KEITH'S CONGRESSIONAL CORNER

"Without supplemental funding now, the Air Force must cut critical facility and readiness requirements, driving Air Force-wide operational risks and negatively impacting the recovery of Tyndall and Offutt."

- The Honorable Heather Wilson, Secretary of the Air Force

Our thoughts are with those at Offut Air Force Base, Nebraska. In mid-March, flood waters left nearly two-thirds of the base under water. In the meantime, Tyndall AFB in Florida remains devastated from October 2018's Hurricane Michael and short funds needed for recovery.

Congress should pass the ‘Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief, 2019’ bill to provide needed recovery funding. The Air Force requires $1.2 billion in Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 and $3.7 billion in FY 2020/FY 2021 of supplemental funding to rebuild Tyndall AFB, FL and recover Offutt AFB, NE. Without this funding, the Air Force will have to make difficult decisions and take funds from planned construction project—affecting warfighters, families, and defense communities.

"Regardless of where the next conflict occurs or which adversary it features, the Air Force will be at the forefront."

- National Defense Strategy Commission

House Armed Services Committee Chairman Rep. Adam Smith (D-WA) has proposed a $733 billion defense budget—a $13 billion increase over Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 but less than the administration’s proposed $750 billion budget. Historically, Congress has been supportive of providing big ticket needs to the services, however, a $17 billion cut to the president’s proposed defense budget may mean the warfighters wait for what they need.

“A return to sequestration would erase the gains we made over the last three years and inflict substantial damage to our national defense.”


It is important to remember that current Budget Control Act (BCA) law set FY 2020’s spending at a significantly lower level: $576 billion. If the law isn’t changed, the Department of Defense (DOD) will undergo devastating spending reductions, jeopardizing readiness and modernization...
“A modern, autonomous, and thoroughly trained Air Force in being at all times will not alone be sufficient, but without it there can be no national security.”
- Gen. Henry ‘Hap’ Arnold, General of the Air Force

In its $165.6 billion “Blue” budget, Air Force leaders testified that its priorities include F-35A fighters, KC-46 tankers, B-21 bombers, Ground Based Strategic Deterrent, Long-Range Strike Option, T-X trainer aircrafts, UH-1N helicopter replacements, and hypersonics technology. It requested a 17 percent increase in the space budget and testified that to conduct its many missions, the Air Force must grow approximately 25 percent to 386 operational squadrons (from its current 312). The budget calls for the Total Force to grow to 4,400 personnel—including a meager growth of only 700 in the Air National Guard and 100 in the Air Force Reserve.

“The acquisition system that won the Cold War invented the technology. Now, the technology comes from industry. We have to ingest commercial technology.”
- Dr. Will Roper, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics

We should leverage the industrial base by funding industry's research into sixth-generation aircraft, hypersonics, artificial intelligence (AI), and swarming drones. Our nation took a defense research holiday and now has to reinvest in itself.

Meanwhile, DOD civilians are overdue for a much-deserved pay raise, yet the president's budget did not request one. **AFA advocates for the Total Force, and defense civilians are a critical part of the Air Force.**

**AFA advocates that Congress collaborate and complete the Defense and Veterans Affairs budgets by the start of the next fiscal year.** The National Defense Strategy tasks the Air Force with demands that only stable and predictable budgets can provide. The FY 2019 budget—delivered on time—helped fix readiness and lift the Air Force in modernization.

AFA recently met with the Honorable James Stewart, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel & Readiness, at a small group meeting in the Pentagon. Military/veterans benefits were discussed, and AFA advocated for protections and improvements to TRICARE, personnel end-strength, civilian pay raises, specialty pay, GI Bill transfer eligibility, military children, pharmacy prescription fees, and Arlington National Cemetery eligibility requirements.

AFA has been engaged with DOD regarding the appalling issue of privatized housing—an effort that began in the 1990s but has become the topic of congressional and media derision. Admittedly, DOD dropped the ball on the issue, and is working towards improving the issue by 1) re-energizing all levels of leadership 2) re-energizing their partners 3) creating a Residents’ Bill of Rights, and 4) producing a common lease independent of location or private entity. DOD has been visiting homes and meeting occupants. **AFA continues to tell DOD and Congress that members and their families deserve clean, safe, high quality, and affordable housing.**

**AIR FORCE HIGHLIGHTS**

“Airpower has become predominant, both as a deterrent to war, and—in the eventuality of war—as the devastating force to destroy an enemy’s potential and
The U.S. Air Force is operating a fighter aircraft inventory on the brink of disaster. The vast majority of its fighter aircraft were designed at the conclusion of the Vietnam War, were produced in the 1980s, and are increasingly not capable of meeting future threats. An immediate change in defense policy and resourcing is required to ensure U.S. air superiority meets the urgent and pragmatic real-world security objectives of the 2018 national defense strategy. …What was once “tomorrow’s threat” is now today’s reality. Deterring the ambitions of modern adversaries demands a fighter force inventory properly sized and infused with advanced fifth-generation capabilities. Read more.

Awaiting Relief Funds, Wilson Defers Dozens of Maintenance Projects
AirForceMag.com | 26 Mar 2019 | by Rachel Cohen, AF Magazine

Recovering Tyndall AFB, Fla. and Offutt AFB, Neb. will require $1.2 billion in fiscal 2019 and $3.7 billion across 2020 and 2021, even as the final price tag continues to evolve, the Air Force said Wednesday.

The new figures come as the Senate considers an emergency disaster-relief spending bill that would help offset the cost of cleanup and early restoration work. [Note: AFA is advocating for the prompt passage of the disaster-relief appropriations bill currently languishing in Congress.]

Speaking at the Heritage Foundation this week, Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson said she decided on Tuesday to pull more than $250 million from 61 projects at 33 installations in 18 states to pay for rebuilding efforts at hurricane- and tornado-ravaged Tyndall. The base needs about $1 billion by the end of September for operations and maintenance projects, as well as to plan its next steps, Wilson said earlier this month. Read more.

“Offense is the essence of air power.”
- Gen. Henry ‘Hap’ Arnold, General of the Air Force

With Air Force’s Skyborg, autonomous drones could be coming soon
FedScoop.com | 26 Mar 2019 | by Billy Mitchell

The U.S. Air Force wants to rapidly field autonomous drone prototypes through a program it’s calling Skyborg.

Skyborg will be an “autonomous unmanned air combat vehicle system” with open artificial-intelligence software architecture and modular hardware, the service said in a
What aircraft does the US Air Force need to beat China and Russia? This new study has an answer.

Last September, the U.S. Air Force revealed that it will need a total of 386 operational squadrons to take on future threats posed by Russia and China. A new congressionally mandated study posits that number may not be enough.

Further, the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments study — which has been obtained exclusively by Defense News — goes on to recommend that the Air Force begin developing a handful of new technologies not in its plans, including a stealthy weaponized drone, a new unmanned reconnaissance plane that can penetrate into contested spaces, and refueling tankers that are unlike anything in its current inventory. Read more.

"Say it ain't so, Joe."
- Fictional Quote to Shoeless Joe Jackson, Chicago White Sox

Space Force’s Projected Size Drifts Upward, Drawing Concern on Capitol Hill
MilitaryTimes.com | 20 Mar 2019 | by Tara Copp

Pentagon officials have often used the word “lean” when talking about the proposed Space Force, an effort to ease lawmakers’ concerns about creating more bureaucracy. But congressional aides being briefed by defense officials privately about the plan remain skeptical about the size of the proposed branch and the number of generals who will lead it. Read more.

A government watchdog is investigating Trump’s defense secretary. Here’s why.
MilitaryTimes.com | 20 Mar 2019 | by Tara Copp

The Department of Defense Inspector General announced Wednesday it had initiated an investigation into Acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan over reports that he has disparaged competing defense companies to the potential benefit of his former firm, Boeing. Read more.

“We are more ready for major combat operations today than we were two years ago. More than 90 percent of our pacing squadrons are ready to “fight tonight” with their lead force packages.”

2020 BUDGET: Airpower Wins Big; 'Multi-Domain' Emerges
At $57.7 billion, the “Air Domain” is the largest single category, by far, in the 2020 budget request’s list of major investments to “enhance competitiveness” with great-power rivals. Almost all of it is Air Force programs, with the F-35, despite cuts, still the largest single item. Read more.

QUOTES TO NOTE

“Here’s how the House Armed Services Committee works. We have people from the Pentagon, we have people from think tanks come in and tell us about a threat. They then explain how we are totally unprepared for the threat, there’s a risk we’re all going to die, and they say we have to spend money. This is the entire theme of how 90 percent of the people look at our defense budget: scare the crap out of you and convince you to spend more money. Some of that is self-interest. But the bulk of it is simple paranoia.”
- Rep. Adam Smith (D-WA), Chairman, House Armed Services Committee

“Desert Storm was a war which involved the massive use of air power and a victory achieved by the U.S. and multinational air force units. It was also the first war in history in which air power was used to defeat ground forces.”
- Gen. Merrill McPeak, 14th Chief of Staff, US Air Force

YOUR AIR FORCE – DID YOU KNOW?

Air Force Posture Statement Fiscal Year 2020:

“Our Airmen perform strategic and vital missions in all domains, across the spectrum of conflict, and from 65 feet below ground to our highest geosynchronous orbits.”

“More than 21,000 Airmen are deployed around the globe, employing unrivaled air, space, and cyber power from over 179 locations.”

“Our mobility forces transported over 1.25 million personnel, 1 billion pounds of warfighting equipment and supplies, and evacuated more than 5,400 patients for critical medical care.”

“In space, we operate 80 satellites that provide communications, command and control, missile warning, nuclear detonation detection, weather, and the Global Positioning System (GPS) for the world.”

True or False: The majority of infrastructure in the Arctic is property of the US Air Force?

KEY DATES TO WATCH

2019
Feb 27-Mar 1 AFA’s Air Warfare Symposium, Orlando, FL
Apr 12 Mitchell Hour with Dr. Will Roper, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics
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<td>Sep 16-18</td>
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*If you have questions, please contact:*

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