (IDM) Open System REMAN (OSR) team continues oversight of IDM 401 obsolescence while advancing IDM OSR software and hardware development efforts addressing obsolescence. With baseline IDM OSR fielding and replacing legacy IDMs in FY29, P3I will work in parallel to generate hardware and software enhancements addressing air-to-ground IDM interoperability gaps.

FY27 focus areas include continued AGPU 1.1 production and fielding, UH-60M DVEPS A-Kit installation/qualification, B-Kit procurements, and IDM OSR hardware and software qualification for future production.

Over 2026, AMSA's focused efforts significantly matured the critical mission systems and architectural frameworks that secure our airspace and communications. The relentless drive, technical expertise and adaptability of our workforce remain our greatest assets in delivering world-class solutions to the flight line. Looking ahead, the AMSA Project Office stands ready to navigate the evolving complexities of the modern threat landscape, continuously equipping our Soldiers with the decisive technological overmatch they need to fight and win.

Mr. James A. Bamburg is the Project Manager for the Aviation Mission Systems and Architecture Project Office, Portfolio Acquisition Executive Maneuver Air, located at Redstone Arsenal, AL.

Dominating the Modern Battlespace:

The AH-64E Version 6.5 and the Dawn of Open Systems Architecture

By COL Daniel Thetford



The newest version of the AH-64E Apache, known as Version 6.5, is the next configuration of the world's premier attack helicopter. The upgrade increases its lethality, survivability and integration of new capabilities like Launched Effects to remain the world's most dominant attack helicopter on today and tomorrow's battlefields.

U.S. ARMY PHOTO

Since it was first fielded in the 1980s, the Apache helicopter has served as the backbone of Army Aviation's attack and reconnaissance capabilities. Through a legacy of continuous and purposeful modernization, the platform has steadily adapted to keep pace with evolving threats.

Today, we stand on the threshold of the most significant architectural evolution since the transition to the E-model: the fielding of the AH-64E Version 6.5 (v6.5) software update. This is not a simple software patch. Version 6.5 is a profound shift in how the Apache program office develops, fields and sustains combat capability. By establishing a fleet-wide common software baseline and introducing a revolutionary Open Systems Interface (OSI), v6.5 transforms the Apache for the complex realities of Multi-Domain Operations (MDO).

The Strategic Imperative of a Common Configuration

For over a decade, managing a mixed fleet of v4, v4.5, and v6 aircraft has introduced unnecessary friction across the force. Different software baselines have persistently challenged aircrews, maintainers and logisticians alike. By establishing a single, fleet-wide Operational Flight Program (OFP) common software baseline, the AH-64E v6.5 update directly solves this problem.

Logistical and Financial Benefits for the Enterprise

Standardizing the fleet on a single configuration yields immediate, enterprise-wide efficiencies:

- **Streamlined Sustainment:** A single software baseline means logisticians manage only one set of technical manuals, one software process and a simplified supply chain.
- **Enhanced Maintenance Proficiency:** Maintainers can develop deep, focused expertise on a single system configuration. Troubleshooting becomes faster and diagnostics more accurate, which directly translates to increased aircraft availability and reduced downtime.
- **Reduced Lifecyle Costs:** Eliminating the requirement to develop, test and field separate software fixes for legacy baselines drastically cuts sustainment costs. Future software upgrades will now move forward from a single, unified point of departure.

Revolutionizing Aircrew and Maintainer Training

From an operational perspective, fleet-wide standardization removes the friction of version-specific differences.

- **Interchangeability of Personnel:** Commanders gain maximum tactical flexibility. Pilots and maintainers can step into any v6.5 cockpit worldwide and immediately dominate the battlespace, eliminating the need for costly and time-consuming version-specific requalification.
- **Simplified Institutional Pipelines:** Standardizing one software baseline allows the institutional training base to use a single syllabus, one set of simulator software and one set of training materials.

The Game-Changer: The Open Systems Interface (OSI)

At the heart of the v6.5 upgrade is the OSI. Historically, adding a new weapon, radio, or sensor to the Apache required Boeing to modify the core aircraft flight software (the OFP). This traditional cycle is incredibly expensive, requires complex regression testing and often takes several years to execute.

The OSI functions as a universal, "be-

hind-the-glass" digital gateway. It is a software interface between the aircraft's critical flight software and Third-Party Hardware Systems (3PHS). This interface allows 3PHS applications to render custom controls and interactive displays directly on the aircraft's Multipurpose Displays (MPDs).

Drastically Reducing Cost and Timeline

By decoupling mission system integration from the core flight-critical OFP, the OSI delivers a massive return on investment:

- **Timeline Reduction:** New capabilities can be developed, tested, and integrated in a matter of months or even weeks — rather than years.
- **Cost Avoidance:** Integrating systems via the OSI avoids the massive Non-Recurring Engineering (NRE) costs associated with a full OFP rewrite. For example, while traditional communications and Next-Gen Command & Control (NGC2) architecture integrations can carry high-cost baselines, integrating new third-party software applications on top of the established OSI can be completed in rapid, highly affordable sprints.
- **Rapid Integration Sprints:** The power of the OSI was recently proven during a Boeing/USG demonstration in the Aviation Integration Lab (AIL) at the Mesa facility. In a 35-day rapid sprint, engineers integrated and demonstrated third-party Launched Effects (LE) command and control software under the glass, using the v6.5 OFP without modifying a single line of core flight code.

Technology Enhancements Fielded in Version 6.5

The v6.5 update consolidates a robust list of capabilities to address Department of Defense mandates, Army priorities, and lessons learned from the v6 Follow-On Test and Evaluation II (FOTE II) in 2019.

Key Capability Insertions Include:

1. **OSI Architecture**: The baseline gateway for rapid third-party sensor, weapon and software integration.
2. **Terrain Awareness Warning System (TAWS)**: A critical safety upgrade designed to prevent Controlled Flight Into Terrain (CFIT) accidents. Operating based on sensor data availability (Digital Terrain Elevation Data (DTED), Radar Altimeter, and flight profile), it provides timely visual and aural warnings during low-level tactical flight.
3. **Advanced Link 16 Crypto Modernization & Hardware Improvements**: Fulfills Joint Requirements Oversight Council Memorandum (JROCM) mandates while vastly improving tactical connectivity.
4. **ARC-231A Crypto Modernization**: Incorporates the latest NSA secure communications standards.
5. **Eagle EGI M-Code & MAGNA Antenna**: Integrates Assured Position, Navigation and Timing (A-PNT) hardware, protecting the Apache from GPS jamming and spoofing in contested environments.
6. **Manned-Unmanned Teaming (MUM-T) & Coyote Modem Integration**: Replaces Rover 6 hardware and sets the stage for advanced drone-defeat and drone-control operations.
7. **TADS Gen II Turret (G2T) Software Hooks**: Enables seamless pilot interaction with the highly responsive Gen II Turret.
8. **Safety & PVI Improvements**: Includes flight page synthetic vision underlays, Brownout Cueing Symbology, Helicopter Landing Zone Degraded Visual Environment (HLZ DVE) symbology and custom Keyboard Unit (KU) shortcuts to reduce pilot workload.

Conclusion

The AH-64E Version 6.5 update represents a monumental leap in lethality, survivability and digital adaptability. By standardizing our fleet on a single common configuration, we remove a massive logistical burden from our soldiers and give commanders unparalleled tactical flexibility.

More importantly, by embedding a Modular Open Systems Approach (MOSA) directly into the Apache's digital heart through the OSI, we have expanded rapid technology integration. We are no longer locked into multi-year, multi-million-dollar development cycles just to add a new sensor or counter a new threat. Version 6.5 ensures that the Apache will rapidly adapt at the speed of relevance, remaining the world's premier attack helicopter and maintaining decisive overmatch for our ground commanders.

ATTACK!!!

COL Daniel Thetford is the project manager for the Apache Project Office, Portfolio Acquisition Executive Maneuver Air, located at Redstone Arsenal, AL.





101st Combat Aviation Brigade Soldiers conduct operational assessment of the Block II CH-47F at Fort Campbell, KY.

U.S. ARMY PHOTO

Chinook Update: Modernizing the Army's Heavy-Lift Workhorse for the Warfighter and Industry

By COL Jennie Conlon

Sustaining operational tempo across vast, contested theaters demands rapid, reliable heavy vertical lift. Whether delivering artillery to a remote firing point, inserting an air assault force or pushing bulk fuel and ammunition forward, the CH-47 Chinook remains the lifeblood of tactical mobility. For the Soldiers who fly, maintain and depend on the aircraft, as well as the industrial partners who build and support it, the Cargo Helicopters Project Office (PM Cargo) uses a synchronized strategy to keep the fleet combat-ready, survivable and technologically dominant well into the 2060s.

Aligning for Total Life Cycle Management

To enhance responsiveness to the warfighter and provide clearer roadmaps to defense industry partners, PM Cargo strategically reorganized. Moving away from a platform-centric model, the project office established two unified functional elements: Development & Modernization and Production & Fielding.

This Total Life Cycle Management (TLCM) structure ensures seamless progression from initial engineering concept to long-term depot sustainment:

- For Soldiers and Maintainers: It breaks down bureaucratic boundaries, accelerating the speed at which field feedback turns into engineering modifications, safety enhancements and software updates.
- For Industry Partners: It creates distinct, dedicated touchpoints for technology insertion, long-lead manufacturing contracts and supply chain collaboration.

Evolving the Legacy: Transitioning from Block I to Block II Production

A major programmatic milestone approaches this fall with the delivery of the Army's final new-build CH-47F Block I to the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade (Air Assault). With baseline Block I production concluding, PM Cargo is focusing manufacturing capacity on the CH-47F Block II.

Block II delivers critical improvements in lift capacity, extended range, and sustainability, giving commanders greater margin and capability in Large-Scale Combat Operations (LSCO). Block II production and fielding acceleration is moving rapidly forward:

- Procurement Milestones: The project office awarded two significant production contracts, Lot 5 in September 2025 and Lot 6 in March 2026, totaling 12 aircraft.
- Fielding Pipeline: Combined with the six aircraft already delivered from Boeing and six currently on the production line, PM Cargo is positioned to field up to 24 Block II aircraft.
- Warfighter Evaluation: The initial fielding phase kicks off with a Special User Evaluation (SUE) alongside the designated First Unit Equipped (FUE), the 4th Infantry Division (4ID), by the end of Calendar Year 2026. This evaluation places the Block II directly in the hands of operational crews and maintainers to validate capabilities and gather user feedback prior to broader fleet integration.

Fleet Sustainment and Industrial Base Resilience

Even as Block II enters service, the fielded Block I fleet

will remain the operational backbone of combat aviation for years to come. Ensuring Combat Aviation Brigades (CABs) maintain high mission-capable rates requires active, transparent collaboration across the defense industrial base.

To counter component aging, diminishing manufacturing sources, and material shortages, PM Cargo continues to partner with industry through the Cargo Obsolescence Working Group. By forecasting component vulnerabilities early and qualifying form-fit-function replacements, the team bundles engineering redesigns to prevent grounded aircraft and maintain uninterrupted readiness across both the enduring fleet and active production lines.

Modernizing Avionics and Evaluating Emerging Capabilities

Tactical modernization inside the cockpit focuses on lowering crew workload while expanding battlefield connectivity:

- CAAS 10.2 Architecture: Testing for the Common Avionics Architecture System (CAAS) 10.2 hardware and software build is in its final fielding preparations. Designed around open architecture standards, CAAS 10.2 enables the integration of third-party software applications without requiring extensive flight control recertification, delivering updated navigation, communication, and situational awareness tools directly to aircrews.
- Evaluating Emerging Autonomous Technologies: Building upon previous flight demonstrations, the project office is actively evaluating emerging technologies in autonomous navigation, obstacle avoidance and assisted cargo operations. These exploratory efforts use software solutions that integrate seamlessly with pilot workflow, reducing cognitive burden during complex approaches in degraded visual environments while increasing mission safety.

Global Fleet Interoperability

With 18 partner nations currently operating various Chinook configurations, international cooperation remains an operational multiplier. Global interest in the CH-47F Block II is strong.

As foundational initiatives like the International Engineering Services Program (IESP) take shape, PM Cargo is positioning the enterprise for future collaborative engineering, technical data exchanges and shared sustainment solutions. Combined with active Foreign Military Sales (FMS), this commonality fosters standardized maintenance practices, shared supplier pipelines and high coalition interoperability across global theaters.

Conclusion

As the Cargo Helicopters Project Office completes the transition from Block I production and accelerates the fielding of the CH-47F Block II, the operational mandate remains clear. Through the recent structural reorganization to Total Life Cycle Management, proactive sustainment, critical industrial base partnerships and targeted modernization, the office ensures that the Chinook fleet remains the backbone of Army Aviation, delivering unmatched tactical mobility to the ground commander today and in the future.

COL Jennie Conlon is the project manager for the Cargo Helicopters Project Office, PAE Maneuver Air, located at Redstone Arsenal, AL.





The MV-75 Cheyenne:
A New Era of Dominance for the Warfighter

By COL Jeffrey Poquette

The MV-75 Cheyenne represents a major step forward for Army aviation. It will give Soldiers, aviators and commanders a multirole aircraft with greater reach, survivability, adaptability and operational flexibility than legacy platforms. More than a replacement aircraft, the Cheyenne will expand how the Army projects combat power and supports forces across extended distances and contested environments.

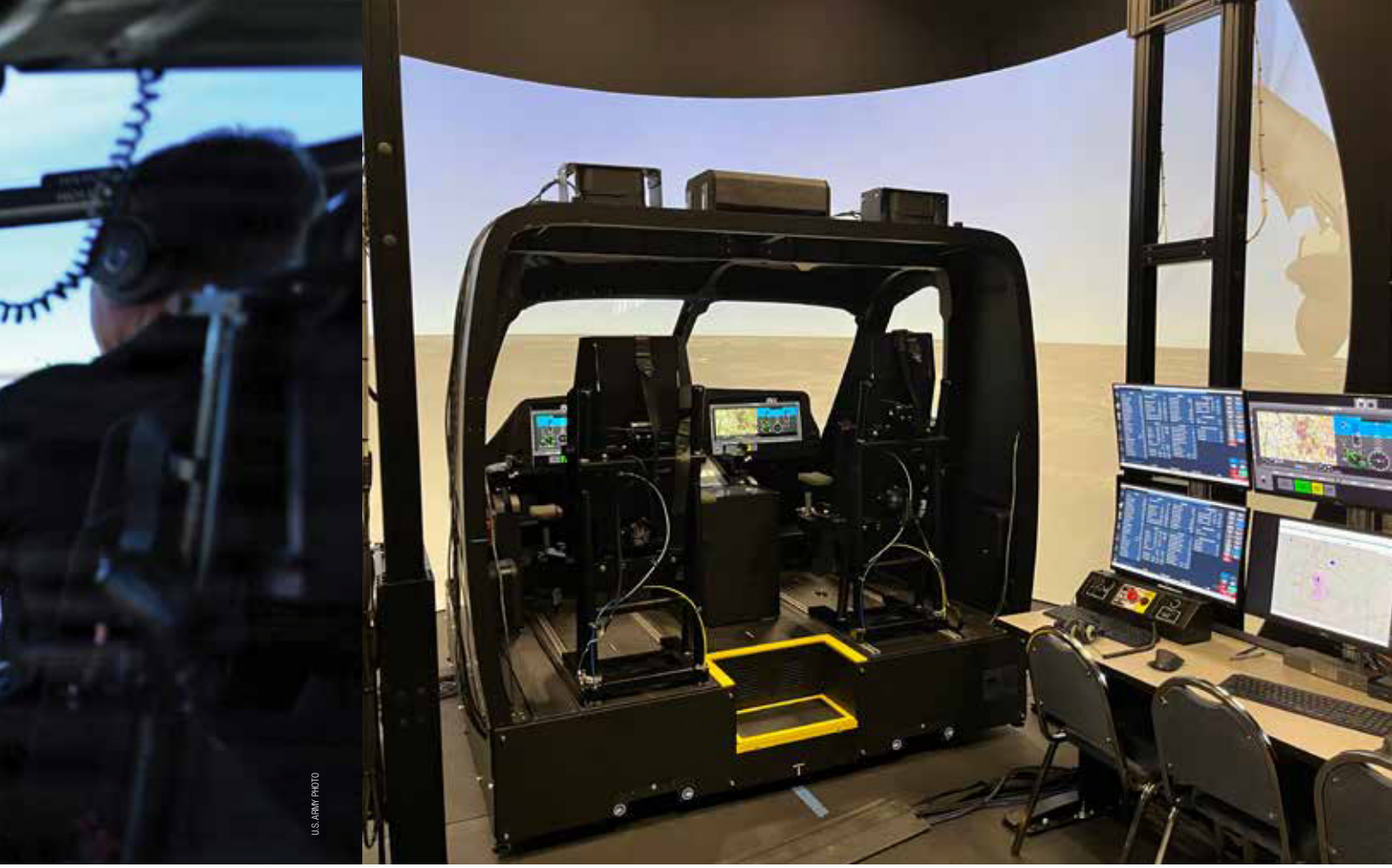
For the warfighter, the value of a new aircraft is not measured by its technical specifications, but by what the platform allows formations to do in combat: move faster, operate farther, survive longer, adapt more quickly and remain ready over time. The MV-75 is being built with those outcomes in mind. Its design, training approach, safety processes and sustainment strategy all reflect a deliberate effort to deliver not only a next generation aircraft, but a transformational long-term capability for the force.

Delivering Combat Capability: Speed, Range and Reach

The MV-75 delivers more combat power by flying faster, farther and with more fully equipped troops than today's utility helicopters. As a next-generation tiltrotor it has a top speed exceeding 280 knots and a significantly increased combat radius, enabling twice the range of the current utility helicopter fleet. This extended reach and range makes the MV-75 Cheyenne a truly transformational capability for the future force.

For warfighters, that performance translates into practical battlefield advantages. Greater speed and range allow commanders to stage farther from threats, cover larger areas without refueling and assault objectives that were previously unreachable for Army Aviation. This capability is particularly compelling in the Indo-Pacific where the MV-75's speed and range will open new opportunities for Army Aviation.

As a true multirole aircraft, the MV-75 supports tactical air assault, air movement and MEDEVAC missions while integrating into multi-domain operations. The Cheyenne integrates effectively in joint and coalition operations with proven Government Furnished Equipment, existing mission systems and digital connectivity. Increased payload capacity further improves lift efficiency by allowing the aircraft to transport more troops, equipment and supplies per sortie. The aircraft's concept of operations also reflects its expanding role in future combat. The MV-75 can operate with joint forces, conduct



Above left: Soldiers participate in an MV-75 Cheyenne Special User Evaluation, providing critical design feedback on the aircraft's pilot display and cognitive workload systems.

Above rIght: A view inside the virtual prototype cockpit of the MV-75 Cheyenne.

standard and mountainous air assaults and deploy launched effects at a safe standoff range to identify targets and relay intelligence. That combination of speed, range and teaming gives commanders new options for how they employ this capability in the future fight.

Safety: Applying V-22 Lessons Differently

The Army is approaching the MV-75 with a deliberate focus on safety, reliability and maintainability from the outset. The Army and Bell have applied lessons learned from more than 750,000 V-22 operational flight hours to improve the MV-75's design and avoid challenges experienced in the Osprey program.

The MV-75 is not simply borrowing from prior tiltrotor experience — it is learning from it. Its fixed-engine, fixed-nacelle design reduces complexity and makes maintenance easier, while also improving cabin usability by removing nacelle movement that can interfere with visibility and troop movement. A straight wing further simplifies the aircraft by reducing manufacturing complexity and eliminating the need for a center gearbox. The improved clutch design system, which runs at reduced speed and does not rotate with the mast, reflects lessons from V-22 gearbox and clutch experience aimed at improving reliability and reducing sustainment demands. Backed by close collaboration with NAVAIR engineers, these changes show a deliberate effort to translate hard-earned lessons into a more maintainable and operationally effective aircraft.

The Army has also brought NAVAIR engineers with V-22 experience into the design process, ensuring the program benefits from decades of tiltrotor knowledge and lessons learned. Their participation helps the MV-75 team identify risk earlier, apply proven engineering insight and make design decisions informed by real-world operational and sustainment experience.

For the warfighter, this means the Army is not simply chasing performance. It is building a tiltrotor aircraft shaped by operational lessons, deliberate engineering choices and a safety-first development process.

Special User Evaluations: Building the Aircraft with Soldier Feedback

One of the strongest aspects of the MV-75 program is its effort to bring Soldier and aviator feedback into the aircraft early, before fielding. In June 2025, the Army received two MV-

75 virtual prototypes. One, located at Redstone Arsenal, supports design reviews and collects input from engineers, logisticians, trainers, test pilots and operational Soldiers. The second, at Fort Rucker, helps units build tactics, techniques and procedures so they are prepared to train, deploy and fight when the aircraft fields.

These virtual prototypes are giving the program practical warfighter insight before first flight. Operators are using them to assess cockpit layouts, displays, controls and overall crew workload. The prototypes help study flight control behavior and refine handling qualities before live flight testing, reducing risk and producing a more user-focused aircraft.

The Army is also feeding lessons from these virtual prototypes and recurring Special User Evaluations directly into training development. Bell, the program office and Army stakeholders are maturing the MV-75 Flight Training Device (FTD) so it remains aligned with the aircraft as the design evolves. Over time, pilot training will transition from virtual prototypes and integration labs to the FTDs, while the virtual prototypes are upgraded to match the final training configuration.

One clear example of the value of the Special User Evaluations came from early cabin assessments, where Soldier feedback during cabin and cockpit mockup reviews directly informed the final cabin step and seating configuration. By evaluating ingress and egress while wearing combat gear, operational users helped the program refine how Soldiers will enter, exit and move through the aircraft — an early but important change that improved usability and better aligned the design with real mission conditions.

For the warfighter, this means the aircraft is not being designed in isolation. The Soldiers, aviators, trainers and maintainers who will ultimately operate it shape the design. That kind of early user input improves more than ergonomics. It improves safety, training relevance and mission effectiveness.

MOSA: Upgradability at the Speed of Relevance

The MV-75's long-term advantage is not only in its flight performance, but in its ability to adapt as mission demands and threats change. The Cheyenne is a "born digital" aircraft with a digital backbone built using a Modular Open Systems Approach (MOSA) and Time Sensitive Network (TSN) standards. This architecture allows the Army to upgrade or replace equipment at the speed of relevance and allows the flexibility to reconfigure the baseline aircraft for MEDEVAC missions, extending the platform's utility across the full range of operational demands.

Flexibility matters because modern combat systems cannot remain static. New mission systems, sensors, communications tools and survivability technologies emerge faster than legacy acquisition cycles can usually absorb them. MOSA improves adaptability, scalability and interoperability; enables rapid integration of new technologies; reduces lifecycle costs; and simplifies maintenance and upgrades. For the warfighter, MOSA creates a platform that can remain effective against evolving threats without waiting for infrequent, platform-wide "block upgrade" redesigns.

The aircraft can rapidly integrate advanced mission systems as threats evolve and is designed to integrate

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seamlessly into multi-domain operations. This is especially important for formations that will need to connect with joint and coalition partners, employ resilient communications and adapt aircraft configurations to specific theaters and operational problems.

MOSA gives the Army something it rarely gets from legacy aircraft architecture: the ability to modernize on operationally relevant timelines instead of legacy acquisition timelines.

IP, Data Rights and the Right to Repair

Readiness depends on the aircraft's performance and design and on the Army's ability to sustain and improve it over time. The Army's approach establishes a fully organic, field-level maintenance capability at Initial Operational Capability and sets the conditions for long-term sustainment across the organic industrial base. Over time, the Product Support Business Case Analysis will inform sustainment strategy, ensuring the aircraft can be maintained, repaired and modernized throughout its service life.

A deliberate data rights and intellectual property strategy was built around the Army's expected use cases across the full lifecycle of the aircraft. From the outset, the program identified the technical data and rights required to support organic sustainment, repair, upgrade and competition over time including use cases such as repairing rotor blades within the Army's own maintenance enterprise. By securing those rights early and pairing them with open interfaces, the program helps unlock the Army's ability to sustain, modernize and truly exercise its "right to repair" the aircraft across the force. For the warfighter, right to repair is beyond a contracting issue. It is a readiness issue. A platform that the Army can repair, maintain, modify and upgrade without unnecessary restrictions is a platform that can stay mission-capable longer and return to the fight faster. When paired with MOSA, the right data rights strategy helps ensure the Army is not only buying an aircraft but preserving the ability to sustain and modernize that aircraft over decades of service.

Conclusion

The MV-75 Cheyenne gives the Army a decisive advantage in the future fight. Its speed and range expand operational reach. Its safety approach reflects hard-learned lessons and a deliberate effort to do things differently from the start. Its Special User Evaluations and virtual prototypes ensure that Soldier and aviator feedback shape the aircraft before fielding. Its MOSA-based architecture allows the Army the flexibility to integrate new technology quickly, and its sustainment and data-rights approach supports long-term readiness and true right to repair.

For the warfighter, the MV-75's significance is clear. It is more than a new aircraft. It is a new operational tool for commanders, a new combat platform for aviators and a new readiness model for Army Aviation. In that sense, the Cheyenne does more than replace legacy capability. It expands what the force can do, how far it can go and how effectively it can fight. That is what a new era of dominance looks like.

COL Jeffrey Poquette is the Project Manager for the MV-75 Cheyenne Project Office, Portfolio Acquisition Executive Maneuver Air, located at Redstone Arsenal, AL.



Transforming the Black Hawk for the Future Fight

By COL Ryan Nesrsta



U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY SSG DAVE HOWARD

Since 1979, the H-60 Black Hawk has been U.S. Army aviation's multi-role workhorse, executing critical missions from air assault and MEDEVAC to combat resupply in high-threat environments. Today, modernization has shifted from planning to decisive implementation. These rapid upgrades actively reshape the fleet, ensuring the Black Hawk remains a versatile, survivable and lethal force multiplier on the modern battlefield.

STRATEGIC VISION

The Black Hawk serves as a dynamic technology incubator, yielding proven, risk-reducing results that enhance current fleet readiness while informing the aviation platforms of tomorrow.

Progress and Future Imperatives

H-60 targeted modernization is accelerating to counter near-peer threats and integrate with the Future Vertical Lift (FVL) ecosystem. Serving as a technology incubator, the Black Hawk is rapidly maturing autonomy and survivability capabilities. This risk-reduction effort secures current fleet readiness while directly informing the aviation enterprise designs of tomorrow.

From Concept to Capability

Power & Propulsion

Rigorous flight testing of the T901 Improved Turbine Engine (ITE) is advancing fleet capabilities. This next-generation propulsion system extends operational range, increases payload capacity and delivers superior performance world-wide in critical combat and MEDEVAC missions, ensuring long-term tactical advantage.

Enhanced Air Vehicle & Digital Backbone

Airframe upgrades feature a larger nose with 112% more volume for next-generation avionics, improving the center of gravity and adding nodal access points for the Digital Backbone. Structural integrity improvements to the airframe will increase useful mission loads, distribute loads optimally and reduce maintenance downtime. Additionally, a larger 480-gallon main fuel tank increases available flight time between refueling stops. Underpinning these upgrades, the Digital Backbone provides an open interface architecture for rapid mission kit insertion, supporting U.S. Army Modular Open Systems Approach (MOSA) objectives.

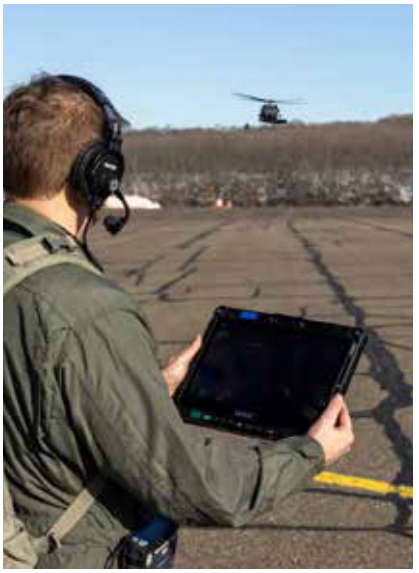
A Launched Effect-Medium Range is fired from a UH-60M Black Hawk helicopter, utilizing the platform-agnostic government-developed Launched Effects Dispenser for Ground and Rotorcraft

MOSA and Open Systems

MOSA represents a fundamental shift from proprietary avionics toward open-architecture systems, enabling rapid integration of new sensors and communications packages without full rewiring, facilitating software-only upgrades and reducing new capability insertion costs. Modularity within the Black Hawk avionics suite further allows rapid insertion of new capabilities using separable, configurable software elements. Finally, the new Avionics Architecture Solution (AAS) in the 60M provides Line Replaceable Unit (LRU) and card-level modularity to address component obsolescence and seamlessly integrate third-party components.

Advanced Survivability

In partnership with the Aviation Missions Systems and Architecture Project Office, the program integrates the Degraded Visual Environment Pilotage System (DVEPS) for continuous transformation units. By fusing LiDAR,



COURTESY PHOTO BY SIKORSKY, A LOCKHEED MARTIN COMPANY



COURTESY PHOTO

Above photo: Next-gen cockpit displays redesigned

Left photo: The U.S. Army officially received a groundbreaking H-60Mx Black Hawk helicopter, extensively modified to fly with or without a pilot at the controls.

long-wave infrared, and digital terrain data, DVEPS allows aircrews to safely operate in severely limited visibility conditions. Coupled with the APR-39E(V)2 radar warning receiver and advanced infrared signature suppression, the Black Hawk's defensive posture is more robust than ever.

New Frontiers in Black Hawk Modernization

Autonomy in Action

In March 2026, U.S. Army aviation marked a strategic milestone with the delivery of the first H-60Mx Black Hawk equipped with Sikorsky MATRIX™-based Optimally Piloted Vehicle (OPV) technology. Ongoing flight testing will inform the Strategic Autonomy Flight Enabler (SAFE) program, driving the development of universal autonomy for the Army Aviation enterprise.

The two-phased SAFE initiative modernizes the Black Hawk with Level 1 Full Authority Flight Controls, establishing a clear path to optionally piloted flight. This integration reduces pilot workload, protects critical actuators with weight-optimized ballistic protection and enhances obstacle avoidance through advanced perception sensing.

In a Phase II Small Business Innovative Research effort, the RUC-60 program integrated Near Earth Autonomy's 'Captain' deterministic autonomy architecture onto a UH-60 prototype for uncrewed operations. Backed by Honeywell, Moog, and XP Services, this effort joins SAFE in targeting major 2026 testing to rapidly advance Army aviation enterprise autonomy, operational flexibility and crew safety.

Air-Launched Effects

Under the continuous transformation initiative, the UH-60M Air-Launched Effects (A-LE) program has demonstrated launching and controlling effects in extreme environments. This critical capability allows forces to penetrate contested airspace from a vital standoff distance while integrating with the Next-Generation Command and Control (NGC2) Network. By proving this technology in adverse conditions, the program matures and rapidly delivers a lethal asset to the force.

The Connected Cockpit: Data and Human-Machine Interface

To manage these advanced capabilities, a new initiative is modernizing the cockpit interface. The integration of Large-Area Displays (LAD) and a multi-core Aviation Mission Computer Environment gives pilots intuitive displays and AI-driven decision aids. By standardizing datalinks and intelligently routing critical information, this connected cockpit significantly reduces cognitive load, enabling aircrews to make faster, more informed decisions in high-stress combat scenarios.

Three-Dimensional Spatial Audio

Further enhancing the cockpit environment is the integration of advanced 3D spatial audio technology. Recently installed in training aircraft, this initiative transforms traditional mono-channel communications into an immersive 360-degree soundscape. This joint modernization effort enables aviators to distinguish and prioritize multiple overlapping radio channels, substantially improving speech intelligibility and situational awareness while further reducing pilot workload.

The Black Hawk Fleet Strategy: Sustaining the Future

Sustaining this momentum requires a robust industrial base strategy. The U.S. Army's campaign plan integrates new-build production with commercial modifications and midlife overhauls. Maintaining the procurement line ensures access to the critical Defense Industrial Base (DIB). The DIB will increasingly rely on Foreign Military Sales (FMS) and Black Hawk Exchange Sales Transaction (BEST) aircraft to achieve minimum sustainment. Continued collaboration between organic facilities and industry partners remains critical to extending the fleet's service life past 2050.

Conclusion

Manned utility transport helicopter remains Army's operational and support backbone for operations in the Western Hemisphere (e.g., Southern Border, Humanitarian Assistance, etc.) and abroad. The Black Hawk is not merely being updated; it is being fundamentally transformed. By systematically integrating advanced propulsion, modular open systems, autonomy, and launched effects, the platform is adapting seamlessly to the demands of multi-domain operations. These vital investments are a critical bridge to Future Vertical Lift, actively reducing risk and maturing key technologies today that apply across the enterprise. The Black Hawk will continue its legacy as a versatile, lethal and highly survivable cornerstone of Army Aviation well into the mid-21st century.

COL Ryan Nesrsta is the Project Manager for the Utility Helicopters Project Office, Portfolio Acquisition Executive Maneuver Air, located at Redstone Arsenal, AL.

The MV-75 Operational Development Team

By LTC(P) Brian Haas, MAJ JT Hingey and CPT Tyler Cox



An artist's rendition of a Cheyenne fitted in a MEDEVAC configuration.

COURTESY PHOTO BELL-TEXTRON

The Aviation Center of Excellence (AVCOE), in conjunction with Department of the Army, Military Operations-Aviation Directorate (DAMO-AV), established the MV-75 Operational Development Team (ODT) to fulfill a unique role within Army Aviation. Since 1984, the United States Army has operated four primary rotary-wing platforms: the UH-60 Black Hawk, CH-47 Chinook, OH-58 Kiowa and AH-64 Apache (U.S. Army, 2014). Designed to go further and faster than any rotary-wing system currently in the Army's inventory, the MV-75 Cheyenne tiltrotor will serve as the Army's new weapon system. The ODT leverages the Department of War's (DOW) Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership and Education, Personnel, Facilities, and Policy (DOTMLPF-P) framework for materiel and non-materiel solutions to analyze the fielding of the MV-75 Cheyenne across all eight domains (AcqNotes, 2024). The ODT's analysis will ensure the MV-75 immediately contributes to a ground force commander's ability to successfully close with, engage and destroy our nation's enemies.

The ODT's mission is to lead DOTMLPF-P analysis and integration, to represent the aviation warfighter in operational tests and to develop Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTPs) to enable the successful fielding of MV-75. Comprised of 26 personnel from across the operational force with over 24,000 flight hours and 7,700 maintenance man hours, the ODT is divided into five sections: Command and Integration, Doctrine and Policy, Training and Leadership, Materiel and Facilities, and Organization and Personnel. The ODT is already integrated with several Aviation Branch organizations to synchronize across the DOTMLPF-P domains. Currently, the team is working alongside Organization and Personnel Force Development (OPFD) to modernize the Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB) Modified Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE) and to determine necessary changes to Military Occupational Specialties (MOS). The ODT also works alongside the Department of Training and Doctrine (DOTD) to ensure that all future doctrine supporting MV-75 operations and employment is purpose-built to enable the warfighter and to leverage lessons learned from sister service tiltrotor employment to build the MV-75 training strategy. ODT integration with the MV-75 Project Management Office, OPFD, DOTD along with other stake holders is critical to ensure the MV-75 will be fielded to the warfighter as a fully developed and sustainable weapon system.

Since the ODT's establishment at Fort Rucker, AL, in June of 2026, team members participated in several engagements to integrate warfighter feedback and operational experience into MV-75 development. Five team members traveled to NASA Ames Research Center in Sunnyvale, California to participate in Advanced Rotorcraft Configurations Testing of Increased

Capabilities 7 (ARCTIC 7). At ARCTIC 7, members of the ODT conducted assessments of Control Law (CLAW) modes, the Mission Adaptive Autonomy (MAA) system, Spatial Audio, Heads Up Display and Threat Detection/Avoidance Systems.

In addition to ARCTIC-7, members of the ODT participated in Special User Evaluation #6 (SUE #6) at Redstone Arsenal (RSA), Huntsville, AL, integrating with Project Manager-Future Long Range Assault Aircraft (PM-FLRAA) and Army Flight Test Directorate (AFTD) to learn about the acquisitions process and the current status of the MV-75 program. Further, multiple engagements at RSA afforded ODT DOTMLPF-P domain leads the opportunity to engage directly with integrated product team (IPT) leads from PM-FLRAA. Relationships formed at SUE #6 and future SUE events will ensure the ODT, PM-FLRAA and AFTD are synchronized throughout the MV-75 Cheyenne's fielding process.

Stationing the ODT at AVCOE provides the opportunity for direct integration into professional military education (PME). AVCOE teaches thousands of PME students per year, and the ODT now provides students with exposure and initial familiarization of the MV-75 prior to their return to the operational force. In recent engagements with Aviation Captain's Career Course (AVC3) students, members of the ODT assisted course cadre with the introduction of the MV-75 into one of the military-decision making process (MDMP) exercises. With a basic understanding of the "twice as far, twice as fast" motto and the projected basic capabilities of the MV-75, future company commanders planned an operation employing the MV-75 platform and provided actionable feedback (PEO Aviation, 2025). The ODT will continue capitalizing on opportunities across the Aviation Enterprise and engaging with United States Marine Corps MV-22 (Osprey) and United States Air Force CV-22 (Osprey) aviators to build United States Army tiltrotor subject matter experts.

The ODT employs one of the three MV-75 virtual prototypes (VP) in existence to develop tiltrotor familiarization, evaluate current and future TTPs and expose the greater aviation enterprise at Fort Rucker to the platform. The VP also allows the ODT to gather feedback from the warfighter perspective. Early operational integration during the development, testing and evaluation processes is key to mitigating risk as the Army looks to begin low-rate initial production prior to full-rate production. In August, the ODT conducted more than 100 VP demonstrations to capture warfighter feedback and better inform the MV-75's future implementation.

The MV-75 Cheyenne will provide the United States Army a new and pivotal operational capability. The MV-75 Operational Development Team fulfills a unique role in the process to acquire, field and train the new tiltrotor platform. Future assignments for ODT personnel will range from integration to existing organizations at Fort Rucker, potential placement at Redstone Arsenal, AL, and for some, the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade at Fort Campbell, KY, to employ the MV-75 in an operational capacity. Members of the ODT will continue to utilize operational experience to field a fully integrated capability in the MV-75 Cheyenne.

LTC(P) Brian Haas, Team Chief, MAJ JT Hingey, Deputy Team Chief and CPT Tyler Cox, Operations Officer, are all assigned to the MV-75 Operational Development Team at Ft. Rucker, AL.



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The Fixed Wing Project Office and Army Fixed Wing Aviation — High Ground, Deep Sensing: Modernizing the Army's Fixed Wing Fleet

By COL James B. Hickey and Mrs. Tracey Ayres Phlegar





U.S. ARMY PHOTOS

Above left: The Army's first HADES prototype taking off on it's first flight in August 2026.

Above right: The Beechcraft C-12 is the workhorse of the Army's fixed wing troop and cargo transport fleet.

As I begin my tenure as the Project Manager for the Fixed Wing Project Office, I am honored to lead a team at the forefront of Army Aviation. The mission of this office is critical: we support warfighter lethality by delivering unparalleled intelligence-gathering capabilities, we execute strategic troop and cargo transport worldwide and we are constantly striving to build partner capacity through our robust Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program. From modernizing our executive fleet to supporting strategic missions worldwide, to developing next-generation deep sensing technology, our work ensures that the Army maintains a decisive edge on the modern battlefield. We are committed to securing the high ground, and I look forward to innovating and delivering with this team.

The Prototypes Take Flight

Our primary focus is the High Accuracy Detection and Exploitation System (HADES). As the next generation of aerial intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (A-ISR) capability, HADES represents a massive leap forward for our warfighters. It is the first program of record under the Army's Multi-Domain Sensing System (MDSS), and its development is moving at an incredible pace.

HADES is achieving key milestones. Our first government-owned prototype took its historic first flight in August. We are now deep into a rigorous flight-testing phase that will conclude in November, paving the way for our first operational demonstration in early 2027.

Right behind it is our second prototype, which is currently undergoing intense integration and testing. We anticipate the second prototype will be ready to prove its mettle in a late 2027 operational demonstration.

The Proving Ground: The HADES SIL

The success of our flight testing begins long before takeoff; it originates in the HADES System Integration Lab (SIL). Housed within an actual Bombardier Global 6500 fuselage, the SIL replicates the internal layout of our aircraft.

This secure, specialized environment allows us to integrate and validate mission systems using a Modular Open Systems Approach (MOSA) long before they ever touch a prototype aircraft. It mitigates the highest risks of complex aviation programs: software delays, interface mismatches and hardware installation failures.

By de-risking the platform on the ground, we prevent costly delays in flight tests. The SIL focuses on three critical objectives:

SIL Objective	Operational Impact
System Integration	Testing high-altitude, long-endurance sensors as a single, coherent operating system.
Data Validation	Ensuring collected intelligence can be rapidly processed,analyzed and shared across networks.
Hardware Troubleshooting	Resolving interface issues and validating data flows before physical installation.

The Digital Backbone

At the core of the HADES platform is the Digital Backbone (DBB). This cutting-edge, high-speed data network serves as the central nervous system of the aircraft, linking, translating and distributing data from a complex array of sensors directly to the warfighters who need it most.

Cockpit Modernization: Enhancing the Enduring C-12 Workhorse

In concert with our advanced Aerial-ISR development, the Fixed Wing Project Office is undertaking limited modern-

ization initiatives to increase capability for the enduring C-12 transport fleet to ensure that this vital workhorse remains at the forefront for safety and capability adaptation across all Army compositions. At the heart of this effort is the integration of a state-of-the-art Garmin glass cockpit, complemented by an autothrottle system, and other advanced safety features. The autothrottle automatically manages engine power to maintain a pre-selected airspeed, significantly reducing the need for manual adjustments during critical phases of flight such as takeoff, approach and landing. Together, these incremental upgrades have fundamentally enhanced cockpit operations by reducing pilot workload and increasing pilot situational awareness.

DBB Capability	Strategic Advantage
Deep Sensing	Operating higher and faster, HADES peers deep into high-threat adversary territory from a safer standoff distance.
Sensor Convergence	Unifies communications intelligence, electronic intelligence, and synthetic aperture radar into a single, cohesive picture rather than processing them separately.
Futureproofing	Leverages open standards to rapidly deploy artificial intelligence and machine learning algorithms directly to the aircraft to filter noise and flag targets.

Strengthening Global Partnerships

Our mission extends far beyond our own borders. Fixed Wing manages over $160 million in FMS case funding annually, supporting 19 partner nations, with emerging interest in HADES from several different countries.

Our role extends beyond delivering hardware; we are building the strategic capacity of our international partners across multiple domains. As partner nations look to improve their capabilities in multi-domain operations and regional security, Fixed Wing's FMS portfolio will only continue to grow.

FMS Offerings	Included Services and Procurement
Hardware and Equipment	ISR equipment, aircraft spare parts, and advanced mission radios.
Training and Support	Pilot and mission systems operator training, technical assistance, and field service reps.

The Path Forward

Our path forward is clear. First, we will transition our HADES prototypes into a fully operational and fielded fleet, placing this revolutionary deep-sensing capability in the hands of our Soldiers who support Combatant Commands. Second, we will leverage MOSA to ensure our platforms remain at the cutting edge, ready to integrate artificial intelligence and new technologies that provide overmatch. Finally, we will provide worldwide strategic transport, and we will strengthen our global partnerships, by delivering assets that ensure our allies can assist the United States and navigate increasingly complex challenges around the world.

COL James B. Hickey is the Project Manager for the Fixed Wing Project Office, Portfolio Acquisition Executive Maneuver Air and Mrs. Tracey Ayres Phlegar supports the Fixed Wing Project Office as a Strategic Communications Lead with KBR. Both are located at Redstone Arsenal, AL.



Modernizing at Battlespace Speed;

PD SAI Innovates Sensors, Tools and Training

By Ms. Julie M. Isaac



COURTESY PHOTO

ARES is a manned contractor-owned, contractor-operated (COCO) proof of concept aerial ISR technical demonstrator jet, delivering modernized sensor capabilities against near-peer threats and adversaries, operating in the U.S. Pacific Command area of responsibility.

Project Director Sensors-Aerial Intelligence (PD SAI) continues to advance technologies and modernize the intelligence landscape in the aerial layer. Army senior leaders challenged the acquisition community to transform technology from the early 2000s to match the advancements of today while moving rapidly to ensure Soldiers get capabilities now instead of a decade in the future. To answer this call, PD SAI has implemented innovative enablers to include an open system architecture on High Accuracy Detection and Exploitation System (HADES), Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning (AI/ML) data tools, and a virtual immersive aerial system trainer.

PD SAI in partnership with Project Manager Fixed Wing (PM FW) is modernizing the aerial Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) fleet through the HADES program. HADES is leveraging the Bombardier Global 6500 luxury business jets to fly significantly longer missions at greater standoff compared to legacy aerial fleets. The larger jet provides sufficient space and power needed for multiple specialized sensing systems. Higher altitudes support deep Signal Intelligence (SIGINT) sensing within contested battle spaces while remaining safely outside the Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) zone of an adversary. The first HADES prototype is delivered this calendar year, with two additional prototypes with greater capability rolling out in 2027 and 2028. The eventual fleet will comprise a half-dozen or more fully capable ISR platforms available for deployment where needed.

More than just an upgrade in aircraft from legacy ISR fleet, HADES represents a paradigm shift in how aerial Fixed Wing ISR platforms collect, exploit and disseminate intelligence. HADES' implementation of open architecture and modular design facilitates rapid equipment reconfiguration as sensor technology evolves and specific mission needs change, ensuring

Army G-2's priorities have real-world solutions in real time. By incorporating interoperability that closed sensor capability gaps in Processing, Exploitation and Dissemination (PED), PD SAI expands the collection, sharing and utilization of battlespace data.

To better leverage the HADES' wider variety of sensors and data collection, PD SAI created a format to improve how information is shared across data enclaves. Called the Tactical Intermediate Data Exchange (TIDE), this approach facilitates sensor tasking, querying and correlation of collected data to enhance the use of AI/ML to create an awareness overmatch in a multi-domain environment. TIDE provides data to Sensor Automation Support Targeting (SAST) which is a set of services that automate the exploitation process with the help of AI/ML to quickly sift through the mountains of data and identify High Value Targets (HVTs). SAST facilitates object-based tasking through rapid automated scanning of the battlefield and correlation of data used to identify and geolocate threats without the aid from human operations.

SAST has been integrated onto contractor-owned, contractor-operated (COCO) aerial ISR platforms including the Airborne Reconnaissance and Electronic Warfare System (ARES), Airborne Reconnaissance Targeting Exploitation Multi-Mission Intelligence System (ARTEMIS), and Army Theater-Level, High-Altitude Expeditionary Next Airborne (ATHENA), and will be integrated onto HADES prior to deployment.

PD SAI is developing a virtual trainer which uses operational software to include the SAST services in a modernized training solution for the operator. The Virtual Aerial Systems Trainer (VAST) is designed to train both rated and non-rated crewmembers in support of the Army Theater-Level, High-Altitude Expeditionary Next-Generation Aerial Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) (ATHENA) and HADES aerial ISR platforms.

VAST leverages current technologies such as virtual reality goggles to place pilots and sensor operators within an emulated aircraft and at the operator workstations. This provides "hands on" experience from anywhere at any time, eliminating the need for real time access to the platform, sensors or operational environment. VAST represents a fundamental shift in Army mission equipment training. This immersive, virtual environment reduces reliance on expensive and limited flight hours, while simultaneously increasing training fidelity, safety and consistency. With VAST, Global 6500 pilots can experience realistic pre-flight pre-checks of the aircraft, while ELINT system operators can troubleshoot common expected issues and emulate data produced by Static Application Security Testing (SAST).

Julie M. Isaac serves as the Project Director for Project Director Sensors-Aerial Intelligence within the Capability Program Executive for Intelligence and Spectrum Warfare (CPE-ISW) at Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD.





The hanger at FWAATS.

U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY MAJ. ANDREW TANNER

FWAATS:

Training at the Speed of Transformation

By CPT Daniel Sislo

Army Aviation is entering a period of transformation unlike any in recent memory. New acquisition approaches are intended to move capability from concept to Soldier faster, while the Army increasingly emphasizes next-generation sensing, survivability and the ability to operate against sophisticated threats. But delivering new capability is only half the equation. The Army must also develop the aviators who will operate it.

In the February 2026 issue of *Army Aviation Magazine*, Program Executive Office (PEO) Aviation highlighted the need to accelerate acquisition and deliver capability to Soldiers with greater speed and agility. As the Army works to shorten the time between identifying a requirement and placing a capability in the hands of Soldiers, training must keep pace with that same urgency. This is where the Fixed Wing Army National Guard Aviation Training Site (FWAATS), located at the North Central West Virginia Airport (KCKB) in Bridgeport, WV, can play an important role.

Nestled in the Appalachian Mountains, FWAATS operates under the West Virginia Army National Guard and the 197th Regional Training Institute. As an accredited schoolhouse within The Army School System, FWAATS provides fixed-wing instruction on the C-12 Huron and C-26 Metroliner to aviators from the Army and Air Force.

FWAATS' greatest value may be its ability to produce qualified aviators efficiently. The schoolhouse conducts multiple courses throughout the year, including the Aircraft Qualification Transition (AQT), Maintenance Test Pilot Course (MTPC), Instructor Pilot Course (IPC), Instructor Pilot Standardization (IPS), Instrument Flight Examiner (IFE) and Instrument Flight Examiner-Preparation (IFE-P).

The AQT is particularly relevant to an Army Aviation enterprise undergoing rapid change. By providing an accelerated pathway for aviators who already possess appropriate fixed-wing experience and prerequisites, FWAATS can reduce the time and resources required to produce a qualified fixed-wing aviator. Rather than starting over, experienced aviators can build upon skills they already possess and transition into the fixed-wing Army enterprise

more efficiently. FWAATS is the only schoolhouse that has this ability.

At first glance, the C-12 and C-26 may appear to represent an older generation of Army Aviation. Their relevance, however, extends well beyond the age of the airframes. The fixed-wing expertise developed through these platforms provides a foundation for the increasingly sophisticated missions emerging across Army Aviation.

The Army's transition toward next-generation aerial intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) makes this particularly important. Programs such as the High Accuracy Detection and Exploitation System (HADES) are intended to provide high-altitude, long-range sensing capabilities that can operate at extended distances from enemy air defenses. These missions will require aviators proficient in complex turbine systems, advanced avionics, high-altitude flight and demanding mission environments. Those aviators have to come from somewhere.

As the Army continues to adjust its rotary-wing force structure, it will also have an opportunity to retain the experience and institutional knowledge of aviators whose current positions may be affected by those changes. A deliberate pathway for experienced rotary-wing aviators to transition into fixed-wing aviation could preserve valuable Army Aviation experience. FWAATS provides an existing training enterprise capable of supporting that transition. It creates an avenue for developing the broader fixed-wing expertise required to support an operational formation.

This concept may also become relevant as the Army prepares to field the MV-75 Cheyenne, its Future Long Range Assault Aircraft. The MV-75 is expected to provide significant increases in speed and range compared to today's rotary-wing fleet. While the Army's final approach to selecting and training MV-75 crews continues to develop, the aircraft's performance and systems may create opportunities to leverage aviators with prior fixed-wing experience during its transition into Army formations.

FWAATS could provide another piece of that training pipeline. The schoolhouse is already designed around the rapid development of experienced aviators and the production of standardized, qualified fixed-wing professionals. As new platforms emerge, that experience provides the Army with an adaptable foundation upon which future training requirements can be built.

Army transformation will ultimately be measured not only by how quickly it acquires and fields new capabilities, but by how quickly it can develop the aviators needed to employ them. As Army Aviation moves toward next-generation ISR platforms and transformational aircraft such as the MV-75, training cannot become the limiting factor. FWAATS has spent more than three decades adapting to the Army's changing requirements. Its role in the next chapter may be to help ensure that the Army's aviators are ready when the next generation of aircraft arrives. The Army is accelerating transformation and FWAATS is prepared to train at the speed of change.

CPT Daniel Sislo is The Army School System (TASS) commander at the Fixed Wing Army Aviation Training Site in Bridgeport, WV.



Guardians of the Sky:
The Unmatched Reach and Readiness of ATSCOM

By COL Richard Polen and the ATSCOM Team

Across every theater of operation — from dense European air corridors to austere, forward-deployed airstrips in the African desert and mountainous approaches across Latin America — Army Aviation relies on one foundational certainty: when aircraft launch into the skies, the airspace is controlled, secure and ready. Delivering that certainty is the United States Army Air Traffic Services Command (ATSCOM).

Operating at the vital intersection of tactical warfighting, strategic aviation doctrine and cutting-edge airspace modernization, ATSCOM is the heartbeat of Army terminal airspace operations. Across all components — Active Duty (COMPO 1), Army National Guard (COMPO 2), and Joint partners — ATSCOM's professionals are quietly transforming how the Army fights, trains and sustains its tactical aviation footprint.



U.S. ARMY PHOTO

A Flight Inspection Mission Specialist validates an instrument approach procedure.

Global Impact: Precision in the Darkest Skies

Nowhere is ATSCOM's immediate operational impact clearer than in its elite Flight Detachment. Entrusted with validating and inspecting instrument flight procedures for all military branches, this specialized crew ensures that aviators can shoot precision approaches in adverse weather and challenging terrain around the globe.



U.S. ARMY PHOTO

ATSCOM provides over the shoulder training for the Army National Guard.

In recent months alone, the Flight Detachment spearheaded an intensive, month-long validation mission across five European nations, verifying critical approach corridors that safeguard allied interoperability. Concurrently, the detachment deployed into the AFRICOM Area of Responsibility to inspect and certify vital instrument approaches in direct support of ongoing contingency operations. Whether ensuring safety of flight at high-tempo multinational hubs or validating tactical arrival gates downrange, ATSCOM guarantees that combat power can touch down precisely when and where it is needed most.

Expanding Horizons: The Skywatch AIC Mission in Honduras

That operational footprint is continuing to expand into pivotal theaters closer to home. ATSCOM's assumption of the Skywatch Air Information Center (AIC) mission in Honduras brings that broader airspace role into sharp focus across the Western Hemisphere.

Taking charge of this mission represents far more than an operational handover; it offers a prime opportunity to apply the advanced expertise ATSCOM is actively rebuilding throughout the entire Air Traffic Services Community. Operating in a complex multinational environment supporting regional secu-

rity, humanitarian assistance and joint aviation operations, the Skywatch AIC mission showcases ATSCOM's ability to manage dynamic airspace architectures beyond traditional home-station boundaries. It stands as living proof that the lessons, standards and technical rigor honed by ATSCOM are delivering immediate operational value to combatant commanders in real-world missions.

Building Combat Lethality: The Two-Year Transformation

While operational detachments secure overseas corridors, ATSCOM's Doctrine and Training Readiness Division builds the tactical teams who control them. Preparing air traffic controllers to operate under high-stress expeditionary conditions demands uncompromising standards — and ATSCOM delivers a methodology second to none.

This dedication shines brightest in ATSCOM's partnership with the Army National Guard's Airfield Operations Battalions (AOBs). Preparing a COMPO 2 unit for overseas deployment is not a brief checklist exercise; it is an immersive, multi-year journey of transformation:

Baseline Assessment: Nearly two years prior to mobilization, ATSCOM subject matter experts deploy directly to the unit's home station, conducting rigorous baseline evaluations and establishing a tailored, 24-month training progression roadmap.

Sustained Engagement: Throughout the two-year cycle, ATSCOM remains shoulder-to-shoulder with unit leadership, providing mentoring, mobile training teams and technical evaluation to ensure rapid skill development.

Culminating Mobilization Event: At Fort Hood, Texas, working alongside the 166th Aviation Brigade, ATSCOM oversees the final validation exercises — testing the battalion in complex, simulated combat operational tempos.

Witnessing a unit evolve from baseline proficiency into an agile, cohesive and fully deployable air traffic control powerhouse is nothing short of inspiring. It demonstrates the enduring strength of the Total Army concept in action.

Pioneering Doctrine for the Future Multi-Domain Fight

As the Army accelerates its overarching Aviation Transformation initiative, the character of terminal airspace is changing rapidly. Uncrewed aircraft systems, autonomous platforms and long-range precision fires demand dynamic, integrated terminal air architecture.

ATSCOM's doctrine experts have tackled this historic challenge head-on. Working hand-in-hand with the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence (AVCOE) at Fort Rucker, ATSCOM is actively rewriting and synchronizing terminal airspace doctrine. They ensure Army Air Traffic Services remain tightly nested not only within organic branch operations, but seamlessly federated with Joint Force command-and-control architectures. By solving the complex problems of airspace deconfliction and multi-component integration today, ATSCOM guarantees the Joint force maintains uncontested air superiority tomorrow.

Ensuring Freedom of Operations: Air Traffic Safety Oversight and Interoperability

Sustaining combat readiness also means mastering the congested skies above our own homeland. Unrestricted access to the National Airspace System (NAS) is the lifeblood of flight training, cross-country repositioning and routine aircrew qualification. ATSCOM acts as the premier institutional vanguard working alongside the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to ensure Army Aviation remains safe, standardized, and synchronized with civilian airspace authorities:

Airspace Delegation and National Authority: When Army operations require air traffic control authority over corridors not serviced by civil towers, ATSCOM coordinates complex, national-level agreements. Anchored in FAA Order JO 7610.14, formal memoranda of agreement between the Department of Transportation, the FAA and the Department of Defense cement the Army's operational flexibility while strictly protecting civil airspace integrity.

Safety Management Systems (SMS): Safety cannot exist in isolation. Both agencies integrate safety oversight mechanisms through rigorous FAA Air Traffic Safety Oversight frameworks. By harmonizing risk assessments and change-management protocols, ATSCOM guarantees that procedural adjustments in shared airspace are executed smoothly and without compromising flight safety.

Shared Terminal Technology and Automation: Seamless skies require shared digital architecture. Army airfields leverage advanced terminal automation suites — most notably the Standard Terminal Automation Replacement System (STARS) and joint FAA-DoD integrated data displays. This interoperability ensures instantaneous radar tracking and precision separation services across military and commercial traffic alike.

Rigorous Certifications and Standards: At the operator level, ATSCOM champions world-class credentialing. Army air traffic controllers pursue demanding Air Traffic Safety Oversight (AOV) ratings and credentials matched to FAA-designed benchmarks — guaranteeing that whether in an installation tower cab or an expeditionary radar shelter, Army controllers meet the gold standard of professional performance.

Protecting the Gateways: Materiel Readiness and NAS Access

Readiness is not sustained by doctrine and training alone; it requires operational equipment capable of matching civilian and military standards alike. ATSCOM serves as the critical bridge linking operational units to key acquisition commands, maintaining direct liaison with the Project Manager for Airspace Management Systems Army (PM AMSA) and the U.S. Army Communications-Electronics Command (CECOM). When tactical equipment breaks or requires depot-level intervention, ATSCOM expedites solutions that keep airfields operational.

By proactively identifying equipment requirements that match the FAA's modernization roadmap, ATSCOM ensures Army airfields never fall behind technological shifts. This proactive advocacy guarantees our aviators the uninhibited airspace freedom they need to build combat power day in and day out.

Cleared for the Future

From continental installation towers to expeditionary radar shelters supporting contingency operations across Europe, Africa and Central America, ATSCOM touches every flight hour flown in the United States Army. Through relentless precision in flight procedure validation, visionary doctrine development, transformative combat training and unwavering safety oversight, ATSCOM does not merely keep aircraft safe; it empowers Army Aviation to dominate the skies.

COL Richard Polen is the commander of the Air Traffic Services Command located at Fort Rucker, AL.

Keeping Pace: Army Air Traffic Control Modernizes Alongside FAA's $12.5B BNATCS Effort

By LTC Micheal J. Monfreda



The THALES ILS-429 replacement for the legacy MARK-20A ILS

The Department of Transportation and Federal Aviation Administration recently launched a generational aerospace transformation: the Brand-New Air Traffic Control System (BNATCS). Backed by a historic $12.5 billion federal appropriation, the FAA-structured BNATCS encompasses five foundational pillars: Surveillance, Automation, Communications, Navigation, and Infrastructure.

The Assured Airspace Access Systems (A3S), Fixed Base Air Traffic Control (FBATC) team, within the Aviation Mission Systems and Architecture Project Office, primarily focuses on meeting capability standards and aligning technical capabilities with modern approaches to sustain Army aviation operations within the National Airspace System (NAS). While the FAA's mandate spans all five domains, the Army will initially concentrate its primary modernization investments directly on three critical pillars: Surveillance, Automation, and Communications. This systematic modernization approach enhances flight safety, accelerates airfield operations, and strengthens joint-service mission readiness across the airspace.

Surveillance: Upgrading to ASR-XM

Surveillance is crucial for maintaining situational awareness at Army airfields where controllers have long relied on aging ASR-8 and ASR-11 radar configurations. With increasing parts obsolescence, climbing maintenance costs, and a shrinking industrial supply chain, the Army must transition to newer, more supportable radar systems to maintain readiness.

Together with federal partners, the Army is participating in a joint-agency transition to upgrade its radar baseline to the Airport Surveillance Radar Next Modification (ASR-XM). This joint initiative replaces aging radar infrastructure with advanced, solid-state digital radar systems. The ASR-XM delivers sharper target tracking, enhanced cyber resiliency, and improved weather detection. For Army controllers, ASR-XM provides an uninterrupted operational picture, reducing equipment failures and strengthening flight safety across shared military-civilian terminal airspace.

Automation: Advancing Digital Flight Data Architecture

As the FAA accelerates automation to streamline high-density terminal operations, Army ATC facilities are modernizing terminal automation platforms to maintain synchronized data exchange. The Army will modernize its terminal air traffic control capabilities by updating the Army Airfield Automation System (AAAS) and the Department of Defense Advanced Automation System (DAAS), the Army's designated version of the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Standard Terminal Automation Replacement System (STARS).

The shift to a networked, digital flight data architecture marks a major leap forward for Army airfield operations, replacing legacy paper records and manual tracking with a fully digital system. The transition integrates automated flight-plan processing, digital coordination, and hazard-prediction software into local airfield operations, linking Army towers directly to national terminal automation architectures.

Communications: Transitioning to NEXTGEN V3 and ED-137 Compliance

Communications modernization is the third critical pillar where the Army is replacing legacy architectures. The Army will migrate to NEXTGEN V3 radio platforms to deliver Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) capabilities across airfield towers and radar approach control facilities.

This radio modernization combines high-speed fiber-optic, satellite, and encrypted wireless transport networks to replace deteriorating copper-wired infrastructure. Coupled with modernized digital voice switches, the NEXTGEN V3 framework eliminates legacy voice degradation and single-point transmission failures.

These upgrades guarantee compliance with the ED-137 international VoIP standards, ensuring seamless interoperability with modern tactical avionics, inter-agency FAA centers, and joint military platforms.

Article continued on page 69



Automated Detection & Determination of the Electrical Wiring Interconnection System (ADDEWIS)

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From Terminal Control to Multi-Domain Dominance:
The TAOG Transformation

By COL Richard Polen and the 164th Theater Airfield Operations Group Staff





USARMYPHOTO

Above left: The U.S. Army's Mobile Tower System provides rapid-reaction, all-weather, day/night visual and procedural air traffic control services for military and civilian aircraft in theater terminal airspace. The system can establish initial operations within 10 minutes of arrival on station and be fully operational in 40 minutes.

Above right: 164th TAOG Soldiers executed airspace operations at Exercise Northern Strike, in early August, at Michigan's National All-Domain Warfighting Center.

To paraphrase retired Army leadership: *"If you don't like change, you will like irrelevance even less."*

Today, the 164th Theater Airfield Operations Group (TAOG) is firmly leaning into that reality. Across the Army aviation enterprise, the demands of Large-Scale Combat Operations (LSCO) and Multi-Domain Operations (MDO) require organizations to shed legacy habits formed over two decades of static counterinsurgency. For the Army's Air Traffic Services (ATS) community, this evolution is not merely administrative — it is an operational imperative that redefines how the ground force synchronizes airspace, operates expeditionary airfields and projects joint combat power.

The Legacy Mindset: Breaking the "Just Enough" Cycle

During the protracted campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, Army ATS units — both TAOG subordinate elements and Fox Companies within General Support Aviation Battalions (GSAB) — maintained a relentless operational tempo. They established and ran busy airfields across mature theaters, delivering steady tactical air traffic control primarily in support of Combat Aviation Brigades (CAB).

While effective for localized, low-intensity counterinsurgency, the narrow employment of ATS units came at an institutional cost. Subordinate ATS elements were routinely tasked to provide only a fraction of their designed capability or "just enough": basic terminal tower services with austere radio packages. Because tactical airfields often relied on fixed regional infrastructure or civilian augmentees, the critical art of maintaining and deploying expeditionary ATS pacing items eroded.

Across the force, vital deployable systems — the Mobile Tower System (MOTS), the Air Traffic Navigation, Integration, and Coordination System (ATNAVICS) and the Tactical Airspace Integration System (TAIS) — frequently languished with administrative "circle red-Xs" on maintenance logs. Underfunded, de-prioritized within CABs focused primarily on flight-hour programs, and underutilized in the field, these

multi-million-dollar systems risked quiet relegation to the boneyard. The condition of these systems does not reflect a lack of commitment from our ATS Soldiers. Our air traffic controllers accomplished the missions the Army gave them; now we must employ and prepare them for the full range of capabilities their units were built to provide. Transitioning from Fox Companies to modernized Airfield Operations Companies (AOC) has illuminated these vulnerabilities — and catalyzed the aggressive modernization needed to reverse them.

Revitalizing Airspace Architecture for the Modern Battlefield

Perhaps the most critical capability that atrophied over the last twenty years was holistic airspace management. Controllers were conditioned to look inward at terminal air traffic patterns rather than outward at dynamic, theater-level airspace architecture.

In future conflicts, airspace will be contested, congested and lethal. The proliferation of low-altitude unmanned aerial systems (UAS), loitering launched effects and long-range precision fires (LRPF) means that uncoordinated skies can halt a division's maneuver just as effectively as enemy air defenses.

The TAOG is tackling this deficit head-on. By instituting an intensive, in-house three-week course, the TAOG is "re-blueing" Military Occupational Specialty 15Q (Air Traffic Control Operator) Soldiers on comprehensive airspace management and Airspace Control Plan (ACP) execution. This curriculum establishes an aggressive baseline of operational capability for every controller assigned to an AOC. The aim is to restore the broader airspace expertise that the Army will require beyond the airfield fence line.

Crucially, the doctrine surrounding TAIS is shifting. The days of treating TAIS simply as a digital flight-following tool are over. The AOC's Airspace Information Section is evolving into a node capable of active, procedural and positive control. Armed with emerging battle management technologies, these sections will dramatically compress the time and lateral separation required between manned aircraft, autonomous swarms and artillery trajectories — safely deconflicting multi-domain fires while accelerating tempo for the ground commander.

Looking ahead, these airspace information sections will anchor Corps Rear Area operations, serving as the foundational building blocks for deeper division-and-corps integration.

Expanding the Enterprise: The Airfield Management Element

The transformation into the AOC construct also answers a longstanding operational shortfall: who actually runs and safeguards the airfield itself?

The newly established Airfield Management Element (AME) within the AOC provides dedicated Soldiers focused entirely on airfield compliance, operations and safety. Their mission footprint covers:

- Comprehensive runway and airfield safety inspections
- Foreign Object Debris (FOD) mitigation and obstacle clearance evaluation
- Aircraft marshalling, ramp management and parking coordination
- Expeditionary airfield hazard tracking and baseline aerodrome reporting

This directly enables the Joint Force. Whether marshaling Air Force strategic airlifters delivering bulk logistics or coordinating rotary-wing air medical evacuation hubs, the AME ensures that forward landing grounds remain safe, efficient and survivable.

An Elevated Role for the Army of 2030

Under the legacy construct, ATS was frequently viewed as an internal CAB asset with limited utility beyond the airfield fence line. Under the AOC organizational design, the unit's mission is fundamentally elevated to a theater- and corps-level enabler.

By revitalizing tactical radar and mobile tower maintenance, transforming 15Q controllers into multi-domain airspace integrators, and embedding dedicated airfield management capabilities, the 164th TAOG is ensuring Army Aviation remains agile and survivable.

Change is challenging, resource-intensive and demanding of culture. But as the 164th TAOG demonstrates, leaning aggressively into transformation is the only sure safeguard against battlefield irrelevance. The modern AOC stands ready not merely to keep aircraft flying, but to clear the skies for multidomain victory.

COL Richard Polen is the commander of the Air Traffic Services Command and the 164th TAOG located at Fort Rucker, AL.

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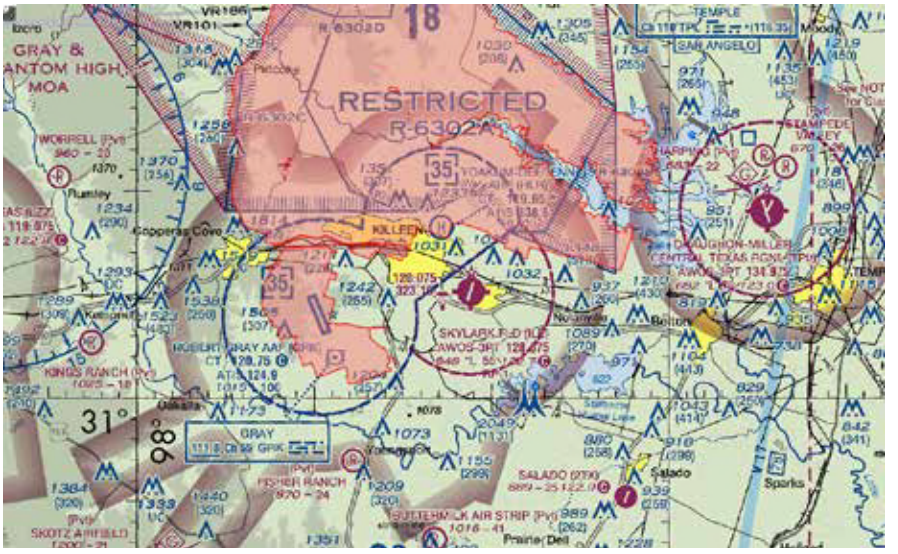
Airspace Access Reform and The Future

By CW4 Michael D. Simans Sr.



The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center, National Guard Bureau and XVIII Airborne Corps all have national COAs that authorize operations of sUAS. Those maps can be found at (https://faa.maps.arcgis.com/).

Your unit is deployed on the front lines of a multi-domain, high-intensity conflict. Overhead, long-range loitering munitions stand ready to deliver precise, on-demand indirect fire support. Autonomous drone swarms flank enemy defensive lines, providing real-time intelligence on enemy movements while executing close combat attacks on their fortified positions. Simultaneously, your tactical teams utilize First-Person View attrition drones to suppress and neutralize concealed enemy infantry.

This would only be possible if your Soldiers are highly trained, equipped with the latest weaponry and fully proficient with cutting-edge unmanned technologies. This article examines ongoing efforts as the Army transitions this vision from a future concept to a present-day reality. Specifically, it highlights how the United States Army Aeronautical Services Agency (USAASA) is leading the way to reform access to the National Airspace System (NAS) and explore modern digital tools to facilitate realistic, routine Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) training for the warfighter. These efforts are amplified throughout the Department of War (DoW) via USAASA's role as the Chair for the Policy Board on Federal Aviation (PBFA) UAS Subgroup.

Today, if a unit wants to operate UAS within the NAS, it requires either a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Certificate of Authorization (COA) or an Army Airspace Access Authorization (AAA) which is approved by the USAASA Commander (in DoW Delegated or Class G airspace). The exception to this process is for operations within a Restricted Area; which does not require an authorization. Restricted airspace remains the most permissive environment for operating Army UAS. Hazardous and weaponized UAS operations can only be conducted in active restricted airspace.

In its current form, this process is demand-driven and initiated by individual unit commands. While this deliberate pipeline is manageable during steady-state and predictable training cycles, it must increasingly respond to rapid operational deployments, urgent, short-notice training requirements or potential natural disasters, i.e. hurricanes, floods and wildfires.

Presidential Executive Order (EO) 14307, "Unleashing American Drone Dominance," was issued to solidify the nation's leadership in unmanned aviation. The EO directs the FAA to establish updated regulatory frameworks that allow for routine, advanced drone operations. For the military, it accelerates the fielding of UAS to the warfighter and mandates simplified airspace access to facilitate tactical training.

Following this EO, the Secretary of War (SECWAR) issued a directive titled "Unleashing U.S. Military Drone Dominance," This directive established a clear mandate:

- Eliminate self-imposed administrative and bureaucratic restrictions.
- Accelerate realistic, high-tempo "drone warfare" training across all echelons.
- Ensure combat formations possess the lethal, unmanned tools required to win the next fight.
- Commanders will be graded on how

Lower photo: Members of the USAASA Headquarters and FAA Department of the Army Representatives gather with Air Traffic and Airspace Officers from across the globe on August 12, 2026 at Fort Belvoir, VA, to coordinate efforts increasing airspace access to Army commanders.



U.S. ARMY PHOTO

effectively they utilize the airspace above their installations, including Restricted Airspace.

In response to these directives, USAASA, PBFA and the FAA are actively implementing policy reforms to simplify flight authorizations within the NAS, such as updating the Memorandum of Understanding between the DoW and FAA for UAS Operations in the NAS. The fourth edition of the MOU is in final FAA staffing and will increase the length of an AAA from two years to four; allow for the DoW to approve UAS weighing up to 1,320 lbs. to operate in Class G airspace; and delegate authority to the Army to approve waivers for artificial "see and avoid" systems enabling UAS Beyond Visual Line of Sight operations within DoW delegated airspace.

USAASA has proposed to issue installation-wide AAAs to the Senior Mission Commander of many installations. This would shift the process from demand-driven to an agile, commander-empowered process. When approved, this will alleviate a unit's requirement to request most AAAs and allow for a locally managed process at each installation. This will allow installations an increased flexibility to operate small UAS (sUAS) within its boundaries.

The National File and Fly Certificate of Authorization program establishes standardized operational requirements for military UAS to operate between departure and destination locations of their choosing within Class A airspace by simply filing a flight plan. Previously, units operating at this high altitude had to secure individual, route-specific COAs for every unique flight profile.

USAASA has worked closely with the FAA to develop increasingly broad COAs to support Army training and operations. The Army Corps of Engineers, Army Combat Readiness Center, National Guard Bureau and XVIII Airborne Corps all have national COAs that authorize operations of sUAS weighing less than 55 lbs. at or below 400 feet AGL and in civil controlled Class B, C, D or E airspace in accordance with published UAS Facility Maps (UASFM). UASFMs can be found at (https://faa.maps.arcgis.com/). Each of these organizations developed detailed implementation guidance to ensure subordinate units operate in compliance with their issued COAs. These flexible examples are available for commanders to enable airspace access and train towards the SECWAR's directives.

Under standard FAA regulations (14 CFR § 91.113), pilots are required to maintain a continuous visual watch to "see and avoid" other aircraft. This is accomplished by UAS operators, visual observers, chase aircraft, ground-based sense and avoid (GBSAA) and other emerging technology. The Army has attained FAA approval for two waivers and COA requests for Beyond Visual Line of Sight operations in Class E airspace for training and supporting Southern Border operations.

These waivers leverage a highly capable and already validated "see and avoid" technological systems called Air and Marine Operations Surveillance System (AMOSS). AMOSS is a web-based surveillance and tracking platform that integrates military, civilian and border-security radar feeds into a single, comprehensive Common Operational Picture. By providing "see and avoid" capability, AMOSS allows UAS operators to monitor surrounding air traffic, receive automated proximity advisories and identify potential conflicts early. It is in use today along the Southern Border and USAASA is actively supporting additional AMOSS use cases across the NAS.

Thanks to these ongoing policy updates, regulatory reforms and technological improvements, the Army's goal of "training as we fight" is closer than ever. By streamlining FAA COA and AAA approvals, administrative and operational requirements have been reduced. By capitalizing on broad, flexible authorizations — such as the CRC, NGB, USACE and XVIII Corps' nationwide COAs — commanders can conduct UAS operations directly from their home stations, even in the absence of dedicated, active restricted airspace. Combined with tools like GBSAA and AMOSS, the Army can establish repeatable, safe and highly agile training to support routine UAS operations within the NAS.

Airspace access reform is not merely an administrative improvement; it is a critical enabler of modern military lethality. These initiatives ensure that commanders have access to the airspace they need, allowing them to build and sustain highly trained, modernized, lethal combat formations ready to deploy, fight and win our nation's wars.

CW4 Michael D. Sirmans Sr. is an Air Traffic Airspace Management Technician, USAASA at Fort Belvoir, VA.



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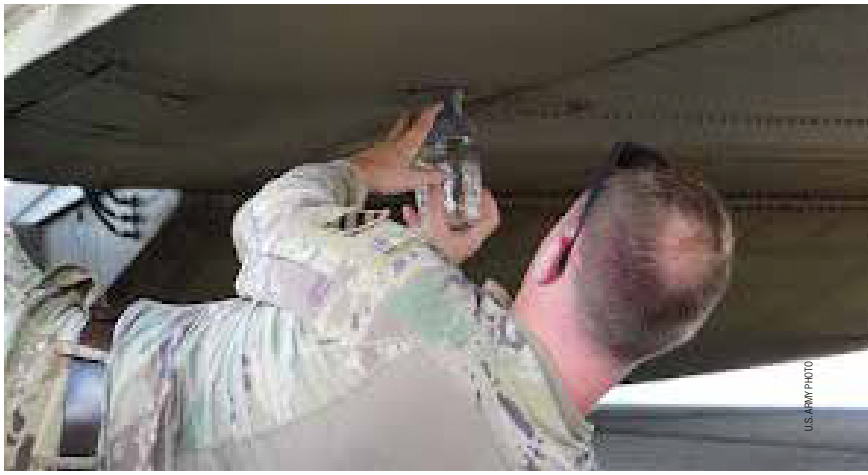
CH-FIST: A Safer Approach to CH-47 Fuel Inspections

How the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade innovation turned a recurring maintenance hazard into a standardized field solution

By CPT Lydia V. Laga and SPC Mikeal Wiley





U.S. ARMY PHOTO

Above Left: CH-FIST provides a safer approach to a routine CH-47 maintenance task.
Above right: A Soldier demonstrates how to use the CH-FIST.

In Army aviation, the most consequential improvements are not always the largest. Sometimes they begin with a recurring maintenance problem, a maintainer looking for a safer way to do the job and an innovation center with the tools to turn an idea into a working solution.

That is the story behind the Chinook Fuel Inspection Safety Tool, or CH-FIST, developed by the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade's Innovation Center at Hunter Army Airfield, Georgia. The tool addresses a persistent hazard associated with fuel sampling on the CH-47 Chinook: obtaining a sample from the aircraft's spring-loaded fuel valve without exposing maintainers to unnecessary JP-8 fuel spills.

The result is a small, purpose-built tool designed to improve safety, standardize the inspection process and demonstrate how additive manufacturing can move an idea from a maintenance problem to a field-ready solution in a matter of days rather than months.

Fuel sampling is a required part of CH-47 preflight inspections. The sample allows maintainers to check for contaminants that could affect aircraft performance and mission readiness.

The challenge is the Chinook's fuel sampling valve. Unlike pull valves on other aircraft that can connect directly to sampling equipment, the CH-47 valve must be manually activated by pushing it upward and turning it clockwise. Fuel is then released into a nonreactive glass sampling jar. The simplest workaround has been to use a screwdriver to actuate the valve while holding the sampling jar in place. That approach can result in fuel spilling onto the ground or the maintainer. In addition to creating a cleanup requirement, spills expose personnel to JP-8 and introduce an avoidable environmental and safety concern.

Units have developed homemade solutions to address the problem, but those tools have not been standardized. Some are bulky, require two hands or are difficult to use. Designs can vary from one unit to another, even within the same airfield.

For maintainers, the problem was straightforward: The task was necessary, but the available method was not designed specifically for the job.

The CH-FIST effort began with four basic requirements: The tool had to be cost-effective, easy to use, safe and easy to manufacture.

Spc. Mikeal L. Wiley and Sgt. Ashton L. Behrendsen, working with the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade Innovation Center, used additive manufacturing to develop and test successive designs. The availability of 3D printing allowed the team to identify weaknesses, incorporate feedback and produce new iterations quickly.

The process also benefited from lessons learned from an earlier project that had stalled because of excessive complexity. Initial CH-FIST prototypes were printed using polylactic acid, or PLA, and were intended to collect and contain the fuel sample. Those designs proved cumbersome and remained susceptible to spills.

Feedback from subject matter experts led the team to change direction. A subsequent design used a funnel to surround the fuel valve and incorporated a flat-head screwdriver bit as the valve activator. The funnel could be attached to the standard glass jars already used for fuel inspections, reducing the need for a completely new sampling system.

The next challenge was durability.

Early versions incorporated the tool

head into the printed assembly. Under load, the tool head could snap, while sharp edges made the device less ergonomic. The team responded by separating and reinforcing the tool head and testing different materials, including PLA, PLA reinforced with carbon fiber and Nylon-12.

Additional design changes included keyways to prevent slippage and knurling to improve grip. The funnel eventually moved to Nylon-12, a material selected for its strength and chemical resistance in humid, high-temperature environments.

The tool head evolved into two welded pieces of 1/8-inch 304 stainless steel. That construction provided the strength needed to work stubborn valves without the tool failing. The funnel lip was expanded to help capture fuel affected by wind, while the throat was thickened so channel-lock pliers could be used if the funnel needed to be removed.

The gasket also underwent testing. Neoprene, thermoplastic polyurethane, polycyclohexylenedimethylene terephthalate glycol-modified and GMS materials were subjected to 30-day JP-8 submersion tests. Neoprene ultimately was selected for the final design because it provided the necessary endurance and leak prevention. Initial discoloration was traced to adhesive residue rather than degradation of the gasket material.

The final tool includes batch numbering and the Innovation Center logo to support long-term tracking. Limited production of 24 units is underway for 2nd-3rd General Support Aviation Battalion.

Testing provided another critical step in the development process. The team conducted drop tests from 5 to 20 feet to evaluate the performance of the printed materials. Nylon-12 outperformed PLA and PLA-carbon fiber, with no failures at the maximum test height.

Shock testing simulated rough handling by repeatedly throwing the tools against concrete. Nylon-12 survived 20 impacts without failure, while other materials fractured along print lines. A hand-strength crush test using channel-lock pliers produced only superficial marks.

The testing was conducted in non-climate-controlled conditions with high humidity, providing a practical assessment of how the tool could perform in the types of environmental conditions aviation maintainers routinely encounter.

The testing did more than validate the design. It demonstrated the value of rapid prototyping. Instead of committing to a single design and waiting for a traditional manufacturing cycle, the team could identify a weakness, modify the design and test the next version quickly.

The operational value of CH-FIST extends beyond the tool itself. By helping contain fuel during the sampling process, the design is intended to reduce spills and limit maintainer exposure to JP-8. Fewer spills also mean less ground contamination and less time spent addressing cleanup requirements. Standardization provides another benefit: Maintainers across units can use the same basic tool and process rather than relying on locally fabricated alternatives.

That consistency can simplify training and improve familiarity for maintainers who move between units. For an aviation brigade that must remain prepared to deploy, having reliable and interchangeable equipment is particularly important.

The effort also illustrates the potential of additive manufacturing as an Army modernization tool. The Army has increasingly emphasized the ability to produce quick parts and other low-cost items closer to the point of need. The CH-FIST demonstrates that concept at the tactical level: A recurring maintenance problem can be identified, a design can be developed locally and the resulting tool can be tested without waiting for a lengthy traditional manufacturing process.

The broader lesson is not limited to fuel sampling. The same approach can be applied to other aviation maintenance challenges in which a specialized tool, jig or protective component is needed but is not readily available through traditional supply channels. Accessible 3D printing gives Soldiers and maintainers another means of developing, testing and refining solutions based on actual experience on the hangar floor.

For the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, CH-FIST began as a practical response to a specific maintenance problem. Its development shows what can happen when Soldiers are given the ability to experiment, test and improve an idea. The finished product is relatively small. Its implications are larger.

CH-FIST provides a safer and more standardized approach to a routine CH-47 maintenance task while demonstrating how grassroots innovation can support Army modernization. More important, it reinforces a simple principle: The people closest to a problem are often in the best position to identify the solution.

CPT Lydia V. Laga is the public affairs officer for the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division. SPC Mikeal Wiley is a 15E, Unmanned Aircraft System Repairer, assigned to Fox Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade. Both are at Hunter Army Airfield, GA.

Keeping Pace *Continued from page 62*

Navigation and Approach: Divesting FBPAR and Legacy ILS

While focusing modernization resources on surveillance, automation, and communications, A3S FBATC is implementing targeted divestment across legacy terminal navigational aids. FBATC will phase divestment of aging Fixed Base Precision Approach Radar (FBPAR) units and legacy Instrument Landing Systems (ILS).

Maintaining legacy FBPAR systems has become a costly challenge, worsened by a shrinking pool of vendor support. With a phased-divestment of the legacy ILS and expensive FBPAR systems, the Army can manage vital resources while ensuring aircrews retain safe precision-approach capabilities. The A3S Product Office is replacing legacy MARK-20A ILS and decommissioned FBPAR systems with over 25 modern Thales ILS-420 systems over the next decade.

Sustaining Ready and Interoperable Airspace

The FAA's $12.5 billion BNATCS investment signals an enduring transformation in American aerospace. By modernizing three core pillars: deploying ASR-XM radars, transitioning to digital flight strips across DAAS automation, and fielding ED-137 compliant VoIP via NEXTGEN V3, the Army is aggressively keeping pace. Through the planned divestment of obsolete FBPAR and ILS systems, A3S FBATC is modernizing and keeping Army airfields equipped for future operations. This coordinated modernization safeguards aviation assets and eliminates operational friction, ensuring long-term civil-military interoperability across a rapidly evolving National Airspace System.

LTC Micheal J. Monfreda is the Product Manager for the Assured Airspace Access Systems Product Office in the Aviation Mission Systems and Architecture Project Office, located at Redstone Arsenal, AL.

Drone Gym: Organizational Solutions to the Tech Skill Acquisition Gap

By LTC Michael Wood, Chris Aura, Leonard Temme and Bethany Ranes

BLUF: This article proposes the establishment of "Drone Gyms" within existing Morale, Wellness, and Recreation (MWR) facilities to serve as a force multiplier for developing critical small Unmanned Aircraft System (sUAS) operator skills. By leveraging the motivational structures inherent in gaming, we can directly address the primary limiters to drone skill acquisition — operator inexperience, cybersickness and opportunity. This initiative directly supports the mandate of the *Drone Dominance* memo1 by creating a culture of technological fitness, paralleling the Army's long-standing success in promoting physical fitness, thereby growing the cognitive capital required for battlefield dominance against peer competitors.



U.S. Army Soldiers assigned to Fox Company, 4th Battalion, 2nd Aviation Regiment, 2nd Combat Aviation Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division/ROK–U.S. Combined Division, conduct drone reconnaissance.

Maintaining Military Dominance

Maintaining military dominance over peer competitors, like China, U.S. forces must field an agile, adaptive, and technologically dominant military force. This superiority depends upon more than dominant hard-and software, but on the innovative competencies of its operators, as highlighted in the Secretary of War's Unleashing U.S. Military Drone Dominance memo. The central challenges are therefore maturing technological skills while maximizing operator performance across the force at the same speed that technological innovation evolves.

A clear gap emerges when we compare our approach to tech skills with our well-established culture of physical fitness. The Army's physical fitness program is structured on high standards set by the Army Fitness Test (AFT). These standards establish cultural expectations enabled by MWR gyms, making them a key part of the maturation of high physical performance standards and can represent how facilities contribute to cultural reinforcement.

High expectations placed on operators can also influence skill development for technological competence. For example, the Army culture of physical fitness is well established; MWR gyms are very popular, in part, because they help operators meet the high expectations tested on the AFT. In contrast, the future warfighter must be technologically fit, but the hard- and software, cultural expectations and facilities to mature operators are less formalized, revealing a noticeable capability gap influencing operator performance. For instance, drone school instructors often request more time to ensure their students achieve flight capabilities. Instructors also report that students with prior gaming experience learn faster and reach higher levels of proficiency, indicating that informal gaming may enhance skill acquisition and technological competence.

MWR as a Force Multiplier

MWR facilities can service the maturation of drone skill acquisition by addressing formalizing a culture of tech dominance, providing technical equipment to expose and enhance drone flight skills and enabling Soldiers with the opportunity to use and adapt to equipment. Each of these limitations can be indirectly addressed through Army systems like MWR.

MWR centers are primarily designed to support physical readiness. These facilities are clearly aligned with a military culture that praises and rewards physical fitness and provides gyms to support physical improvement. However, the physical capability matured in MWR facilities is insufficient for future battlefield tech capabilities.

Organizational mechanisms to motivate performance are a function of cultural shaping designed to set expectations and align corresponding awards. For example, the Best Ranger competition represents the pinnacle of Army physical fitness, which is highly awarded throughout the community and supported by MWR facilities. The cultural shaping to motivate tech dominance is emerging with the Drone Crucible Competition2, but no military facilities exist to enable drone skill improve-

ments. Because sUAS drone operational skills are highly aligned with gaming skills, scientific literature demonstrates that playing video games does advance sUAS drone operator skills3.

In addition to skill acquisition and improved technological fitness, regular "reps" with sUAS technologies can help mitigate issues related to cybersickness3,4. Like pilots of other airframes, motion sickness arises at different levels of exposure to provocative environments. However, systematic exposure to those provocative environments can enable the development of motion sickness tolerance thereby inoculating operators and elevating performance. Thus, MWR drone gym gaming rooms could also allow users to gradually increase the level of provocative experiences to develop tolerance and help sUAS drone operators more organically acquire compensatory strategies to increase operational longevity and lethality.

Cultural shaping establishes high expectations of drone operational performance; enabling access to sUAS drone machinery, like 3D spatial navigation, and having high frequency access to gaming devices, could easily be enabled through MWR facilities.

Drone Gyms represent a term that is easily associated with current expectations of technological capability. Yet, as technological capabilities rapidly mature, MWR facilities should be adept at recognizing and adjusting toward future tech skill requirements to enable warfighter dominance.

Conclusion

The establishment of Drone Gyms within existing MWR facilities will serve as a force multiplier for developing critical sUAS operator skills. By leveraging the motivational structures inherent in gaming, providing opportunities to improve technological fitness 3D spatial navigation and providing provocation-based training to reduce cybersickness susceptibility, we can directly address the primary limiters to drone skill acquisition: operator inexperience, cybersickness and opportunity. This initiative directly supports the mandate of the *Drone Dominance* memo by paralleling the Army's long-standing success in promoting physical fitness and leveraging Soldiers' personal motivations to improve themselves, thereby growing the intellectual capital available to adopt and adapt to these new technologies for battlefield dominance against peer competitors.

End Notes

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LTC Michael Wood is a Research Psychologist, Chris Aura, Leonard Temme and Bethany Ranes are Civilian Research Scientists; all are at the U.S. Army Aeromedical Research Lab, Fort Rucker, AL.

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CW5 Timothy J. Woznica
82d Combat Aviation Brigade
Fort Bragg, North Carolina

Chief Warrant Officer Five Timothy Woznica made a profound and enduring impact on Army Aviation through his exceptional contributions to Aircraft Survivability Equipment as the Brigade Aviation Mission Survivability Officer for the 82d Combat Aviation Brigade. CW5 Woznica led the Brigade's survivability program spanning more than 79 rotary-wing and eight unmanned aircraft across four battalions, transforming survivability into an integrated warfighting capability. He delivered more than 1,200 hours of ASE training, improving aircrew proficiency and measurably reducing threat-reaction times within the Brigade's most junior formation in two decades. CW5 Woznica also overhauled the Brigade's ASE management process through a digitized, real-time tracking system that improved visibility of system status and reduced non-mission-capable rates. His technical leadership was instrumental in fielding an advanced countermeasure suite, making the Brigade the first Combat Aviation Brigade to field the capability, and he coordinated Common Infrared Countermeasure integration across CH-47 Chinook and UH-60 Black Hawk platforms while advancing integration on the AH-64 Apache Version 6. His efforts directly supported the Brigade's deployment for Operation Epic Fury, where aircrews operated in highly contested, threat-dense airspace. Over the past year, the Brigade flew more than 17,000 hours with zero combat-related fatalities while sustaining its highest mission-capability levels in Brigade history. CW5 Woznica's performance has been exemplary, making him the only choice for the 2026 Army Aviation Association of America Aircraft Survivability Equipment Award.

2026 CW3 Christopher M. Allgaier Aviation Mission Survivability Officer Award

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CW2 Joshua J. Haushalter
Company A, 1st Battalion,
82nd Aviation Regiment
82nd Combat Aviation Brigade
82nd Airborne Division Fort Bragg,
North Carolina

Chief Warrant Officer Two Joshua Haushalter distinguished himself through exceptional technical expertise, innovative leadership, and commitment to aviation mission survivability as the Aviation Mission Survivability Officer for Alpha Company, 1st Attack Battalion, 82nd Aviation Regiment, 82d Combat Aviation Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division. CW2 Haushalter delivered more than 75 hours of instruction and certified over 50 pilots on tactical systems and threat mitigation. He spearheaded Link 16 mission planning during two Scarlett Dragon exercises, validating Corps-level connectivity for the AH-64E Version 6 and establishing a joint network linking Apache aircraft with USMC Stinger Teams, Army Air Defense, Signal nodes, and USAF BACN assets. He also led Counter-UAS and Link 16 interoperability training for 12 aircrews. During Operation Epic Fury, CW2 Haushalter was the first AMSO on the ground, rapidly analyzing threats, developing survivable routes, and reducing the transition-to-flight window to four days. His planning enabled 1,600 combat flight hours during a 70-day operation. He flew more than 95 combat hours, supported deep-attack missions with maximum standoff, cued the rescue of two downed aviators, and trained more than 40 aviators on a newly fielded ASE countermeasures suite. CW2 Haushalter's technical mastery, mentorship, innovation, and combat leadership exemplify the highest standards of aviation mission survivability and make him exceptionally deserving of the 2026 CW3 Christopher M. Allgaier Aviation Mission Survivability Officers Award.

2026 Avionics Award

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SSG James M. Kibler
Delta Company, 4th Battalion,
160th Special Operations Aviation
Regiment (Airborne)
Joint Base Lewis-McChord,
Washington

Staff Sergeant James M. Kibler has made a lasting impact on Army Aviation through his outstanding expertise, leadership, and dedication as an Avionics Line Supervisor for Delta Company, 4th Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne). As a Section Sergeant, Technical Inspector, and Fully Mission Qualified Avionics Mechanic on the MH-47G Chinook and MH-60M Black Hawk, SSG Kibler spearheaded the reconstruction of the Aviation Maintenance Training Program, refining more than 100 legacy tasks into a task list that accelerated mechanic progression across the airframes. He developed and led Downed Aircraft Recovery Team training for 265 Soldiers and became the subject matter expert for integrating AN/PRC-160(V), AN/PRC-163, and AN/PRC-167 radios. He was the first mechanic in the 4th Battalion to integrate the Eclypse Automatic Wire Test Set into Preventive Maintenance Inspections, reducing erroneous FADEC faults. During an Emergency Deployment Readiness Exercise, he led mechanics in outfitting six MH-47G Chinooks in under 48 hours, corrected 14 grounding conditions, and enabled their launch. During a 4,000-mile over-water self-deployment, he corrected critical avionics faults and enabled Next Generation Tactical Communications adaptation in austere conditions. His expertise contributed to over 800 work orders, 2,200 maintenance man-hours, and more than 4,200 flight hours. SSG Kibler's performance has been exemplary, making him the only choice for the 2026 Army Aviation Association of America Avionics Award.

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CW2 Calen L. Arrowood

82nd Combat Aviation Brigade
Fort Bragg, North Carolina

CW2 Calen L. Arrowood distinguished himself through exceptional technical expertise, decisive logistics leadership, and operational foresight during Operation Epic Fury, an expeditionary deployment executed amid heightened instability across the CENTCOM Area of Responsibility. Serving in a CW5 level Aviation Materiel Officer billet, he provided enterprise-level sustainment oversight for 79 aircraft and enabled aviation readiness supporting deterrence operations amid increasing Iranian aggression and regional tension. As part of the first aviation organization to deploy into theater for Operation Epic Fury, CW2 Arrowood established the expeditionary architecture critical to circulating Class IX Air repair parts across the operational environment. He built the distribution network, established the Forward Issue and Turn In Point, and engineered the processes that sustained three aviation task forces simultaneously, setting the theater standard for aviation materiel flow. Ahead of deployment, he anticipated critical sustainment gaps and assembled a $20M deployable parts package that sustained a thirty-two aircraft Aviation Task Force for more than sixty days of operations. While deployed, he directed the turn in of $3.6M in unserviceable Class IX parts and an additional $10.4M in the first ninety days, improving accountability and accelerating the repair cycle forward to enhance support for deterrence missions. CW2 Arrowood's technical mastery, strategic vision, and decisive impact on expeditionary aviation sustainment make him deserving of the 2026 Army Aviation Association of America Logistics Technician of the Year Award.

2026 Outstanding Logistics Support Unit of the Year

Sponsored by AAAA



Commander: LTC Cole A. Spitzack | *Senior Warrant: CW5 Todd A. Misurelli* | *Senior NCO: CSM Joseph D. Reed*

404th Aviation Support Battalion

4th Combat Aviation Brigade
4th Infantry Division,
Fort Carson, Colorado

The 404th Aviation Support Battalion distinguished itself through aviation sustainment, combat recovery, and logistical innovation during the 2025–2026 award period. Deployed across 13 locations in five countries throughout CENTCOM, the battalion sustained the 4th Combat Aviation Brigade under persistent Theater Ballistic Missile and One-Way Attack Unmanned Aircraft System threats during Major Combat Operations. During Operation Saker Dust Devil, 130 Providers infiltrated a high-threat area to recover combat power left behind during a displacement. Operating under attack, Bravo Company returned eight battle-damaged helicopters to flyable status within seven days and executed a 60-kilometer cross-desert tow of a damaged CH-47F using a tractor. The battalion recovered 14 combat aircraft and 282 pieces of rolling stock, preserving more than $420 million in combat power with zero injuries. The battalion expanded theater access by establishing the Port of Aqaba as an alternate aviation port of debarkation and employing Expeditionary Forward Arming and Refueling Points that extended AH-64D engagement ranges. During personnel recovery, Alpha Company established a hasty E-FARP and serviced eight MH-47G aircraft, enabling recovery of a downed F-15 pilot. Across the deployment, the maintenance enterprise delivered more than 245,000 aircraft maintenance hours, completed 31 Phase Maintenance Inspections, and executed 10 Downed Aircraft Recovery Team missions. The accomplishments of the 404th ASB identify them as the 2026 AAAA Outstanding Logistics Support unit of the year.



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2026 Army Aviation Materiel Readiness Award For a Contribution by an Individual

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Mr. Joe Walker

DigiFlight, Inc.
Columbia, Maryland

Mr. Joe Walker made a contribution to Army Aviation materiel readiness through technical expertise, innovation, and unwavering commitment to combat-ready Apache forces. As DigiFlight's principal technical Subject Matter Expert supporting the PM Apache Program Office through the Aviator New Equipment Training Team, Mr. Walker became a trusted authority for resolving complex software, navigation, communications, and training challenges affecting the AH-64E fleet. During the fleet-wide Embedded GPS/Inertial Navigation rollover event, he analyzed a failure that degraded Link-16, Blue Force Tracker, secure communications, and automated maintenance reporting, then developed, validated, and documented a recovery procedure that became the standard across the Apache enterprise. His solution enabled the 1-82 Attack Helicopter Battalion to deploy to CENTCOM with fully mission-capable aircraft while preserving fleet readiness. Mr. Walker also pioneered a low-cost ADS-B In capability using existing Link-16 architecture, provided Army-wide technical leadership for Link-16 integration, supported AH-64E V6.5 modernization, and developed reusable planning and training tools for Army and Foreign Military Sales programs. His technical leadership during New Equipment Fieldings and Apache operations further accelerated modernization while protecting availability. Through innovative problem-solving, enduring technical solutions, and steadfast dedication to Soldiers, Mr. Walker significantly strengthened AH-64E materiel readiness. His performance has been exemplary, making him the only choice for the 2026 Army Aviation Association of America Materiel Readiness Award for a Contribution by an Individual Member of Industry.

2026 Army Aviation Materiel Readiness Award For Contributions By A Small Business

Sponsored by AAAA



Aerial Machine & Tool Corporation

Meadows of Dan, Virginia

Aerial Machine & Tool Corporation has made an outstanding contribution to Army Aviation materiel readiness through the accelerated production and delivery of Aircrew Combat Equipment and survivability products. During the 2025–2026 award period, Aerial delivered more than 3,500 ACE ensembles to the U.S. Army, more than 500 days ahead of the contractual delivery schedule. These integrated systems provide critical capabilities for aircrew safety, mission endurance, equipment carriage, emergency egress, flotation, and survivability across rotary-wing operations. Aerial achieved this result through disciplined program management, close coordination with Product Manager Air Warrior, rigorous AS9100 quality controls, proactive supplier management, and an agile manufacturing workforce committed to the Army mission. The company sustained program reviews, resolved production and supply-chain risks, and maintained configuration, quality, and operational reliability while accelerating delivery. Aerial strengthened Army Aviation readiness by continuing to provide emergency breathing systems, refill and sustainment equipment, flotation products, aircrew restraints and harnesses, survival vests, and other Aviation Life Support Equipment. Through investment in production, testing, engineering, and sustainment capacity, Aerial strengthened the aviation life-support industrial base and positioned itself to respond to requirements. Its performance reduced readiness risk, increased equipment availability, and placed lifesaving equipment into the hands of Soldiers well before required. Aerial Machine & Tool Corporation's exceptional performance merits the Army Aviation Association of America's Materiel Readiness Award for a Contribution by a Small Business Organization.

2026 Army Aviation Materiel Readiness Award For Contributions By An Industry Team

Sponsored by AAAA



Pinnacle Solutions

UAS Instruction and Mission Support Team
Fort Huachuca, Arizona

Pinnacle Solutions' UAS Instruction and Mission Support Team at Ft. Huachuca distinguished itself through exceptional aviation materiel readiness and logistics support during a period of extraordinary growth in the Army UAS training mission. From August 2025 through July 2026, student throughput increased from approximately 200 to 750 and supported platforms grew from 18 to 37, yet the team sustained a 94–95% Operational Readiness rate with zero mission failures. The Pinnacle team delivered 1,941 of 1,941 requested sUAS with zero missed missions due to maintenance, completed more than 2,859 maintenance and smart charge actions, and maintained uninterrupted training operations across an expanding fleet. The team also partnered with PM UAS to develop and validate the GCSS-A sustainment framework for the RQ-28B program of record, supporting delivery of nearly 30 sUAS to the 2-13th Aviation Regiment and establishing a repeatable logistics model for the Army's future sUAS fleet. When growth challenged the legacy support model, Pinnacle Solutions expanded to two-shift roving logistics operations, reducing the transportation burden on Soldiers by 35%. Through disciplined maintenance, responsive logistics, rigorous quality controls, and mission-focused adaptability, the team protected critical readiness while increasing training capacity and strengthening long-term sustainment. Pinnacle Solutions' UAS Instruction and Mission Support Team at Ft. Huachuca's exceptional performance merits the Army Aviation Association of America's Materiel Readiness Award for a Contribution by an Industry Team, Group, or Special Unit.

Army Aviation Association of America
2026 National Functional Award Winners

2026 Army Aviation Materiel Readiness Award For Contributions By A Major Contractor

Sponsored by AAAA



Amentum
Chanitlly, Virginia

Amentum distinguished itself through exceptional aviation maintenance, logistics support, and unwavering commitment to Army Aviation readiness. Supporting approximately 75 percent of the Army's helicopter and fixed-wing fleets across more than 130 locations, Amentum's 2,100 aviation professionals consistently delivered mission-focused support in demanding environments worldwide. Over the past year, Amentum's Aviation Field Maintenance–East team completed 46 aircraft RESET/OCSM/ASER heavy maintenance inspections with a 100 percent quality score, 166 phase inspections with a 99 percent mission success rate, and 754 Modification Work Orders while executing more than $200 million with zero cost overruns. The Aviation Field Maintenance–West team completed 105 aircraft phases, saving more than $4 million, while its 540 Modification Work Orders saved an additional $300,000 in projected labor costs. Amentum also sustained the Army's 159-aircraft fixed-wing transport fleet at an 89 percent Mission Capable rate and completed 93 depot-level maintenance operations with 100 percent on-time delivery. These achievements directly strengthened aircraft availability, reduced costs, and enabled Soldiers to train, deploy, and redeploy with confidence. For its sustained excellence, innovation, and measurable contributions to Army Aviation readiness, Amentum is recognized with the Materiel Readiness Award for a Contribution by a Major Contractor.

2026 Unmanned Aircraft Systems Soldier of the Year Award

Sponsored by General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc.



SFC Christopher W. Thompson
Company F, 4th Aviation Regiment, Fort Carson, Colorado

SFC Christopher W. Thompson distinguished himself through technical expertise, combat leadership, and innovative tactics that advanced Army unmanned aircraft operations. Serving as Operations NCOIC and 2nd Flight Platoon Sergeant for Fox Company, 4th Aviation Regiment, Thompson led Soldiers through a deployment supporting Operation INHERENT RESOLVE, managing the tactical execution of 10,292 flight hours across 709 combat sorties. Drawing on more than 3,000 MQ-1C flight hours and his Master Gunner expertise, Thompson pioneered tactics to operate in a degraded, denied, interrupted, and limited electromagnetic environment. He partnered with SATCOM providers to defeat signal jamming, improved Mode 5 integration, and led his unit through more than 100 attacks while suffering zero losses to enemy engagement. He also identified critical logistics shortfalls, establishing a Gray Eagle parts flow and correcting MQ-1C technical procedures with fleet-wide implications. Thompson's leadership produced operational milestones. His Soldiers executed 27 Hellfire strikes and two remote engagements with AH-64 Apaches, while he personally flew more than 600 combat hours. He led the Task Force through its first autonomous engagement during Operation HAWKEYE STRIKE and served as Aircraft Commander for the theater's first MQ-1C Close Air Support strike during Operation EPIC FURY. His leadership established tactics and procedures supporting large-scale combat operations. SFC Christopher W. Thompson's service merits the Army Aviation Association of America's Unmanned Aircraft Systems Soldier of the Year Award.

2026 Unmanned Aircraft Systems Operations Technician of the Year Award

Sponsored by AAAA



CW2 Stephen S. Carey
Company F, 4th Aviation Regiment, Fort Carson, Colorado

CW2 Stephen S. Carey distinguished himself through operational leadership, combat expertise, and innovative employment of unmanned aircraft systems during a deployment to the CENTCOM Area of Responsibility. Serving initially as a Platoon Leader and then as the Operations Officer for Fox Company, 4th Aviation Regiment, Carey synchronized operations that enabled 10,292 flight hours across 709 combat sorties. His efforts transformed the Gray Eagle mission set from a traditional intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance platform into a lethal strike asset. He enabled 27 Hellfire strikes and two remote engagements with AH-64 Apache's while enabling the first Army UAS strike in Iran and MQ-1C support to the first Close Air Support strike of Operation EPIC FURY. As the theater's foremost UAS subject matter expert, Carey provided near-daily operational counsel to senior leaders, synchronized Joint Force missions, strengthened force protection, and ensured Gray Eagle parts flow without interruption. Carey was instrumental in the rapid development of tactics, techniques, and procedures that enabled operations in a severely degraded electromagnetic environment. He ensured that all Gray Eagle units within the CENTCOM AOR understood and could execute those TTPs, increasing operational output for multiple units within the region. For his exceptional leadership, combat innovation, and lasting impact on Army UAS operations, CW2 Stephen S. Carey merits the Army Aviation Association of America's Unmanned Aircraft Systems Operations Technician of the Year Award.

Army Aviation Association of America
2026 National Functional Award Winners

2026 Unmanned Aircraft Systems Unit of the Year Award

Sponsored by Textron Systems



Commander: Commander: CPT Daniel M. Voecks III *Senior WO: CW3 David J. Maxwell* *Senior NCO: 1SG Mykel J. Obert*

Fox Company, 4th Aviation Regiment

Fort Carson, Colorado

Fox Company, 4th Aviation Regiment distinguished itself through exceptional combat performance, innovation, and operational excellence as an MQ-1C Unmanned Aircraft Systems unit supporting operations across the CENTCOM Area of Responsibility. During deployment, the company flew more than 10,000 hours and executed over 750 sorties, delivering critical intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, close air support, and precision strike capabilities for joint and multinational forces. Operating in a complex threat environment, Fox Company rapidly developed and employed tactics, techniques, and procedures to counter adversarial jamming of aircraft command-and-control links, reducing jamming effectiveness from 100 percent to 35 percent. The unit also pioneered procedures for highly restricted and congested airspace, trained incoming MQ-1C crews, and coordinated multinational airfield operations while maintaining mission continuity and protecting coalition assets. Fox Company delivered decisive combat effects, including 27 Hellfire strikes and two remote strikes supporting AH-64 Apache operations. The company executed the first MQ-1C strike in Iran and enabled the first close air support strike of Operation EPIC FURY. Its operators also incorporated and validated Mode 5 identification friend-or-foe capabilities while identifying system flaws that led to fleet-wide improvements. Its performance strengthened force protection, mission reach, and effectiveness across the theater. For exceptional combat effectiveness, innovation, and enduring contributions to Army Aviation operations, Fox Company, 4th Aviation Regiment, is recognized with the Outstanding Unmanned Aircraft Systems Unit of the Year Award.

2026 Fixed Wing Unit of the Year Award

Sponsored by CAE USA



Commander: LTC Nicholas J. Norton *Senior WO: CW3 Joseph J. Strauf* *Senior NCO: MSG Matthew K. Krehbiel*

15th Military Intelligence Battalion (Aerial Exploitation)

Killeen, Texas

The 15th Military Intelligence Battalion (Aerial Exploitation) distinguished itself through exceptional fixed-wing aviation operations, global mission execution, and innovative intelligence collection during the award period. As the Army's premier multi-disciplined aerial intelligence collection organization, the battalion deployed more than 96 personnel across four Forward Aviation Detachments spanning the Middle East, Europe, and Pacific Asia while sustaining operations across four Geographic Combatant Commands. The battalion surpassed 16,350 flight hours while executing continuous missions in complex and austere environments. Its fixed-wing teams supported reconnaissance operations along contested borders, processed signals intelligence and moving target indicator data in real time aboard aircraft and delivered automated target alerts directly to forward tactical units, shortening the time between collection and action. Simultaneously, the battalion managed Contractor-Owned, Contractor-Operated ARTEMIS aerial collection operations for European missions and conducted three overseas HADES flight training events while transforming toward the ME-11B High Accuracy Detection and Exploitation System. This modernization laid the foundation for the Army's next-generation aerial exploitation capability without degrading combat commitments. Despite its demanding operational tempo, the battalion maintained zero Class A or B mishaps and zero aviation-related injuries while achieving an 88.4 percent fleet Operational Readiness rate. For exceptional operational excellence, innovation, safety, and sustained contributions to Army Aviation, the 15th Military Intelligence Battalion (Aerial Exploitation) is recognized with the AAAA Fixed Wing Unit of the Year Award.

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Part I: Drones

By Mark Albertson

Unmanned aerial vehicles or drones are hardly new. As an avid collector of movies from the Golden Age of Film, including productions from the Thrill Factory, references to drones certainly appear, especially with the 12 and 15 chapter serials. However, a good starting point is the Italian War for Independence: Venice, besieged by the Austrians, 1849.

Austrian artillery officer, General Franz von Uchatius, urged the use of Montgolfier-style paper gas bags to deliver ordnance.[1] Each of these unmanned aerial vehicles was armed with a 30-pound explosive charge.

With enough balloon-bombs, thought Uchatius, he could bomb the stubborn Italians into submission. Upwards of two hundred of the unguided, pilotless aircraft were released. The results were at best mixed. The lack of a guidance system impaired accuracy and control.

This meant that the balloon bombs were left to the mercy of the winds.

Some were carried back to Austrian lines; which one might suspect soured further Austrian enthusiasm for unmanned aerial vehicles.[2] The battlefield possibilities of unmanned weaponry advanced exponentially in 1895, with Guglielmo Marconi's radio transmitter and receiver.

Then there is Nikola Tesla. In 1898, New York City, before representatives of the press, Tesla flicked a switch on a small control box. The prop to a four-foot model of a patrol boat began to churn up the water. As the boat moved off, Tesla turned another switch and the boat veered to starboard. Obvious implications here.[3]

In 1913, Elmer Sperry together with his son, Lawrence, and with assistance from the Navy, developed an automatic gyrostabilizer. With same, Sperry was able to urge a Curtiss flying boat "to fly straight and level without input from the human pilot on board." [4]

The Great War bore witness to advances, albeit precarious advances, in unmanned aerial vehicles. In 1917, Charles F. Kettering, Dayton, Ohio, conjured an aerial torpedo, nicknamed the "Bug." "Launched from a four-wheeled dolly…down a portable track…pre-set pneumatic and electrical controls stabilized and guided it towards a target. After a predetermined length of time, a control closed the circuit, shut off the engine," and with the wings released, the Bug plunged earthward, setting off a 180-pound nose charge.[5] During the demonstration at Dayton, the Bug changed course and targeted a main grandstand of spectators, sending people scattering to all points around the compass.

Just before Charles Kettering was Briton Archibald Low, a brilliant engineer, inventor and later television trailblazer. His project was labelled, "Aerial Target," an aerial torpedo for use against U-boats and Zeppelins. Some consider Low the father of the modern drone.

Low's effect relied on advances made by Elmer Sperry. Yet just like Kettering, Low's test in March 1917 nearly took out some of the audience. Problem here, of course, was the lack of control leading to accuracy. And until this issue was solved, the drone could not be used as a viable weapon.



COURTESY PHOTO WIKIPEDIA

General Franz von Uchatius

Leading up to 1939, research continued on UAVs. The French achieved some success with a Voisin biplane, radio-controlled and in the air for fifty-one minutes. In 1923, another French success, with a two-seater Voisin type 10 bomber. Remotely piloted, it was designed and built by a pilot, Captain Max Boucher, and designer, Maurice Perchion.

At the Royal Aircraft Establishment in Britain, researchers developed the Queen Bee: a Tiger-Moth look-a-like with radio control equipment in the rear seat, with control connections extending to the rudder and elevator controls. Unlike the Tiger-Moth, Queen Bee's fuselage was of plywood and spruce; allowing buoyancy if the UAV had to ditch in the water.

William Standley, CNO, United States Navy, proved inquisitive, despite British reluctance to share such technology with the United States. Commander Delmer Fahrney was put in control of Navy efforts. Obsolescent aircraft such as the Curtiss N2C were converted into drones, to be controlled by pilots flying other aircraft against rival aerial targets. However, it was a Briton, Reginald Denny, who came to America as an actor in Hollywood, who entered the picture. A model aircraft enthusiast, he had, by 1935, added radio controls to his model airplanes. Before long, the U.S. Government came calling.

By 1937, Denny was developing radio-controlled aircraft for the Army. By 1939, Radio-Plane OQ-2 became the first production unmanned aerial vehicle. Followed, in turn, by Radio-Plane OQ-3. This version became the widely used target drone by the U.S. military in World War II, with more than 9,400 produced.

The United States Army Air Forces, too, used B-17s and B-24s as bomb-laden drones. Hauling upwards of 20,000 pounds of ordnance, these were used to target hardened U-boat pens and rocket sites. Initially, a pilot took off in the drone, then bailed out. But by the war's end, entire missions were being performed remotely.

Drone technology was jealously guarded during World War II. Yet as a collector of movies and serials from the Golden Age of Film, references can be found (especially with the serials) to death rays, remote controlled aircraft and even hints of atomic energy, in addition to a new medium, television. Yet, too, like atomic energy, the drone has evolved into not only a weapon that has become acceptable, but one that modern militaries can no longer do without.

Endnotes

[1] Joseph and Etienne Montgolfier resorted to hot air to raise their balloon, to which the bag was made of cotton and paper.
[2] Accounts as to the Austrian employment of balloon bombs at Venice vary, including the number of balloons used. One of the best accounts, per Brett Holman, is that of Lee Kennett, *A History of Strategic Bombing,* page 6, published by Charles Scribner's Sons, 1982. See Brett Holman, "The first air bomb: Venice, 15 July 1849," *Airminded: Airpower and British Society, 1908-1941 (mostly),* August 22, 2009.
[3] See pages 3 and 4, "The Secret History of Drones," by Mark Piesing, Smithsonian National Air & Space Museum, September 23, 2024.
[4] See page 5, "The Secret History of Drones."
[5] "Kettering Aerial Torpedo 'Bug,'" National Museum of the United States Air Force, www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/Visit/Museum-Exhibits/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/198095/kettering-aerial-torpedo-bug/.

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Mark Albertson is the award-winning Army Aviation Publications Historian and a contributing editor to ARMY AVIATION magazine.

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My 48 Feet of Airspace

By CW4 (Ret.) Dale House



UH-1s were the workhorse helicopters of Vietnam.

COURTESY PHOTO

Author's note *— Troop A, 7th Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment is in An Khe now (1969). We occupied the 1st Cav Hooch's on the hill overlooking the "Golf Course". It is not really a golf course. It is where the revetments and Camp Radcliff Army Airfield, An Khe, Gia Lai Province, Vietnam are located. All in the shadow of Hon Cong Mountain, An Khe, Vietnam. A lot is going to happen in my tour yet to come: The story below, upset training in an OH-6, the tragic loss of one of our own, lots of Area of Operations (AO), a move back to Pleiku, Vietnam, to Camp Holloway; all before I board the "Freedom Bird" in Cam Ranh Bay back to the USA on April 21, 1970.*

Danny Rackoff and I volunteered to extract a wounded Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol (LRRP) member that was located southeast of An Khe. Crew Chief SP4 Jerry Trembath and Gunner SP4 Ron Aaberg made up the remainder of the crew.

We used 66-16017, which was Richard Turnley's ship; my ship, 66-16016 ("The Sopwith Camel") was not available. The official Troop A, 7th Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment history has Richard Turnley listed as the Aircraft Commander for this mission. Richard Turnely doesn't remember this mission, because he didn't fly it. I was flying it, in his aircraft.

We had received an abbreviated briefing that a LRRP Patrol had an injured member and had requested a MEDEVAC. MEDEVAC was not immediately available, so the mission was deferred to our unit. We headed out with a gunship escort from the 119th Assault Helicopter Company, a latitude and longitude, and an FM frequency.

I'm not sure why we ended up with a gunship from another unit. It could have been because our unit was active in the AO that day and did not have any assets available except for a spare H model Huey. I found out later that it may have been Peter Daly flying the "Mike" model gun ship. It was coincidence that I ran into Pete at the Officer's club at Camp Holloway, Plieku, Vietnam, several months later. I didn't know Pete before that. We just happened to be in the Officer's club together at the same time that evening. While we were talking, I noticed a zippo lighter on the bar next to him with the 119th engraved on it, that's when we discovered that he may have been

my gun cover that day. We would later become good friends. (We ended up being stationed together in Germany.)

We arrived at the grid coordinates (at least in the ballpark). Radio contact was made with the LRRPs on the ground and they got us to the landing zone (LZ). No smoke because they said they had been in contact and did not want the extra company. The LRRP member had fallen into a bungee pit and was badly injured. The location was on the top of a ridge line. The LRRP team had cut an LZ for us but the bush was still too high and we couldn't land. In fact, we couldn't get any lower than about 8-10 feet. The rotors were already cutting some bamboo.

The LRRP was in a poncho liner stretcher with bamboo poles. The LRRP team wrapped rope around both ends of the stretcher and threw the rope ends up to Jerry and Ron. That took several tries because the rotorwash kept blowing the rope back before it reached the ship. Jerry and Ron finally got hold of the rope and began hoisting the makeshift stretcher up. When the stretcher reached the doorway of the ship, Jerry and Ron couldn't get the stretcher turned to get it in the aircraft. They said as much over the intercom. I asked if they could rest the stretcher on the skid and hold on until we could find a place to set down on the ground. They said they could, so off we went…Danny transmitted that we were coming out. Jerry and Ron tied the ropes to D rings in the floor to assist, but still had to hold on to the ropes so that the stretcher wouldn't bounce around in the slip stream.

During the time we were at a hover trying to recover the stretcher, we began receiving fire from another location on the ridge. I still remember the zing and popping sound of rounds that went through the cabin. Danny transmitted that we were receiving fire. I think the gun ship rolled in with suppressive fire. My attention was on getting the LRRP on board and getting the hell out of there. I was focused on "my 48 feet of airspace". (The rotor diameter of a UH1 is 48 feet, right?) When we got back to An Khe we looked the ship over and found one hit in the skid. My incredible luck held. That was the only hit during my entire tour.

We took off east/southeast from the ridge. As soon as we cleared the ridgeline, I noticed a small sand bar in a river about one thousand feet below. That became my target LZ, and we basically autorotated down to that sandbar. Jerry transmitted over the intercom, saying that he and Ron were having trouble hanging on to the stretcher. I remember saying "Hold On, we're almost there".

We landed on the sandbar which was attached to the riverbank by a small strand. There were foot prints in the sand, which concerned me. After we touched down, Jerry and Ron relaxed their grip on the ropes and lowered the stretcher to the ground and then jumped out of the aircraft so they could lift and turn the stretcher to get the that poor LRRP member in the aircraft. After they got the wounded LRRP into the cabin, Jerry and Ron jumped back in the aircraft and they both yelled "clear" at the same time into the mike. They must have noticed the footprints too. It took us about 20 seconds to get the LRRP on board but, it seemed longer. I can't imagine what this poor guy was thinking the whole time this was going on. What a ride he must have had.

It took us about 15 to 20 minutes to get back to An Khe. We landed near the base of the tower because the hospital pad was occupied. An ambulance crew came out to meet the aircraft and Jerry and Ron assisted off-loading the LRRP. As the LRRP was being carried off toward the front of the aircraft past the left side, where I was sitting, the LRRP looked up and saw me. He said, "thank you" — of course, I couldn't hear him with the rotors turning, engine running and helmets on, but he mouthed it. And in that moment, I understood why I was there. That simple "thank you" made the entire tour worth everything I had experienced.

Danny later collaborated the story and adding, "that was the worst mission that he had ever been on." I met up with Jerry in 2016 at a 7th Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment reunion in Branson, MO. He stated, "I remember my fingers were really hurting trying to hold on." Over a beer, I was able to thank him for a job well done.

CW4 (Ret.) Dale House is a life member of the VHPA. He served with A/7/17 CAV in 1969-70. He is the president of the Rocky Mountain chapter of the VHPA and a recipient of the FAA 50 Year Master Pilot Safety Award.



AAAA TLC Trade School, Licensing & Certification Foundation

Building better futures, one grant at a time!

AAAA TLC Chapter Support

By LTC (Ret.) Jan S. Drabczuk

All effective associations exist to provide value to their members. AAAA is no exception. AAAA chapters are the backbone of AAAA. Chapters are where members first see what AAAA offers.

This is evident in the more than 600 scholarships awarded to our members each year. Beyond the scholarship program, AAAA continues to seek additional ways to support members who do not pursue traditional college paths.

TLC Program

To expand AAAA support, the AAAA TLC Foundation, Inc. was established to assist members seeking funding for trade schools, licensing or certification courses for career transitions.

TLC provides funding to students enrolled in trade, licensing and certification programs. It partners with industry leaders and generous donors to build a strong, skilled workforce. Through this initiative, TLC creates accessible pathways to training, rewarding opportunities and sustainable careers in high-demand fields.

To apply for a TLC Grant, applicants must meet one of these criteria:

- Be a current Army Aviation Association of America (AAAA) member.
- Be a spouse or a deceased member of AAAA.
- Be the son, daughter or grandchild of a current or deceased AAAA member.
- Be a high school graduate or have a GED.
- Be enrolled in an accredited trade school, licensing exam/course or certification course.

In all cases, the AAAA member must have been a member for at least one year unless the member is deceased. This requirement is waived for active Army, ARNG and USAR members. The applicant must be enrolled in an accredited course.

What Can Chapters Do

We currently have 82 active chapters across CONUS and outside CONUS. These chapters are diverse, including active, reserve, ARNG, educational and corporate members. AAAA and the TLC Foundation need more chapter support to grow the TLC program. Chapters should inform their members about available financial aid. Perhaps a member needs financial help to become a welder, a soldier plans to leave the military to become an ATP mechanic or a spouse wants to become a hairdresser or a real estate professional. The TLC Foundation is here to assist and will consider all reasonable requests to help members expand their education through trade, licensing or certification courses.

To start, chapters should designate a VP for TLC. Some chapters have renamed their AAAA VP Scholarships to VP Scholarships / TLC to better support this effort. Designating a dedicated chapter board member provides direct contact with the AAAA National Office and the TLC Foundation. It also helps keep members informed and guides them through the TLC process.

Additionally, chapters should consider TLC when planning fundraising events. They could seek local sponsors and invite businesses or schools related to TLC themes to apply for grants or speak. Sharing successful ideas can help chapters raise funds for TLC grants.



COURTESY PHOTO

SGT Ilio Sanchez received a TLC grant of $3000 to help him achieve his goal of earning an A&P certification.

How To Get Support For The TLC program

More information is available on the AAAA website at www.quada.org or by contacting MG (Ret.) Jessica Wright at *jessica.garfola.wright@gmail.com*.

LTC (Ret.) Jan S. Drabczuk is the AAAA Past VP of Chapters and serves on the TLC Board of Governors.

Save the Date

GIVING TUESDAY
DECEMBER 1, 2026

Help Us Help Army Aviation Families In 2 Ways

AAAASFI
Rising Costs. Rising Need.

With college tuition ranging from $11,000 to over $43,000, many students are struggling to afford higher education. At AAAA Scholarship Foundation, we believe that cost should never be a barrier to opportunity. That's why we're stepping up this Giving Tuesday with a goal to raise $3,000—enough to award three $1,000 scholarships to deserving students striving to pursue their education.

Your support can open doors. Give today—change a future.

AAAATLC
On a New Mission.

AAAA Trade Licensing & Certification Program provides financial support for those transitioning out of the military and pursuing skilled trades instead of traditional college. This Giving Tuesday, we aim to raise $3,000 to meet growing demand—over 500,000 trade jobs are currently unfilled, with 345,000 more expected by 2027–28.

Help us support AAAA soldiers, Veterans and Family Members in building stable, future-proof careers in trades that are hands-on, tech-integrated, and vital to America's future.

Donate today!



AAAA Chapter Affairs

By COL (Ret.) John Broam

This month we highlight the Air Assault Chapter and its outstanding support to Soldiers, families and the Army Aviation community.

The Air Assault Chapter:
Supporting Brigades of Greatness

"Air Assault!" immediately brings to mind the 101st Airborne Division and its proud legacy. "Night Stalkers Don't Quit" represents the extraordinary professionalism of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne).



Air Assault Chapter members and Army Aviation Soldiers gather in support of the chapter's mission and community.

CHAPTER COURTESY PHOTO

For the AAAA Air Assault Chapter, supporting the Soldiers, families and veterans of these two exceptional aviation organizations — the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade and 160th SOAR(A) — is both a privilege and a responsibility.

The chapter's support begins with Soldiers and families. During deployments, chapter leaders join Soldiers at the Passenger Processing Center to provide encouragement before departure. When they return, chapter members are there — regardless of the hour — to welcome them home.

The chapter also preserves the moments that define Army Aviation service. With a professional photographer on its board, the chapter captures everything from redeployment "hero shots" and family reunions to changes of command, final flights, and inductions into the Honorable Order of St. Michael. These photographs provide Soldiers and families lasting memories of milestones.

Education is another major focus. This year, the Air Assault Chapter awarded a record $47,500 to 32 scholarship recipients. Recipients also receive a medallion bearing the Air Assault Chapter logo.

Fundraising makes that support possible. The chapter continues to participate in the Scholarship and Trades, Licensing and Certification (TLC) Golf Tournament held in conjunction with the Army Aviation Warfighting Summit. Last year's tournament raised more than $96,000 for the AAAA Scholarship Foundation and TLC programs, with a portion benefiting the chapter. Recognizing that success depends on industry and community partners, the chapter also presented shadow boxes containing an Air Assault Chapter coin and certificate to each of its 34 sponsors.

Recognition of Army Aviation professionals is equally important. Between the chapter's two supported brigades, more than 140 Soldiers and family members were inducted into the Order of St. Michael and Our Lady of Loreto. The chapter amplifies these achievements through social media, highlighting inductions, AAAA awards, and local accomplishments. That consistent engagement has helped grow the chapter's Facebook following from 632 in 2023 to more than 1,000 today.

Chapter service also extends into difficult moments. Air Assault Chapter leaders regularly support memorial ceremonies, console families, and recognize fallen Army Aviation professionals through posthumous presentations of the Order of St. Michael. The chapter also remains closely connected with the 160th SOAR(A) Memorial Day observance.

Looking ahead, the chapter is taking membership outreach directly to Soldiers through semiannual membership drives at brigade headquarters and hangars. The concept is intentionally simple: free pizza, activities such as cornhole and family photography, and an opportunity to explain the tangible benefits of AAAA membership — particularly scholarships and TLC opportunities.

The chapter also hopes to reestablish a local Air Assault Chapter Scholarship/TLC Golf Tournament this fall, building on successful tournaments previously conducted in Nashville.

Serving the Soldiers of the 101st CAB and 160th SOAR(A) is an honor. They represent the tip of the spear, and the Air Assault Chapter strives every day to stand alongside them.

Contact Us!

For Chapter support or to have your chapter featured, contact Chelsea Jarvis, AAAA Assistant Director of Member Engagement, *chelsea@quad-a.org* or me at *john.broam@quad-a.org*.

Above the Best!

COL (Ret.) John Broam
AAAA VP for Chapter Affairs
john.broam@quad-a.org

AAAA Chapter News

Aviation Center Chapter



CHAPTER PHOTO

COL Dennis K. Hill, brigade commander, 110th Aviation Brigade, Fort Rucker, AL., was inducted into the Honorable Order of St. Michael - Silver, at the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence headquarters prior to his change of command July 30, 2026. Then MG Clair A. Gill, commanding general, Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker, hosted the ceremony and highlighted Hill's significant accomplishments during his three-year command. With a fleet of more than 500 aircraft, the 110th Aviation Brigade plans, coordinates, and executes formal flight instruction to train U.S. Army and allied rotary-wing aviators and non-rated crew members.

Tennessee Valley Chapter

We are thrilled to announce the official launch of our brand-new website: *https://tvc-aaaa.com/*

The Tennessee Valley Chapter (TVC) of the Army Aviation Association of America (AAAA) has always been dedicated to supporting our Soldiers, Army civilians, and industry partners across Redstone Arsenal and North Alabama. Our new online home makes connecting, staying informed, and getting involved easier than ever.

Pikes Peak Chapter



CHAPTER, COURTESY PHOTO

Congratulations to Mrs. Amanda Stewart, wife of CSM Stewart of the 404th Aviation Support Battalion, on receiving the Order of Our Lady of Loreto (OLL) from the Army Aviation Association of America (AAAA). The award was presented by the 4th Combat Aviation Brigade, Command Chief Warrant Officer, CW5 David VanVechten. This prestigious recognition honors her outstanding dedication, selfless service, and unwavering support to the Army Aviation community. Thank you for your continued commitment to our Soldiers and Families!

AAAA NEWS — ORDER OF ST. MICHAEL INDUCTEES

Aviation Center Chapter



CHAPTER PHOTO BY CW5 (RET.) CARLOS A. MERINO

CW5 Paul M. Wilson is inducted into the Silver Honorable Order of St. Michael by LTC Cody Killmer, the 1-14th Battalion Commander on Tesday, July 28, 2026 at Fort Rucker, Alabama. Wilson was recognized for mentoring over ten thousand students and instructors during more than thirty years of aviation service. He will continue to work for the 1-14th Aviation Battalion in his retirement from active service.

Air Assault Chapter



CHAPTER PHOTO BY MAJ (RET.) SCOTT W. HOLLINGSWORTH

COL Tyler B. Partridge is inducted into the Silver Honorable Order of St. Michael by COL (Ret.) Henry C. "Hawk" Ruth III, President, Air Assault Chapter (ACC), AAAA, and Mr. John S. "Jack" Smith, Vice President for ACC Operations, on Thursday, July 9, 2026 at Fort Campbell, Kentucky during his change of command ceremony. Partridge was recognized for his exceptional leadership over the past 24 months including the brigade's nine month deploy in support of Operation Inherent Resolve.



CHAPTER PHOTO BY MAJ (RET.) SCOTT W. HOLLINGSWORTH

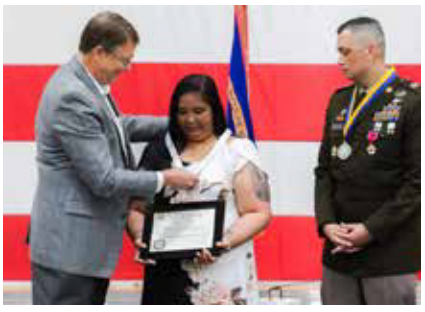
1SG James C. Howard is inducted into the Bronze Honorable Order of St Michael on July 31, 2026, by LTC Kevin Lee, CW5 Marlon D. Stewart and COL (Ret.) Henry C. "Hawk" Ruth III, President, Air Assault Chapter (ACC), AAAA at Fort Campbell, KY. He was recognized for his 21-year career both in special and conventional operations, during which he accomplished 15 deployments, performed outstandingly in multiple air assaults including 3 L2A2's, and led his soldiers during Hurricane Helene rescue operations all the while performing exceptional maintenance and personally accomplishing over 3,000 flight hours of accident- and incident-free aviation operations, resulting in a commendation by the Division Commanding General.

Corpus Christi Chapter



COURTESY PHOTO BY SAMI VILLALOBOS

CSM Angelo V. Rickert is inducted into the Silver Order of St. Michael at a Change on Responsibility ceremony on June 25, 2026 by Kevin Rees, president of the AAAA Corpus Christi Chapter. His wife, **Mrs. Maelyn Rickert**, was inducted into the Order of Our Lady of Loreto at the same ceremony.



Colonial Virginia Chapter



COURTESY PHOTO BY SFC JON STOVER

CW5 Mark R. Tucker is inducted into the Silver Order of St. Michael on July 31, 2026, at Joint Base Langley Eustis by SGM Nick Edmondson. He retires after 24 years of service, 20 of which were in Aviation. He has led at every level, including as a Training Company Commander and is a recipient of the Air Medal with Valor and the Distinguished Flying Cross. He will go on to be a pilot for American Airlines

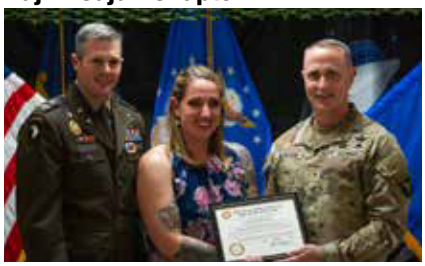
Minuteman Chapter



COURTESY PHOTO BY MR. RICHARD ROLAND

Mr. Thomas Champion is inducted into the Bronze Honorable Order of St Michael on July 21, 2026, by COL (Ret.) Garner Pogue in Lynn, MA. A former U.S. Army officer and Army Aviator, Mr. Champion led the T901 engine project to success. His collaboration with the U.S. Army has ensured alignment with service requirements and accelerated progress toward Milestone C and low-rate initial production. His next role will be as Executive Product Manager of the H/M series turboprop engines in Prague, Czech Republic.

Rajin' Cajun Chapter



COURTESY PHOTO BY 1LT ZACH HAFELEY

Mrs. Laura Robichaux, wife of COL John F. Robichaux, is inducted into the Honorable Order of Our Lady of Loreto on April 10, 2026, by her husband and BG Travis McIntosh on the occasion of COL Robichaux's promotion in Leesville, LA. Mrs. Robichaux, a scienceteacher at Hicks High School, shaped family readiness efforts, coordinated two battalion military balls, and served as a trusted advisor on spouse and family concerns.



COURTESY PHOTO BY MS. SYDNEY GALLEGOS

Mrs. Candace B. Carter, wife of MAJ William J. Carter, is inducted into the Honorable Order of Our Lady of Loreto at the 2026 Military Ball at Lake Charles, LA, by COL John F. Robichaux and CSM Christopher D. Flint. A key leader of the 1-5 Aviation Regiment's Soldier and Family Readiness Group, Ms. Carter dedicated exceptional time and care to organizing major events, welcoming new spouses, and strengthening unit cohesion.

Mrs. Nayree Griger, wife of SFC Tyler Griger, is inducted into the Honorable Order of Our Lady of Loreto at the 2026 Military Ball at Lake Charles, LA, by COL John F. Robichaux and CSM Christopher D. Flint. Mrs. Griger was instrumental in leading the Cajun Dustoff and 1-5 Aviation Regiment SFRG programs and has been involved in all fundraising and planning for events.

Mrs. Chelsea Chavez is inducted into the Honorable Order of Our Lady of Loreto at the 2026 Military Ball at Lake Charles, LA, by COL John F. Robichaux and CSM Christopher D. Flint. Mrs. Chavez supports both the Cajun Dustoff and 1-5 Aviation Regiment SFRG programs, using both her creative talents and her home business to create multiple items for fundraising and for the unit. She has also provided numerous opportunities for young ladies to grow and learn with her local Girl Scout Chapter.



COURTESY PHOTO BY MS. SYDNEY GALLEGOS

MAJ Shawn D. Douglas is inducted as a Knight into the Honorable Order of St. Michael at the April 30, 2026 Military Ball in Lake Charles, LA, by COL John F. Robichaux and CSM Christopher D. Flint.

CW3 Bradley R. Fuller is inducted into the Bronze Honorable Order of St. Michael on April 30, 2026, by COL John F. Robichaux and CSM Christopher D. Flint at the 2026 Military Ball in Lake Charles, LA. As a maintenance test pilot, CW3 Fuller has consistently demonstrated an unparalleled ability to diagnose and resolve the most complex mechanical issues, resulting in a significant increase in aircraft availability, and fostering a culture of excellence within our maintenance teams.

CW3 Mariah D. Steinbock is inducted into the Bronze Honorable Order of St. Michael on April 30, 2026, by COL John F. Robichaux and CSM Christopher D. Flint at the 2026 Military Ball in Lake Charles, LA. CW3 Steinbock is recognized for her exceptionally meritorious service as the Standardization Pilot for Charlie Company, 1-5 Aviation Regiment. Her unparalleled expertise, unwavering dedication to safety, and profound impact on aircrew training and readiness have been instrumental to the unit's success.

C**W3 (Ret.) Carlyle S. Swofford III** is inducted into the Silver Honorable Order of St. Michael on April 30, 2026, by COL John F. Robichaux and CSM Christopher D. Flint at the 2026 Military Ball in Lake Charles, LA. His 35-year career thus far spans Operations Desert Shield and Storm, Joint Forge in Bosnia, and Iraqi Freedom, where he earned multiple "Top Gun" awards and Air Medals. As the Force Integration Chief at the Joint Readiness Training Center, he has been pivotal in integrating unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) into training.

CW3 Justin Stump is inducted into the Silver Honorable Order of St. Michael.

Tennessee Valley Chapter



COURTESY PHOTO BY MS. JOHNNIE D. BRAUT

MAJ (Ret.) Thomas J. Barthel is inducted into the Bronze Honorable Order of St. Michael on August 12, 2026 at his change of duty assignment at Redstone Arsenal, Huntsville, AL, by Mr. Tod Glidewell. He deployed multiple times as a UH-60 pilot during the Global War on Terror and served as an Army civilian in positions of increased responsibility throughout AMCOM over the last two decades. He will move from his role as the AMCOM G3S Sustainment Programs Integration Lead to Lead Program Integrator Project Office - Advanced C-UAS Effects (PO-ACE).



COURTESY PHOTO BY MS. RICHELLE BROWN

MG Lori L. Robinson is inducted into the Gold Honorable Order of St. Michael on July 30, 2026 at Redstone Arsenal, AL, by BG (Ret.) Timothy J. Edens, AAAA Senior Vice President. She has served the previous two years as the Commanding General of the US Army Aviation and Missile Command and will retire from Army Aviation to pursue a master's degree in library science.

Washington-Potomac Chapter



COURTESY PHOTO BY MRS. KAREN GRIFFIN

LTC Thea Iacomino is inducted into the Silver Honorable Order of St. Michael on July 24, 2026 in Alexandria, VA, by Mr. Daniel R. Curry in recognition of her support to the Washington-Potomac Chapter. LTC Iacomino will go on to attend school at Ft. McNair.



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AAAA **Membership** Update By COL (Ret.) Liz Martin

In Service to Those Led: Deeds Not Words

The talent and grit of Army Aviation Soldiers remain pivotal to the success of the Branch. Long before an aircraft launches and long after it returns, the work of Aviation Soldiers sets the conditions for mission success.



US ARMY PHOTO

CSM Marcus Pitts, poses as with a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter flying overhead during a reenlistment ceremony.

Aviation maintainers, non-rated crewmembers, air traffic controllers, UAS operators and aviation mission support personnel are among the finest Soldiers in the Army. Their critical thinking, adaptability and technical expertise keep Army Aviation operating, often while placing tremendous responsibility in the hands of junior Soldiers.

Warfighters expect precision from Army Aviation. Meeting that standard depends on Soldiers who are trained, trusted and empowered by strong NCO leadership. Fellow AAAA member SGM Marcus Pitts, currently serves as the III Armored Corps G5 SGM, Fort Hood, TX. He describes that approach simply: "deeds not words." For Pitts, those deeds are what enable the backbone of Army Aviation — the Soldier — to thrive.

Pitts' leadership philosophy centers on "showing more than I speak." He credits faith, family and resilience with shaping the leader and person he has become during 26 years of military service. At the heart of his approach is a simple principle: know the Soldiers entrusted to your leadership and understand what they need to succeed.

"Leaders must truly understand the Soldiers they lead, versus expecting them to understand and modify to the leader," Pitts said. That philosophy is particularly important in Army Aviation, where junior Soldiers routinely shoulder enormous responsibility. PFCs and SPCs serve on phase teams, flight lines and in back shops, performing technically demanding tasks that directly affect aircraft safety, readiness and mission accomplishment.

For maintainers, non-rated crewmembers and aviation mission support personnel, the mission follows a familiar rhythm: **Prep. Launch. Recover. Launch Again.**

"There's a nostalgia to that cycle, with a momentum and sense of pride familiar across Aviation formations," Pitts said. Yet much of what makes that cycle possible happens outside the spotlight. While aircrews execute the mission, Aviation Soldiers are already preparing for the next launch. Maintainers troubleshoot and repair. Back shops rebuild components. Parts move. Inspections continue. Logisticians sustain the force. Soldiers identify problems, develop solutions and keep the formation moving forward.

The Aircraft May Be What Everyone Sees, but Soldiers Generate Readiness

Pitts remains impressed by the young Soldiers who routinely demonstrate technical expertise, confidence and skill well beyond their years and rank. These young professionals understand their craft, know the standards, identify problems and help drive solutions, often while working in austere and demanding environments.

The role of the NCO, Pitts believes, is not to do the job for them. It is to provide the training, trust and latitude necessary for Soldiers to apply their expertise. Rank does not define a Soldier's value: a Soldier's ability to contribute to the mission does. When properly trained and empowered, the youngest Soldier in an Aviation formation can directly generate combat power.

For Pitts, that belief is rooted in his own experience. A Florida native, Pitts enlisted in 2000 intending to serve for four years before pursuing college. His first assignment as a 15P Flight Operations Specialist in Korea changed that trajectory. Supporting 2nd Battalion, 52nd Aviation Regiment and witnessing Army Aviation's role in the defense of the Korean people convinced him that the Army was where he belonged.

Over the course of his career, Pitts has served as the 4th Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment Battalion CSM and as the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade CSM, with deployments and assignments supporting OEF, OIF, Pacific Pathways, USEUCOM and OIR. His broadening assignments have included serving as a USASOC Equal Opportunity Advisor and as the 128th Aviation Brigade Program of Instruction Manager.

In Spring 2027, Pitts will return to Army Aviation as the 166th Aviation Brigade CSM — an opportunity he looks forward to with enthusiasm and a continued commitment to the Soldiers he will serve.

Through it all, he remains quick to acknowledge the role of his family and the unwavering support they have provided throughout his career.

After 26 years of service, Pitts' philosophy remains remarkably straightforward: Know your Soldiers. Invest in them. Trust them.

For Army Aviation, the principle reaches well beyond one leader or one formation. Mission success ultimately depends on Soldiers who are prepared to perform and NCOs who are willing to develop, trust and empower them.

The words may be simple. The commitment is demonstrated every day.

Deeds not words.

COL (Ret.) Liz Martin
AAAA Vice President for Membership

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Flying Gator Chapter
MSG Matthew Giorgio
Jimmy Doolittle Chapter
MAJ Sean Brookshire
Live Free or Die Chapter
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Magnolia Chapter
CW4 Brian Sanders
Mount Rainier Chapter
CW3 Eugene A. Park
Narragansett Bay Chapter
SPC Michael Almeida
North Star Chapter
MAJ Daniel Caron
North Texas Chapter
SGT Richard Grady
Prairie Soldier Chapter
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Tennessee Valley Chapter
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Washington-Potomac Chapter
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PFC John Forrest Edmonds
1SG Richard Lagerquist
1SG Angel Luna
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Colonial Virginia Chapter
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SSG William Michael Fox
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CW3 Robert Altman
CPT Kenneth Gregory Butts
Idaho Snake River Chapter
CW4 Jay E. Daw
SPC Nia Greenwood
PV2 Conrad James Winston
Iowa Chapter
Mr. Chad LaGrange
CW4 Doyle Miner

Continued on page 91



AAAA **Family Forum** By Judy Konitzer

Editor's Note: Special thanks to Family Forum Editor, Mrs. Judy Konitzer, for reaching out to Fort Rucker's newest first lady, Mrs. Courtney Baker, and encouraging her to tell her family's story.

Meet Courtney Baker, the First Lady of Army Aviation and Fort Rucker, AL

Before I ever met Cain, I saw his picture at a college party and thought he was the best-looking guy I had ever seen. It was his blue eyes — not to sound cheesy, but they struck me.



COURTESY PHOTO PROTOCOL REDSTONE ARSENAL

The Baker family left to right: - Hannah, Caitlin, MG Phillip C., Courtney and Ashley Baker.

We both attended Auburn, though at different times, and he was leaving for Korea when I saw his picture. It wasn't until several years later that our paths crossed.

By the time we met, he had already experienced a great deal of life, at least compared with others I had known. He had deployed during the invasion of Iraq and again in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Within five minutes of meeting him, I knew he was the man I was going to marry.

I fell in love with his confidence and humor. He was goal-oriented, a complete Type A personality, and absolutely the most hilarious, fun, and deeply passionate person I had ever met. After more than 20 years, I should be used to the intensity with which he lives life and loves everything that matters to him, yet I am still surprised by it.

That's just how he is. It's how he loves me, how he loves our girls, our family, Army Aviation, and the Army family around us. I truly believe that depth of passion rubs off and shapes the people around us. I knew almost nothing about marrying an Army aviator -— except that the uniform was incredibly attractive -— but I quickly learned that this was a special community, and I was excited to be part of it.

As a new Army spouse, I expected moves. We married on a Sunday in Georgia, and by Friday, we were moving to Fort Irwin, CA. The remoteness surprised me, but the community surprised me even more. People welcomed us and showed me what Army life was all about. That lesson followed us through every move and deployment.

Army life asks a great deal of families, but it also gives us people who understand without questioning. They celebrate homecomings, sit beside us through loss, and make unfamiliar places feel like home.

I have watched that culture shape our three daughters: Hannah, 20; Caitlin, 18; and Ashley, 15. Military children are called resilient so often that it can sound like a catchphrase, but I understand why. Our girls have walked into new schools knowing no one, left friends they loved, and started over before they felt ready. That experience is certainly not uncommon. They can find something to laugh about when things get hard, and that has carried all of us more times than they realize.

Watching them start over taught me the importance of giving them something that did not change, even before I fully understood what we were doing. I realized it after I completely disappointed Hannah on the first day of school following another move. I had always made pancakes on the first day of school. The year I skipped them, Hannah was so disappointed. To me, they were just pancakes. To her, they were home.

That was when I realized that, at least for our family, traditions were what made each new house feel like home. They were our girls' constants amid all the changes — -the things that stayed the same. We have also always tried to protect Christmas morning. When Cain was not deployed, we spent it at home with just our family. In a life where addresses, schools, and neighbors change, traditions give our girls something familiar to count on. They remind us that wherever we are, we are still us.

The spouses of Army Aviation are the bedrock of what our aviators do day in and day out. From young families to single soldiers, support and community shape our culture and define who we are as a branch.

A friend once said that it takes a special person to be an Army aviator and the same kind of person to marry one. I believe that. There is no community I would rather be part of. I would tell a brand-new Army Aviation spouse that they are one of the luckiest people in the world. This life is hard, fun, meaningful, and more rewarding than I could have ever imagined.

You will do big things together and surprise yourself and each other. Then, one day, you will wonder how it all went by so quickly.

Judy Konitzer is the family forum editor for ARMY AVIATION; questions and suggestions can be directed to her at judy@quad-a.orgjudy@quad-a.org.

New AAAA Members

Continued

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SFC Anthony Craig
Mr. Kenneth Dean
CPT Brian Downey
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SPC Michael Almeida
No Chapter
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Ms. Daniela Arimondi
Mr. Peter Bereza
Mr. Bill Brown
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AAAA Scholarship Foundation

Year-End Giving:
Investing in the Future of Army Aviation

By Tommy Marks

As the year concludes, the AAAA Scholarship Foundation encourages members and supporters to consider the lasting impact of yearend charitable giving.

Your generosity directly strengthens educational opportunities for Soldiers, family members and dependents while offering meaningful financial and tax-planning advantages.

TaxEfficient Ways to Give

Supporters age 73 or older who must take a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) may find a **Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)** to be an especially effective giving option. A QCD allows donors to direct funds from an IRA to the AAAA Scholarship Foundation, satisfying all or part of their RMD while excluding the distributed amount from taxable income. Charitable contributions can also support estateplanning goals by reducing the size of a taxable estate and establishing a legacy that reflects a donor's values. Donors should consult their financial or tax advisors to determine how charitable giving aligns with their overall plans.

Donor Legacies Making a Difference

The Foundation is honored to steward gifts that commemorate service, honor loved ones and expand opportunities for future generations.

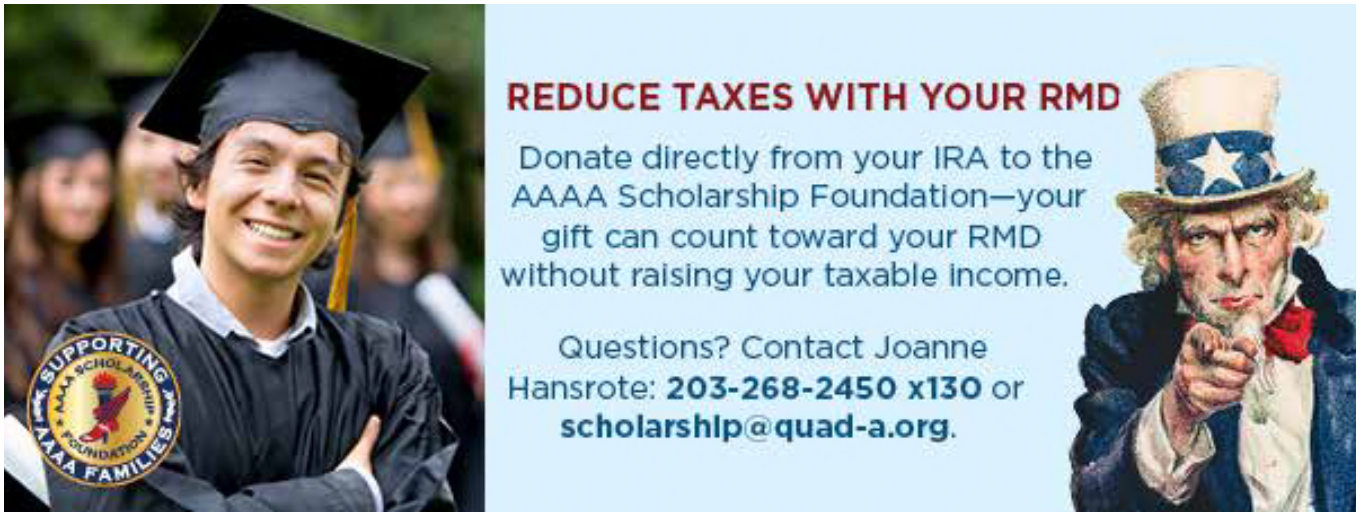
- One spouse has contributed more than **$25,000** in memorial gifts, es tablishing a perpetual scholarship now providing **$1,000 annually**.
- Another donor ensures **$5,000 in scholarships** each year in her husband's memory, supplementing her perpetual fund to create a more substantial award.
- A remarkable estate gift of **over $600,000** now generates **more than $20,000 annually** in perpetual scholarships.
- A **$100,000 memorial gift** honoring MG Carl McNair provides **$3,500 each year** in perpetuity.
- Community participation in **Giving Tuesday** contributes approximately **$3,000 annually**, demonstrating the collective strength of many donors giving what they can.

Your Support Builds the Future

Every contribution — large or small — advances the mission of the AAAA Scholarship Foundation and supports the educational aspirations of the Army Aviation community. As you consider your yearend charitable plans, we invite you to join the many members who have chosen to make a lasting difference. Your generosity ensures that the legacy of Army Aviation continues to inspire and empower future generations.



Mr. Tommy Marks is the vice president of the AAAA Scholarship Foundation, Inc. Board of Governors.



Thank You to Our Scholarship Fund Donors

AAAA recognizes the generosity of the following individuals, chapters and organizations that have donated to the Scholarship Foundation, Inc. from October 2025 through October 2026. The list includes donations received for all scholarships, as well as the General Fund which provides funding to enable the chapter, corporate, heritage and individual matching fund programs as well as national grants. Every penny donated to the Scholarship Foundation goes directly towards scholarships as a result of the Army Aviation Association of America subsidizing all administrative costs (minus investment brokerage fees).

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For more information about the Foundation or to make a contribution, go online to www.quad-a.org; contributions can also be mailed to AAAA Scholarship Foundation, Inc., 593 Main Street, Monroe, CT 06468-2806.

Industry News

Announcements Related to Army Aviation Matters

Editor's note: Companies can send their Army Aviation-related news releases and information to editor@quad-a.org.

Lawmakers Urge Continued MV-75 Funding



COURTESY PHOTO BELL-TEXTRON

A bipartisan group of 87 lawmakers is urging the Pentagon and White House Office of Management and Budget to maintain funding for the U.S. Army's MV-75 Cheyenne program. The lawmakers called the MV-75 a critical modernization priority and the Department of Defense's only active vertical lift development program. The letter comes amid funding uncertainty that has affected the program's schedule. The Pentagon has sought to reprogram funding to prevent a potential work stoppage, while Textron has said it would self-fund selected activities to maintain momentum.

Systems Selected for JIATF-401 Counter-UAS Pilot

The Department of War has selected four directed-energy systems for the Joint Interagency Task Force 401 (JIATF-401) counter-UAS pilot program: AeroVironment's Palletized High-Energy Laser, Epirus' Leonidas high-powered microwave, Kord's Firefly high-energy laser and Boeing's Compact Laser Weapon System. The pilot program will evaluate the systems in operational environments, providing data on performance, requirements, costs and integration. JIATF-401 is coordinating the effort with the Federal Aviation Administration, U.S. Northern Command and the military services. Additional directed-energy systems will be evaluated during a December shoot-off at Dugway Proving Ground, UT, as the Department assesses technologies for future homeland counter-UAS operations.

Contracts —

(From various sources. An "*" by a company name indicates a small business contract / "**" indicates a woman-owned small business.)

Griffon Aerospace Inc.,* Madison, AL, was awarded a $17,515,469 firm-fixed-price, indefinite-delivery/indefinite-quantity contract for Outlaw communication subcomponents and training. Work locations and funding will be determined with each order, with an estimated completion date of Feb. 28, 2027.

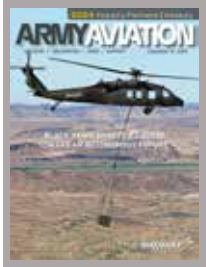
The Boeing Co., Ridley Park, PA, was awarded a $33,881,195 modification to add country-specific requirements (Korea) to the CH-47F Block I Chinook helicopter production line. The amount of this action is $33,881,195 with a total cumulative face value of $827,391,197. One bid was solicited with one received. Work locations and funding will be determined with each order, with an estimated completion date of Oct. 31, 2029.

CAE USA Inc., Tampa, FL, was awarded a $29,797,799 modification to provide fixed-wing training and support. The modification brings the total cumulative face value to $242,809,779. Work will be performed at Fort Rucker, AL, with an estimated completion date of March 9, 2032.

ARMYAVIATION

UPCOMING SPECIAL FOCUS

December



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January



Unmanned Aircraft Systems Sensors & Weapons
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CONTACT :
Erika Burgess -Carmen Touhy
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Jack H. Dibrell/Alamo Chapter
CW5 Kirk A. Burns
Jimmy Doolittle Chapter
CW5 Michael K. Hutto
CSM Jeffrey L. Kimbrell
Mount Rainier Chapter
CSM Carl A. Marshall
Northern Lights Chapter
CW5 Daniel Hansen
Prairie Soldier Chapter
CW5 Michael T. Maides
Rio Grande Chapter
CW5 Donald F. McHugh II
Tennessee Valley Chapter
Joseph P. Creekmore, Jr.
CW4 Sean F. Gilpin, Ret.
LTC Marvin "Lynn" Hanks, Ret.
John S. Kelley
Charles W. Lent
COL Danielle R. Medaglia
COL Joseph S. Minor
Greg D. Shirley
Washington-Potomac Chapter
MSG Aaron C. Johnson
Yellowhammer Chapter
CSM Jason P. Anderson, Ret.

Bronze
Air Assault Chapter
CSM Fredrick J. Benuzzi
1SG James Howard
CPT Alexis N. Salvanera
CW5 David A. Webster
Alaskan Midnight Sun Chapter
CPT Amanda S. Lopez
Aloha Chapter
SFC Steven D. Atkinson
CPT Alexandria Gautreaux
CPT Michele C. Greene
1SG Carlos M. Hernandez
1SG Matthew S. Plumley
CW2 Brian Schroeder
CW3 Andrew Thomas
Aviation Center Chapter
SSG Charles A. Algeri
CW3 Robert L. Appell
CW3 Jonathan Ard
CW3 Joshua D. Baker
MSG Robert L. Ballard
SSG Patrick J. Carter
SSG Marcus Charfauros
CPT William W. Clark III
SSG Patrice A. Daniels-Miranda
CPT Dakota DeFreece
SSG Wayne R. Eckler
CW3 Brenden Enns
SSG Erin Flageolle
CW4 Chad D. Fogler
CPT Jonathan M. Frantz
SFC Christopher M. Fritzler
CW3 Zackery Hill
SFC Eric G. Hover
CW3 Khalid W. Jurdi
MSG Roberta I. Kahl, Ret.
SSG Jacob L. Kemp
LTC Aaron N. Krupp
MAJ Paul Lambert
Andrew B Lecuyer
Lionel Macklin Sr.
CW3 Shaun McDowell
CW3 Joseph McIntyre
SFC Michael E. Morris
CW4 Nathan Neal
SFC Ruben Perez
SSG Chance H. Poland
MAJ Matthew L. Powell
SFC Katherine B. Ransom
CW4 Dustin H. Schnaible
LTC Mary K. Schuster
SFC Tracy R. Snapp
SSG Jeremy T. Sowell
SFC Matthew S. Sprau
SSG Jalen A. Stepney
SSG Thomas W. Treusch Jr.
LTC Wesley F. Walker, Ret.
CW4 Michael P. Walton
CPT Eric J. Wasek
Colonial Virginia Chapter
SFC Joshua Abella
Billy L. Auker
SSG Jacob A. Bain
SSG Matthew Cunningham
CPT Cody A. Dangler
SFC Anthony M. Ervin
SFC Brandon S. Felger
SSG Lejuan L. Feliciano
SSG Tyler Finnigan
SSG William Fox
SFC Andrew P. Greenfield
SSG Cody Harman
Ella Kinberg
SFC Ronaldo L. Klesck
John W. Lee II
MSG Richard Miles
SSG Asa L. Riggins
MAJ Benjamin A. Schneider
SSG Jake Williams
SFC Timothy C. Wooden
Desert Oasis Chapter
COL Abdulelah H. Abawod
SFC Robert C. McAlister
CW5 Chad M. McGrath
Diamond State Chapter
CW2 Dickey D. Mayland, Ret.
Follow Me Chapter
SSG Hayden T. Jones
Gold Standard Chapter
MSG Christopher P. Abrom
SSG Matthew T. Asp
CW5 Jeffrey L. Braden
SFC Marcus S. Brewer
1SG Evin J. Feit
SFC James T. Hanson
CW3 James F. Hastings
LTC Dillon W. Nutt
CPT Ryan L. O'Neil
CPT Conner J. Parent
CW3 Jerry P. Skinner
SFC Job N. Smith
CPT Shannon J. Sperry
1SG Brian R. Van Sant
Griffin Chapter
CPT Tyler M. Bybee
Iowa Chapter
COL Jamie J. Dailey, Ret.
Iron Mike Chapter
MSG Mark Anderson
CW5 Jacob Baird, Ret.
SFC Cody M. Baur
SSG Hunter L. Blankenship
SSG Oliver R. Cantu
COL Nicholas B. Challen
SSG Kyle J. Gann
Jimmy Doolittle Chapter
CPT James A. Smith
Land of Lincoln Chapter
SFC Russell Bennett
CW3 Jeffrey Gunnoe
COL Jason P. Henderson
CPT Matthew A. Isely
CW5 Gabe Liles
CW5 Charles M. Maroon
CSM N. Michael Simard
CW5 Herbert E. Stevens
Mid-Atlantic Chapter
LTC Thomas R. Kivlen
LTC Andrew A. Sepulveda
Minuteman Chapter
SSG Joshua Ferguson
Morning Calm Chapter
SFC Khoa Cao
CPT Joshua M Ciarlante
1SG Louberto Huertas Lopes
CW3 Andrew C. Maney
CW3 David Raby
CPT Wesley M. Taylor
CW2 Robert Westover
CW3 Brannan Williams
Mount Rainier Chapter
1SG Andrew P. Anderson
CPT Cameron J. Barth
CW3 Zachary A. Becker
SFC Feliciano Garcia Jr.
CW4 Brandon Garner
CPT Raymond J. Gaspardo
SFC Dwayne S. Huffstead
MAJ W. Trexler Jasien
SSG Vincent L. Olivencia
CW2 Stephen J. Powell
1SG Michael C. Richardson
MSG Joshua M. Terry
1SG Elias M. Torres
1SG Greg A. Tracy
Old Tucson Chapter
MSG Bryan Green
Phantom Corps Chapter
CW3 Ryan P. Ebbers
Pikes Peak Chapter
CPT Megan R. Bartolotta
MAJ Dana C. Diaz
CPT Alex Esteve
LTC Douglas Gray
CPT Mary Jane Lenderman
CW4 Santos Millan
SSG Travis R. Stover
Ragin' Cajun Chapter
SSG Nikolas J. Pappas
Rio Grande Chapter
CW2 Samuel Gerolmo III
CW5 Khristian A. Kitselman
SFC Garrett F. Wooldridge
Savannah Chapter
CW3 Johnny J. Cervantes
MAJ William J. DeStasio
CW2 Alexander R. Frese
SFC James S. Griffith IV
SSG Santiago H. Hurtado
MAJ Christina C. Johnson
CPT Matthew Y. Kim
Capt Sandy W. Osborne
SFC Terence Potter
CPT Mathew M. Simmons
MAJ Kayla Smith
Southern California Chapter
1SG Vergia M. Farrow
CSM Claudia Hernandez-Smith
Tennessee Valley Chapter
MAJ Jaryd Bailey
James K. Bartlett
MAJ James N. Bashford
Matthew S. Bentley
CW4 Michael T. Carroll
Andrew C. Cranford
MAJ Vincent M. Franchino
SFC Angel Negron, Ret.
1SG Zachary J. Ogilby, Ret.
CPT Cameron S. Pollard
CW4 Ryan W. Reaves
Steven L. Tibaldo
Thunder Mountain Chapter
CW3 Ron C. Rivera
Utah Chapter
SSG Andres Avella
CW4 David Berry
CW3 Andrew Carroll
CSM Shawn Earl, Ret.
SGT Roy Epling
CW4 Myles Gilbert
SSG Korey Jones
SSG Keaweamahi Kaaihue
COL Jon D. Richardson
CW5 Scott Upton
SGT David Whitney
CW4 Michael Zesiger
Washington-Potomac Chapter
1SG William C. Barton
1SG Alex Borja
1SG Angel W. Fernandez
LTC Leala McCollum
MAJ Randy W. Swingle
Winged Warriors Chapter
MSG Richard W. Bowman
MAJ Ashley V. Johnson
MAJ Damien M. Watkins

Knight



Air Assault Chapter
Lanette Miller
MAJ Justin D. Salinas
SFC Donald Taylor, Ret.
CPT Joshua E. Wasserman
Aloha Chapter
MG James B. Bartholomees
1SG Jammar A. Campbell
CPT Robyn Franklin
CPT Alexandra L. Georgi
SFC Larry W. Johnson
Aviation Center Chapter
Melissa D. Kinney
LTC Rebecca Mercer
Michael A. Metje
1LT Abimbola O. Ogedengbe
Lt Col Paul Rees
John R. Watson
MAJ Samantha A. Wolf
MAJ Matthew Woods
Colonial Virginia Chapter
Sharon Brinkley
Desert Oasis Chapter
MG Omar Bin Fahad Al Husan
COL Mohammed S.M. Al Jabr
BG Moshen J. Al Qarni
BG Hasan S. Asiri
COL Nafea Reja Alharbi Bander
COL Saud A. Binmurebah
SFC Quan N. Dang
BG Khalid A. Alanaze Fayez
Gold Standard Chapter
1SG Guillermo Marquez-Corona
CSM Bjoern J. Pietrzyk
Griffin Chapter
MAJ Robert M. Brickley
CW2 Lorenzo L. Cruell
COL Troy G. Danderson
Jimmy Doolittle Chapter
CSM Joshua R. Bitle
Land of Lincoln Chapter
BG Lenny Williams
MacArthur Chapter
CSM Arnold G. Reyes
SGT Jennifer I. Torres
Morning Calm Chapter
CPT Ross J. Brown
WO1 Robert F. Coles
CSM Michael Dawley
Sang Su Kim
CPT Genevieve Marschall
CPT John H. Smith
SFC Eric A. Stadtmueller
1SG Kelvin D. Welch
Mount Rainier Chapter
MSG Christopher R. Holdredge
MSG Clayton N. Nicholas
Pikes Peak Chapter
LTC Elliot Grant
SGT Devin Seibel
Tennessee Valley Chapter
LTC Matthew R. Upright
Thunder Mountain Chapter
CPT Kevin Z. Virtue
Winged Warriors Chapter
CSM John R. Diggles II

Our Lady of Loreto

Air Assault Chapter
Christine Cloaninger
Dr. Leilani Karls
Aviation Center Chapter
Whitney L. Conrad
Amy Essig
Devi Huebscher
Jessie Lee
Black Knights Chapter
Coren L. Yastrzemsky
Colonial Virginia Chapter
Melissa Highley
Laura Naigle
Megan Sudweeks
Gold Standard Chapter
Kitty Huber
High Desert Chapter
Jillian E. Gardner
MacArthur Chapter
Lesia R. Koropey-James
Corinne Reyes
Morning Calm Chapter
Rosselin Rincon
Emily M. Taylor
Mount Rainier Chapter
Christa E. Barkalow
Danielle J. Becker
Laura Hermanson
Jaime L. Huizenga
Ragin' Cajun Chapter
Candice Carter
Savannah Chapter
Tamara DeStasio
Shandy Hoeffer
Kimberly Holloway
Danielle Lofreddo
Amanda F. Morse
Tennessee Valley Chapter
Cindy Bailey
Nikki Ciszczon
Christa Minor
COL Tom Robinson, Ret.
Utah Chapter
Jennifer Richardson
Yellowhammer Chapter
T. Renae Laier

*indicates a posthumous award

AAAA Salutes the Recently Departed...

CW4 William J. Andrew, Ret. - Deceased 8/28/2026
COL Eugene F. Crooks, Ret - *Deceased 9/5/2025*
Mr. Keith E. Gay - *Deceased 8/12/2025*
COL Bill G. Lockwood, Ret. - *Deceased 8/25/2025*
LTC Stuart A. Miller, Ret. - *Deceased 4/26/2025*
CW5 William E. Pfau, Ret. - *Deceased 8/11/2025*
CW5 Christopher A. Rau - *Deceased 9/24/2025*
Mr. Gary L. Smith - *Deceased 7/27/2025*
Mr. William H. Squires - *Deceased 10/14/2025*

People On The Move

Changes of Command/ Responsibility

Missouri National Guard Names New 35th Combat Aviation Brigade Commander



US ARMY PHOTO BY SGT KEWA NORTON

BG James Schreffler, Missouri National Guard assistant adjutant general, passes the guidon to LTC Seth Everett, incoming commander of the 35th Combat Aviation Brigade, during a change of command ceremony Sept. 13 in Sedalia, MO. The Missouri Army National Guard's 35th Combat Aviation Brigade welcomed LTC Seth Everett as its new commander during a change of command ceremony Sept. 13 in Sedalia, MO. Everett assumed command from outgoing commander COL Jack Windes during a ceremony attended by Missouri National Guard leaders and brigade personnel.

25th Combat Aviation Brigade Welcomes New Command Sergeant Major



US ARMY PHOTO BY LEONARDO MARTINEZ-TOVAR

The 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, welcomed CSM Joseph Cole as its senior enlisted leader during a change of responsibility ceremony Sept. 16, 2026, at Wheeler Army Airfield, HI. Cole succeeded CSM Ryan Reichard, who delivered farewell remarks during the ceremony marking the transfer of responsibility between the brigade's senior enlisted leaders. LTC Walter Thomas (right), commander of the 209th Aviation Support Battalion, 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, passes the brigade colors to CSM Cole (left), the incoming senior enlisted advisor of the 25th CAB.

1-145th Aviation Regiment Welcomes New Command Sergeant Major



US ARMY PHOTO BY KELLY MORRIS

The 1st Battalion, 145th Aviation Regiment, welcomed CSM Aramis Martin and his family during a change of responsibility ceremony hosted by battalion commander LTC Matthew Stockton at Fort Rucker, AL. The ceremony also recognized outgoing CSM Julian Adams and his family for their service and contributions to the battalion. The 1-145th Aviation Regiment develops disciplined, agile and adaptive Army professionals and leaders for the operational force, specializing in air-ground operations and preparing Soldiers to fight and win the nation's wars.

1-11th Aviation Regiment Welcomes New Command Sergeant Major



US ARMY PHOTO BY KELLY MORRIS

The 1st Battalion, 11th Aviation Regiment, welcomed CSM Joshua Burnell and his family during a change of responsibility ceremony at Fort Rucker, AL. The ceremony also honored outgoing CSM Jack Essig and his family as Essig relinquished responsibility ahead of his retirement after 30 years of service. The 1-11th provides air traffic services in support of the Aviation Center of Excellence training mission and the National Airspace System. The battalion also certifies assigned air traffic control Soldiers to Federal Aviation Administration air traffic safety oversight standards, helping sustain the Army's air traffic services community.

Undergraduate Flight Training



AAAA provides standard aviator wings to all graduates and sterling silver aviator wings to the distinguished graduates of each flight class ... *another example of AAAA's **SUPPORT** for the U.S. Army Aviation Soldier and Family.*



UFTClass 26-020

AAAA congratulates the following officers graduating from Undergraduate Flight Training at the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence, Fort Rucker, AL.

44 Officers August 6, 2026
Commissioned Officers
1LT Bailey, Jacob D. * – DG
1LT Borrero, Benny J., Jr. – HG
1LT Bostwick, Aidan J. * – HG
2LT Darrow, Everett M. – HG
2LT Johnson, Elsie C. * – HG
1LT Ahlemann, Brandon J.
1LT Barrera, Noah A.
2LT Brown, Tyler A. *
1LT Bryce, Kyle J.
2LT Edwards, Mason J. *
1LT Flynn, Michael E. *
2LT Higgins, Jonathon S. *
2LT Hinton, Elijah T. *
2LT Justiniano Suarez, Flabia M. *
1LT Lister, Samuel P.
1LT Lord, Parker C.
1LT Lowman, Marshall B. *
2LT Mims, Thomas D.
1LT Morsette, Scott E. *
1LT Pham, Hai Minh N. *
2LT Roll, Erik J. *
1LT Rozman, Cassandra L. *
CPT Stammeyer, Alex J.
Warrant Officers
WO1 Kisslerobergin, Giselle V. * – DG
WO1 Friske, Scott K. * – HG

People On The Move

WO1 Ludwig, Ryan M. – HG
WO1 Scott, Jared A. – HG
WO1 Bailey, Willow H. *
WO1 Decker, Cole R.
WO1 Della, Raquel M. *
WO1 Diiorio, Katrina A. *
WO1 DuFrene, Jeffrey W. *
WO1 Enequist, Dorian D.
WO1 Garcia, Oscar D.
WO1 Howard, Damion S.
WO1 Langhus, Cody W.
WO1 Oakley, Landon A.
WO1 Rosariocalderon, Emmanuel *
WO1 Sanders, Matthew J.
WO1 Stephen, Q'Ran R.
WO1 Sulser, Zachary A.
WO1 Swift, Joseph P.
WO1 Webber, Justin T.
WO1 Werley, Bryan S. *

41 Officers August 20, 2026
Commissioned Officers
CPT Zammit, Alexa S. * -DG
CPT Darden, John T. -HG
1LT Helsley, Alexander M. -HG
1LT Wallace, Isella G. * -HG
1LT Adanlawo, Lukman O.
2LT Jacobs, Sherrie S.
2LT Jordan, Veronika T.
2LT Magolan, Caitlin J. *
1LT Neogi, Malika *
CPT Nevarez, Christian C.
1LT Sheng, Diego T.
2LT Smith, Parker C. *
1LT Sykes, Shelby R.
1LT Vendetti, Frank D.
1LT Wagner, Logan J. *
2LT White, Zachary C.
2LT Wright, Jacob A. *
1LT Young, John A.
Warrant Officers
WO1 Saal, Orion E. * -DG
WO1 Caiata, Joseph V. * -HG
WO1 Barr, Zachary M.
WO1 Camlin, Evan M. *
WO1 Firman, Trevor D. *
WO1 Goins, Tanner D.
WO1 Harrison, Ian P.
WO1 Hickok, Elisha P.
WO1 Keenan, Daniel J., Jr.
WO1 Kennedy, Trevor R.
WO1 Marlowe, Carson Chase W.
WO1 Mutuku, Kyle J. *
WO1 Newman, Ramsay A. *
WO1 Ortega Ceniceros, Gilberto
WO1 Pape, Michael T. *



UFT Class 26-021

WO1 Rhoden, Hannah M.
WO1 Sandoval, Bruce A.
WO1 Snipes, Joseph D.
WO1 Soucier, Scott W. *
WO1 Toribio, Gabriel
WO1 Vancura, John A. *
WO1 Whiting, John P.
WO1 Woelke, Brooke A.

-DG: Distinguished Graduate
-HG: Honor Graduate
* = AAAA Member

ADVANCED INDIVIDUAL TRAINING (AIT) GRADUATIONS

AAAA congratulates the following Army graduates of the indicated Advanced Individual Training (AIT) courses at the 128th Aviation Brigade, Joint Base Langley-Eustis, VA and the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence, Ft. Rucker, AL.

Aviation Maintenance Technician (151A)
Class 005-26
WO1 Jiwon Park * – DG
SGM Mazen Rajab A. Almalkiy
WO1 Sara M. Becker *
WO1 Fitzritson E. Ingram, Jr.
WO1 William R. Robles
Class 006-26
WO1 Jarad A. Cozart * – DG
SGM Fahad Mohammed I. Alzahrani
WO1 Michael Ganesh
WO1 Mikaylah M. Loveless
WO1 Oscar D. Moore, Jr.

AH-64 Attack Helicopter Repairer (15R)
Class 022-26
PV2 Allie Noel Henry * – DG
SGT Elmehdi Aqil
PV2 Daswann Zephen Fitzgerald
PVT Manuel Alexandro Gonzalez
PVT Harley Robert Horne
SPC Cameron Zion Jones
PFC Aleksandr Khantashkeev
PFC Aditya Singh Kushwaha
PFC Reign Taylor Marchant
PFC Gavin Aaron Pollock
FM Hicham Sehraoui
SPC Carter James Stewart
Class 023-26
PFC Gavin August Heiserman * – DG
PV2 Aaron Mark Bruce
PFC Soren Richard Card
PV2 Teerapun Chanamun
PV2 Xander James Cherry
SFC Zouhair Dimame
PV2 Parke Dean Dutzle
PVT Dylan Hunter Gierwatowski
SPC Ronald Eiden Mattlingly
SPC Robert T. May
SSG Ilyas Msaadi
PV2 Luke Paul Zesiger
Class 024-26
PV2 William Keith Small * – DG
1LT Abdulaziz T.M.M. Alshemmari
PFC Alexander Robert Everard
PV2 Bharat Gurung
PV2 Set Michael Ives
PFC Mark Anthony Moon
PV2 Kalel Elliott Pickens
SPC Terry Darrel Redelman
PV2 Amilya Josephine Schaefer
PV2 Micah M. Waithe
Class 025-26
PV2 Elijah William Bentley * – DG
PFC Edgar Alejandro Gonzalez
PV2 Cayden Wayne Gray
PFC William F. Rodriguez
SPC Danyren Marcus Williams
PV2 Johnmark Baliwag Wood

CH-47 Medium Helicopter Repairer (15U)
Class 017-26
PFC Colin Sean Ng Hoffert – DG
PV2 Oliver Martin Alt
PVT Jesse James Randolph Black
PV2 Audrey Ann Burth
PV2 Anthony John Casanas
PFC Joshua William Jenkins
SPC Markece D. Leland-Spencer
PV2 Kevin James Llorente
PV2 Cory Xavier Reel
PFC Robert James Tart
PV2 Diego Vega
SPC Jalen Wheeler
Class 018-26
PFC John Forrest Edmonds * – DG
PVT Noah Jeffrey Baker
SPC Jordan Nicholas Craig
PV2 Antonio Ramon Flores
PV2 Jacob Justin Heinrich
PVT Joseph Patrick Kane
SPC Mustafa Aykut Karapinar
PVT Zakkary Austin Morris
PFC Zaire Najee Parsons
PV2 Joshua Cruz Voss
Class 019-26
PFC Odin Ray Aleksich * – DG
PFC Jedidiah Samuel Coon
SPC Ololade Monday Dairo
SPC John Harold Ford
PV2 Scott Stephen Glaister
PV2 Kyle William Larvik
SPC Gabriel Mendez Lopez
PV2 Louis John Sukey
PV2 Luke Reagan Vinson
Class 020-26
PV2 Logan Daniel Monelo * – DG
PV2 Hassan Ahmed
SPC Jacob Brody Andrews
SPC Kevin Eduardo Calvac
CPL Yandel Cristian Figueroa
PV2 Leonardo Jose Flores-Rios
PVT Brock Alexander Kuznik
CPL Aiden Jacob McNitt
PV2 Alessandro Fernando Moncada
Class 021-26
PFC Luke Henry Marquardt * – DG
PV2 Christopher Ian Cospelich
PV2 Anthony James Decastillia
PVT Tristan Isaac Dierflinger
PVT Brogan Rylan Johns
SPC Casey Nichole Lauderdale
PV2 Gabriyel Alifaa Marshall
PFC Cody Jay Shields
SPC Riley Dean Tucker
SPC Daniel Joe Wherley
PFC Elijah Brooks Willette
Class 022-26
PFC Isaiah Crone Shank * – DG
SGT Jacob Dale Boyd
SGT Addison Arthur Dorn
CPL Mason Wesley Fields
PVT Maddux Kain Franklin
PV2 Ralph Vincent Frasca
SPC Joseph Kwesi Hagan
PV2 Tanna Elizabeth Witmer
PV2 Patrick Lynn Woods
Class 023-26
PFC Caden Shane Steele * – DG
SGT Arnaldo Adolfo Albrineoles
PV2 Suwan Bae
PFC Jacob Clifford Beckett
PFC Elizabeth Grace Bradacs
PV2 Matthew Christopher Davis
PFC Austin Lee Forcade
PV2 Andre Pierce Leblanc
PVT Cooper Duane Olney
PV2 Christian Axel Rivera
SPC Cody Len Waldrop
PV2 Isaac Michael Wuerffel

UH-60 Helicopter Repairer (15T)
Class 033-26
PFC Gregory Augustus Kyser * – DG
PV2 Lloyd Henry Allen
PV2 Evelyn Gracebecerra Beckby
PFC William Brett Burrell
PVT Ethan Amos Lamar Covington
PV2 Joshua James Curry
MSG Smaragda Dalamagkidou
PV2 Sara Nicole Hale
PFC Ramon Jaudiel Sanchez-Jaime
PV2 Matthew Leonard Theisen
PV2 Gavin Joshua Tuberville
PFC Gilberto Sixto Vasquez
Class 034-26
SPC Gunnar Willis Rhoads * – DG
SPC Aaron David Broom
PFC Paddy Dong
PFC Aiden Christopher Eckard
SPC Parker Scout Golemon
PFC Elijah Thomas Hornberger
SPC Supee Jirattikanchot
SPC Montana Ray Charles Mann
PVT Noah Westen Meeks
PFC Theodore William Musselman
PV2 Hunter Patrick Royer
SPC Anthony Bryant Simmons
Class 035-26
PFC David Arturo Santos * – DG
PFC Andrew Jadon Baham
PV2 Owen Christopher Bateman
PFC Sean Tomas Breslin
PV2 Luis Alvaro Carrillo *
PV2 Yariel De La Cruz-Garcia
PFC Darick Eldon Payne
PV2 Alexander Russell Pope
PFC Andres M Rodriguez-Cuadros
PFC Nicholas Macgregor Scribner
PV2 Andrew Maurice Shotwell
PFC Christian Ivan Velez
Class 036-26
PFC Sean Connor Ponce * – DG
PVT Aslan Azhiev
PV2 Jacob Joseph Biggs
PV2 Kawlin Ryan Jones
SPC Jongmin Jack Kim
PFC Noah Alan McClanahan
PFC Robert Michael Stepp
SPC Brian Rodolfo Torres Monroy
Class 037-26
PV2 Gabriel Jude Byers * – DG
PFC Adriel Abanes Alacar
PVT Kyle Price Anderson
PV2 Gavin Jon Blome
PV2 Aidan Samuel Dexter
PFC James Artis Emerson
PV2 Christopher Jacob Farmer
PV2 Wyatt Beck Johnson
PV2 Caleb Charles Kidder
PV2 Ethan Joel May
PFC Olivia Danielle Nally
Class 038-26
PV2 Calvin David Schumann * – DG
PV2 Ayden Elijah Nicolas
PV2 Tyler Charles Oger
PFC Timothy Lawson Porter
PFC Radesh Kumar Ramnandan
PV2 Cole Matthew Roduner
PV2 Gurjit Singh
PFC Riley Ansel Smith
PFC Kai Ashby Tom
PV2 Daniel James Watson *
Class 202-26
PV2 Alex Yang * – DG
PV2 Dustin Drew Dillman
PV2 Titus Lee Larson
SPC Aaron Maldonado
PV2 Daniel Klaus Moy
PV2 Luke Mitchell Prejean
PFC Gregory Shawn Seaman
PVT Jonathan Christopher Stinnett
Class 203-26
PV2 Ryan James Thompson * – DG
PVT Tyler Joseph Brown

Continued on next page

People On The Move

ADVANCED INDIVIDUAL TRAINING (AIT) GRADUATIONS *continued*

PV2 Brayden Michael Gable
SGT Johnathan Samuel Hake
PFC Daniel Scott Hoadley
PV2 Cory James Hookie
PVT Aiden Myers
PFC Carson Oakley Perdew
PV2 Diego Keoni Pettypool
PV2 Aidan Grant Wojciak
SPC Xiaochen Wu
Class 041-26
SPC Trent Lee Newell * – DG
PVT Nicholas Alexander Arny
SPC Stephen Parker Bellew
PFC Tyler Lee Cox
PV2 Avery Ann Fritz
PV2 George William Gordon
PV2 Joshua Cole Granum
PV2 Edward Alonso Guerrero
PV2 Jaelin Alan Tanner Hart
PV2 Ethan Edward Lylo
PV2 Jerry Alixander Reilly
Class 042-26
PFC Josiah Wayne Hottenstein * – DG
PVT Anthony Jay Baker
SPC Willie James Cook
SPC Kilanin Q. Gamazon
PV2 Vincent Grey Garmon
PV2 Omari Safeer Griffin
SPC Nathaniel David Hamrick
PV2 Jason Peter Marquez
PV2 Kyle Boyd Westover
Class 043-26
PV2 James Warren Ezell * – DG
PV2 Reed James Bonar
PVT Trenton Swayse Elliott
PV2 Makaio Feria
SPC Lorenzo Xavier Florez
PV2 Jose Laureano
PV2 Bryton William Ricci
Class 044-26
PV2 Aiden Julian Muniz * – DG
SPC Jacob Claude Cowan
PV2 William James Paine
PFC Nicholas Lee Ramirez
PV2 Devon Joel Serrato
SPC Chandler Jared Striegel
SPC Jesse Michael Wells
Class 045-26
PV2 Joshua Thomas Rispens * – DG
PV2 Andon Joseph Agler
PV2 Michael Fortune Bawack Ashu
PFC Diana Arizel Barrientez
PV2 Jocelyn Riley Bridgman
PV2 Luke Evans Brown
PV2 Cody William Griffin
PV2 Austin Charles Hendrix
PVT Chason Jeremiah Lamothe
PVT Jacques Mukuba Mila
PFC Brady James Randall
PV2 Natalie Mari Sanchez
Class 046-26
PFC Camden Walter Tew * – DG
PV2 Andres Avelino Amador
PFC Arsenal James J. H. Bolosan
SPC Casey Clinton Burdette
PFC Luis Alfredo Estrada
SPC Carson Michael Fallert
PV2 Charles Robert Gavin Ituarte
PV2 Jonathan Luke Johnson
PV2 Devin Jaydin Mullins
PFC Amani Javaughn Person
PFC Franklin Steve Rodriguez-Castro
PV2 Morgan Yaksic
Class 047-26
SPC Kayley Alonzo * – DG
PFC Richard Gomez
PV2 Uriel Alfonso Gurrola
PFC Maxwell Arthur Haggett
PFC Evan J. Hamilton
PV2 Thomas James Hunt
PVT Kevin Japhet James
PV2 Cade Michael Leblanc
PV2 Colin Joseph McCrary
PV2 Alexandra Daniela Morales Lopez
PV2 Alora Sarah Rae Watts
PFC Kevin Alexander Williams
Class 048-26
PV2 Elston Anthony Cadle
SPC Owen Christopher Cavanagh
SGT Joshua Aiden Champer
PV2 Thomas Malcolm Dinning
SPC Brandon Cole Dow
PV2 Alex Coy Jurkiewicz
SPC Caleb Ryan Martin
PV2 Rafael Leonidas Martinez
SPC William Alexander Morales
PFC Matthew David Puma
PV2 Nicholas Rey Serl
PFC Gustavo Valentin Trindade
Class 050-26
PFC Madilyn Paige P. Roesner * – DG
PV2 Andrew Michael Begany
PV2 Aiden Christopher Brown
PV2 Kadyn John Coffman
PV2 George Gomez
SPC Noah Hunter Hatfield
PVT Dominic Jacob Malachi Haynes
PFC Trenton Michael MacReady
PFC Quade Michael Parker
PV2 Samuel Isai Ramos Garcia
PV2 Alyssa Leann Weeks
PV2 Yide Yang

Aircraft Powerplant Repairer (15B)
Class 006-26
PFC Shiva Lakhan * – DG
SPC Asahal Barros De Souza
PV2 Travis James Bergquist
SPC Bibek Nepali
PV2 Jose Daniel Paniagua
PV2 Bradley Nathaniel Turner
PV2 Denzel Benedict Paulius
Class 007-26
SPC Dylan Christopher Azzarella * – DG
PFC David Allyne Bach
PV2 Benjamen Todd Dressler
PFC Mingyun Kim
PFC Christian Alexander Lozada
SGT Cheyenne Autumn Peterman
PV2 Braxton Mikel Wheatfill

Aircraft Powertrain Repairer (15D)
Class 005-26
SPC Theodore Joseph Carter * – DG
SPC Jason Matthew Blumberg, Jr.
PVT Ivan Carbajal-Tolentino
PFC Jeremy Eliezer Cardona-Diaz
PFC Joshua Scott Kelly
SPC Anna A. Martinez-Bazhenova
SPC Jeremy Bryan Paz
PV2 David Matthew Ritzenthaler
SPC Derrick Deshone Singleton
PVT Kyle Austin Terbaniesingh
PV2 Caleb Brannon Townsend
SPC Dmytro Zaitsev

Aircraft Electrician (15F)
Class 009-26
PV2 Albert Garlin Engler * – DG
PFC Brandon A. Carmona Mendoza
PV2 Alfredo Charco Arciga
PV2 Malik Au'justice Ricklefs
PFC Jonathan Ramon Martinez
PV2 Cristian Diego Todd
Class 010-26
PFC Rafael Makoa Kekumu Arroyo * – DG
SPC Dylan Matthew Daw
PVT Adil Mihbach
PV2 Morgan Joseph Quinn
PFC Regan Ezekiel Ramdhanie
PFC Jelani Noel Gomez
SPC Vincent Maina Riri
PFC Bidhan Shrees

Aircraft Structural Repairer (15G)
Class 006-26
PVT Zackery Dawson Pieper * – DG
SPC Oluwadamilola David Adeboga
SGT Wendy Lynn Bouton
PV2 Matthew William Caplinger
PFC Branden Laroy Cheeseboro
PV2 Gage Wyatt Clark
SPC Kodjo Arsene Edem Doe
SPC Daniel Fernandez Contreras
PV2 Paul John Grumbine
PFC Conlan Charles Keane
PV2 Huzairu Mensah
SPC Umar Mensah
PFC Jermiah Francisco Pablo
PFC Sebastian Noel Tovar Alaniz
Class 007-26
PFC Samuel Alexander Ritter * – DG
SPC Steven Henry Athas
PV2 Ryan Ko Barry
PFC Landon Richard Box
PV2 Sibe James Brooks
PV2 David Adair Cooper, III
PV2 Jackson Lee Cooper
SPC Kwame Obeng Nuamah
SPC Jerome Romeo Reid
SPC Chagdyr Sandzhiev

Aircraft Hydraulics Repairer (15H)
Class 006-26
PV2 Theo Latron Poole * – DG
PFC Jacob Asher Finkelstein
PV2 Steven Esau Hernandez-Umana
PV2 Teylor Adrian Herrera-Herrera
PFC Cindy Maame Kwabru Kwofie
PV2 Colin Lee Martin
PV2 Juan Manuel Ocampo-Pineda
PV2 Kartiko Yudha Pratama
PFC Daniel Balanza Soriano
PFC Erik Thomas Winther

Avionic Repairer (15N)
Class 005-26
PV2 Jahlil Nasir Radford
PFC Jasmine Rivera
PFC Bryce Jameson Rush
PFC Alanna Lynn Vigil
PV2 Esmeralda Villarreal
PVT Pilar Bernice Torres
Class 006-26
SPC Mason Zane Sharpe * – DG
PV2 Crescens Cloven Crayton
PV2 Luis Fernando Del Rosario Sanchez
PFC Osbaldo Gaspar Juan
PV2 Roydrick Xavier Jones
SPC Landon Earl Wilburn
Class 024-26
SPC Krisstina Marquez * – DG
SPC Spencer Eason Barker
PV2 Allison Marie Bowen
PV2 Caden Alexander McManama
PFC Titus Stephen Scott
SGT Tyler Patrick Souders
PFC Rafael Xavier Vasquez
PV2 Jael Vazquez
Class 007-26
PFC Eduardo Jose Gonzalez-Otero * – DG
PV2 Regan Chelsea Betts
PV2 Marquise Eugene Dumas
PFC Georgia Anne Hodge
PV2 Dymin Mina Kakazu
PV2 Micah Caleb McDaniel
SPC Jorge Deigo Mendoza
PV2 Joshua Adam Pagan
Class 008-26
PV2 Olvan Steven Avila
PV2 Anthony Paul Dickerson
PFC Jorge Vega Dominguez
SPC Jordany Echavarria-Robles
PV2 Behren Spencer Mahan
PFC Asher R. Nottingham *
PFC Luis Angel Parra Lopez
PV2 Reece Robert Wegner
Class 201-26
PV2 Chase Bryant Kaberline * – DG
PV2 Joshua Abisay Avila-Gomez
PVT Victor De Jesus Barrera Robles
PFC Tomber Botero
PFC Gabriel Alexander Hester
PFC Antonio Manuel Martinez
PV2 Alex De Jesus Ortega
PFC Seth William Salisbury

AH-64 Armament/Electrical/ Avionic Systems Repairer (15Y)
Class 011-26
PFC Kyle Matthew Kraus * – DG
PV2 Sean Michael Baker
PFC Adan Bautisa
PVT Johnike Thomas Browne
PFC Jeffery Scott Carvalho
PVT Michael Oneill Gustin
PV2 Gideon David Hatridge
PV2 Jd Aleksandr Rainwater
PV2 Ashlynn Rebecca Rowley
SPC Ryan C. Stinson
Class 012-26
PV2 Connor James Silva * – DG
SPC Zachary Alan Freiley
PFC Rigoberto Alisandro Lopez
PFC Benjamin John Walworth
SPC Ethan Ashley Ward
Class 013-26
PFC Zahid Habib Hernandez * – DG
PFC James Curtis Allen
PFC James Michael Har Boucher
PVT Cristian Charles Kelsey
PVT Calvin Henry Larson
PFC Hector Rodriguez
PV2 Zane Tyler Scholemer
PV2 Charles Eugene Walker
PV2 Jaylin Christopher Wilmore
PV2 Andres Felipe Zapata
Class 014-26
SPC Ethan Thomas Foster * – DG
SPC Evan Matthew Bass
SPC Brendon Patrick Czarnowski
PV2 Alejandro Herrera
SPC Sierra N. Jeffery
PVT Joseph Lara
SPC Benjamin Andrew Larsen
PV2 Lucio Vicente Reyna

- DG: Distinguished Graduate
* = AAAA Member

UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS (UAS) GRADUATIONS

UAS Repairer
AAAA congratulates the following Army graduates of the Unmanned Aircraft Systems Courses at Fort Huachuca, AZ.

RQ-7 Repairer (15E), TUAS Trained (15X)
Course 26-506, 05 August 26
PFC Fowlston, Dominic – HG
PV2 Bailey, Ryan
PV2 Cheatham, Destinie
PV2 Craver, Michael
PFC Tirado, Caridad
Course 26-507, 19 August 26
SPC Kim, James – HG
PVT Chaney, Matthew
PV2 Dodson, Corey
PV2 Hill, Elsie
PV2 Mcginley, Katelyn
PV2 Mentjox, Matthew
PV2 Monroe, Grayden
PV2 Munn, Nicholas
PV2 Olien, Stephen
Course 26-508, 02 September 26
PV2 Doyle, Ty-Eugene
PV2 Guzman-Ramos, Fabian
PV2 Makulinski, Joshua
PFC Matthew, Donte
PV2 Rife, Cody
PV2 Selck, Ethan
PVT Smith, Shawn
PVT Stennett, Gavin
PVT Tamayo-Lopez, Robelquis
PFC Widdoes, Adon

RQ-7 Operator (15W), TUAS Trained (15X)
Course 26-513, 21 July 26
PV2 Christensen, Walter – DG
PFC Luke, Zaalilyah – HG
PVT Allen, Vaun
PFC Cosser, Christian
PV2 Dean, Caleb
PV2 Durham, Charles
PV2 Ellis, Daniel
PFC Henriquez, Ricardo
PVT Hughes, Cooper
PFC Levie, Gage
PV2 Lovvorn, Tanner
PV2 Martinez, Miguel

People On The Move

UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS (UAS) GRADUATIONS

PV2 Negron-Fernandez, Arturo
PV2 Perez, Lorenzo
PV2 Phimmasone, Alley
PFC Satterwhite, Joseph
PVT Talley, Bryan
PV2 Trice, Austin
PV2 Vineyard, Jarrod
PV2 Welch, Kacen
PV2 Williams, Anderson
PV2 Worthy-Montgomery, John
Course 26-515, 05 August 26
SPC Smith, Trayton – DG
PV2 Agustiniano, Joel
PVT Antonio, Najal
PVT Araujo, Julio
SPC Baez, Angel
PVT Barnes, Ke'anthony
SPC Bennett, Jonathon
PV2 Garcia, Johnny
PV2 Gonzalez, Adrean
PVT Hallums, Thomas
PV2 Havelock, Anthony
PV2 Helfrich, Maddox
SPC Houser, Paul
PV2 Joseph, Capreil
SGT Landon, Jordan
PV2 Little, Harvey
SPC Macias, Sandra
PV2 Moralia, Juan
PVT Murillo, Alec
SPC Mwendwa, Joseph
PV2 Nichols, Phoenix
PV2 Oller, Kayden
PVT Russell, Gannon
PV2 Townley, Gavin
Course 26-517, 19 August 26
PFC Miner, Lochlan – DG
PV2 Bowden, Cameron
PFC Cano, Christian
PV2 Castilla, Kevin
PVT Condon, Ryan
PVT Devine, Brendan
SPC Donkor, Keenan
PV2 Dye, Madison
PV2 Floyd, James
PVT Jones, Marcus
PFC Jung, Jin
PFC Newbill, Berton
PFC Niemala, James
PFC Phillips, Tenasia
PV2 Preisner, Robert
PFC Purvis, Gavin
PVT Shonblom, Patrick
SPC Spiller, Savannah
PFC Thompson, William
PV2 Vasquez, Abbigail
PFC Zechman, Ethan
Course 26-518, 19 August 26
PVT Ivey, Caden – DG
PVT Kolkman, Jaxon – HG
SPC Blanchard, Kevin
PFC Giesing, Benjamin
PVT Halleck, Ryan
PVT Harris, Gabe
PFC Hazen, Wyatt
SPC Johnson, Cole
PV2 Merritt, Boyd
PVT Metris, Damyan
PV2 Pankratz, Emerson
PV2 Portis, Matrion
PV2 Reed, Isaac
SGT Simms, Marquis
SPC Young, Ethan
Course 26-519, 02 September 26
PV2 Schweitzer, David – DG
SPC Coady, Paul – HG
PFC Acra, Caydin
PFC Baer, Lukas
PFC Crawford, Alexander
PV2 Danielson, Calvin
PV2 Frank, William
PFC Hower, Denver
SPC Konopka, Alexander
PV2 Lopez, Anthony
SPC Mcdiffitt, Luke
PV2 Newkirk, William
SPC Pacifico, Louis
PV2 Ruiz, Judah
PVT Suniga, Jonathan
PV2 Thayer, Clayton
PV2 Tran, Khai
PV2 Vanepps, Robert
SPC Woods, Joshua
Course 26-520, 02 September 26
SPC Hainey, Alexander – DG
PVT Bright, Ian – HG
SGT Caudill, William
PV2 Harris, Michael
SPC Haynes, Benjamin
SSG Heneisen, David
PV2 Jones-Durant, Cairo
PFC Lee, Jeremiah *
PFC Malcolm, Grant
PV2 Moore, Derek
PVT Morales, Timothy
PFC Morgan, Jeramie
PV2 Palinckx, Daniel
PFC Pate, Randy
PV2 Rodriguez, Christopher
PFC Vincente, Kevin

MQ-1 "Gray Eagle" Repairer (15M)
Course 26-003, 22 July 26
SGT Raynor, Braden – DG
PFC Dunkel, Mark
PFC Gilcrease, Landon
PFC Rubio, Melissa
PVT Santiago, Janelys
PV2 Wingo, Colton
Course 26-004, 03 September 26
PV2 Hall, Aiden – DG
PFC Alvarado, Zachary
PFC Darosa, Joshua
PFC Lehr, Wyatt
PFC Miranda, Jamil
PV2 Osborn, Chase
Course 26-501, 03 September 26
PV2 Samman, Sam – DG
SSG Lee, Andrew
SGT Marroquin, Edgar
PVT Mitcheltree, Philip
PFC Vallin, Samuel
PV2 Yensco, Corey

MQ-1 "Gray Eagle" Operator (15C)
Course 26-005, 11 August 26
SPC Foster, William – DG
SPC Chit, Bawi – HG
PV2 Artiles, Joseph
PFC Ashby, Randall
PFC Cetnar, Lily
PVT Chaboya, Jayden
PV2 Duran, Levi
SPC Ericksen, Johnathan
SPC Floyd, Timothy
SGT Gauthier, Christian
PVT Guevara, Gavin

DG - Distinguished Graduate
HG - Honor Graduate

* = AAAA Member
\+ = Life Member

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Each month, one company will be spotlighted in ARMY AVIATION Magazine in the Advertiser Spotlight section. If chosen, your company may submit newsworthy information that will appeal to the Army Aviation community. ***To qualify, your company must have a signed 2026 insertion order for print advertising*** *(1 Ad Minimum). Selected company will be randomly chosen by the 15th of the month prior.*



AAAA **Legislative** Report

By LTC (Ret.) Kevin Cochie
AAAA Representative to the Military Coalition (TMC)
kevin.cochie@quad-a.org

Congress Adjourns; The Bills Keep Coming

In September we reported that a continuing resolution appeared all but certain and that final action on the FY27 defense bills could slip to a lame duck session or into the next Congress. That forecast has been overtaken by events, and not in the direction any of us hoped. Congress has finished its legislative business ahead of the midterms. The only thing it finished was the CR.

Consider the full scope of what Members left behind when they departed for their states and districts. No FY27 National Defense Authorization Act, ending a streak of consecutive annual authorizations that has survived far worse political conditions than these. No defense appropriations bill. No wartime supplemental, despite sustained operations in the CENTCOM area of responsibility. No defense reconciliation package. What passed was a stopgap; a legislative permission slip that keeps the doors open while excusing the delinquency that made it necessary. Congress has arranged to be graded on attendance rather than performance, and it went home before the grades were posted.

The mechanics of a CR are well known to this readership, so I will not belabor them. What deserves attention this month is the second-order effect: the bills are stacking up. Sustained operations in CENTCOM are consuming munitions and key kinetic weapons at rates the current appropriation was never structured to support, and perceived shortages in precision munitions and interceptors are now a standing topic in briefings and in the trade press. Replenishment is a procurement problem. Procurement is precisely the account a stopgap freezes. Every month the CR runs, the eventual bill grows, and the competition for dollars that Army Aviation will face in the spring grows with it.

The Department, to its credit, has not waited on Congress. The Pentagon sent billions of dollars in reprogramming actions to the four congressional defense committees this cycle, one of which was critical to keeping the Future Long Range Assault Aircraft program moving forward. That action deserves recognition, and it deserves perspective. Reprogramming is a useful instrument, not a substitute for an appropriation. It moves money the Department already has rather than providing money it needs; it requires committee approval that spends real goodwill with staff; and it cannot be treated as a recurring workaround for a Congress that will not pass a bill. We should be grateful the FLRAA action went through. We should not mistake it for a funding strategy.

Through all of it, one thing has remained constant, and it is the part of this report I never have to revise. The professionalism within Army Aviation has not wavered. Readiness is not generated in a committee room; it is generated on the flight line before dawn by maintainers working supply timelines and phase schedules to keep aircraft on the board, and by aircrews who fly the mission as briefed whether or not an authorizing bill ever reaches the floor. That grit is the reason the Army still has a ready aviation force for Congress to argue about.

It is also worth stating plainly that Army Aviation remains held in high regard across Capitol Hill. Last month I described AAAA's intent to broaden our outreach beyond the House Army Aviation Caucus. That work is underway, and it starts from an unusually strong position. Aviators sit as Members in both chambers, and Army aviation experience is represented in key professional staff positions on the authorizing and appropriating committees. Very few communities can say the same. It is a meaningful part of why our programs continue to draw bipartisan support in a year when Congress produced almost nothing else.

Goodwill, however, is not a budget line, and this is where I would ask the membership to temper optimism with realism. Going into 2027, the funding picture for every Army Aviation priority is more fragile than the rhetoric suggests. Congress returns to a compressed calendar, an expiring CR, a changed political configuration after November and a backlog that now includes an NDAA, a defense appropriations bill, a probable supplemental and a munitions replenishment problem that will not wait. Aviation will compete for those dollars against shipbuilding, missile defense and interceptor lines with powerful advocates of their own. A full-year CR, no longer an unthinkable outcome, would hold FLRAA procurement, enduring fleet modernization and readiness accounts at prior-year levels through a year the Army cannot afford to lose.

By the time this edition reaches your mailbox, the midterm elections will be over, but the cliff will still be in front of us; the current CR expires in early December. Regardless of the outcome or who controls either chamber, that expiration is the calendar date with the most consequence for Army Aviation. The weeks before the lame duck are the window to act. Aviators, families, retirees and industry partners who reach their Members now, in plain terms, about what a ready aviation force costs and delivers will be heard more clearly than any of us will be in a hearing room in February.

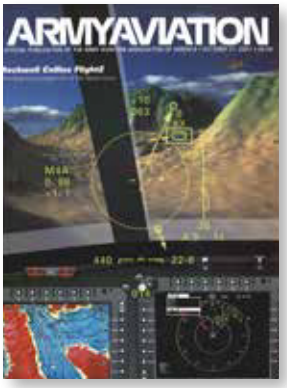


Art's Attic

By Mark Albertson

Art's Attic is a look back each issue at 25 and 50 years ago to see what was going on in ARMY AVIATION Magazine. Contributing editor Mark Albertson has selected a few key items from each decade's issues. Art Kesten is our founder and first publisher from 1953 to 1987. He is also the founder of the AAAA in 1957 and served as its Executive Vice President. The cartoon, right, was created back in 1953 by LT Joe Gayhart, a friend of Art's and an Army Aviator, showing the chaos of his apartment-office in New York City where it all began.





25 Years Ago

October 2001

Post 9/11

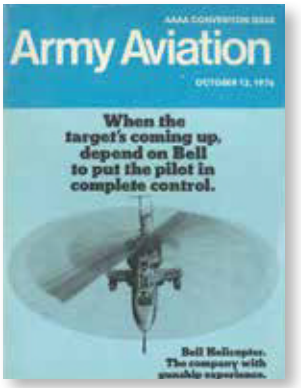
As the Nation recovers from the recent terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center and Pentagon, many elements of the Department of Defense and Army have husbanded their resources for the task at hand. Pictured against the New York City skyline is a Black Hawk landing on the deck of the hospital ship, USNS *Comfort*. September 19, 2001. Piped aboard will be Secretary of the Army, Thomas E. White.



Army Aviation Hall of Fame: CW4 Billy J. Fulbright (Ret.)



Billy Fulbright came out of one of the early warrant officer training classes at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. He became an instructor pilot in the H-21 transition school at Fort Riley, Kansas. Many of his trainees became pilots in the first five cargo helicopter companies in Vietnam, 1961 and 1962. Billy himself became an instructor pilot for the 8th Transportation Company in Vietnam and flew medevac and reconnaissance missions in an L-19. In 1963, Billy helped to form a Caribou Transition Course at Fort Benning, Georgia; and, readied pilots for both fixed and rotary wing aircraft for the 11th Air Assault Division tests. In 1967, he trained in the Navy's P-2V Neptune patrol bomber. After accomplishing other milestones, he retired in 1975 with 30 years of service, logging more than 8,700 hours (1,200 were combat hours), and more than 1,000 hours in P-2Vs. He was qualified in 25 aircraft types.



50 Years Ago

October 19, 1976

AAAA National Executive Board Members Serving, 1965-1969

In its first two years, the AAAA National Board totaled eleven. In 1959, three to five Regional Presidents were added. In 1962, National Members at Large were approved, going from one in 1962 to nine today. The Board's Past President retained a Board seat, being joined by 18 to 22 chapter presidents with 150+ members. Total: A Board of 48 to 52 members.

AAAA's Splinter Group: The "Cub Club"



This club is indeed unique, and for a variety of reasons. It is a confederation with no dues, no officers and no established meetings. It has no agenda, no by-laws, no lapel pins, nor budget or charter. Nor does it boast of awards, policies, leadership or staff. But it does support an AAAA scholarship every year. But its membership is rich in persons who answered the call to defend this Nation in times of peril, starting with the Air Observation Post and as it evolved into becoming Army Aviation. Indeed, a unique association of Americans.

The 353 Twenty-Year Members Who Joined AAAA in 1957.


THE 353 TWENTY-YEAR MEMBERS WHO JOINED AAAA IN 1957

With AAAA's activation, April 18, 1957, "Army Aviation" had 4,307 subscribers. By 1958, more than 800 had converted their subscriptions to memberships and joined with others to constitute the Association's 1,403 Charter Members. The 353 members are listed on these two pages—54 and 55—and have stayed with it.

Army Aviation Hall of Fame

The Army Aviation Hall of Fame, sponsored by the Army Aviation Association of America, Inc., recognizes those individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to Army Aviation.

The actual Hall of Fame is located in the Army Aviation Museum, Fort Rucker, AL.

The deadline for nominations for the 2028 induction is June 1, 2027

Contact the AAAA National Office for details and nomination forms at (203) 268-2450 or visit www.quad-a.org

Chief Warrant Officer Five Jack Dotterer, Retired

Army Aviation Hall of Fame 2022 Induction — Nashville, TN



Chief Warrant Officer Five (Ret.) Jack Dotterer's most lasting achievements resulted from his brilliant and relentless acquisition and program management skills during his Army career in the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment's Systems Integration and Management Office, (SIMO) and during his 20-year civilian career as a SETA (Systems Engineering and Technical Assistance) contractor at vertical flight's technical leading edge.

He retired after 31 years of military service on 31 December 1999, serving in both conventional and Special Operations units. He had over 6,500 flight hours, 1,280 in combat, and for which he was awarded 21 Air Medals, including one for valor.

His achievements as a civilian resulted in unparalleled aircraft modernization contributions which were directed to the advancement of Army Aviation and tactical force projection throughout the 20th and 21st century. He was dedicated to the development, readiness and mission accomplishment of conventional and special operations Army aircraft.

As the Senior MH-60 Program Integrator for the Technology Applications Program Office (TAPO), Jack delivered unique capabilities to our national leadership. He also proved to be a highly capable logistician and strategic planner who was instrumental in the establishment of the SOF aviation depot at Lexington Blue Grass Army Depot (LBAD). It became the model for the Army's Prototype Integration Facility (PIF) and the Logistics Support Facility (LSF).

CW5 (Ret.) Jack Dotterer had the heart of a warrior, the brain of an engineer and the work ethic of few other men. Many of his contributions to Army Aviation technologies are still used to this day and have provided the foundation for advances in weapon systems, aircraft survivability, communications and cockpit systems that have proliferated across the entire Army.

His legacy will be felt by thousands of both conventional and Special Operations Aviators for decades to come.

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