



AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION

Legislative Update



KEITH'S CONGRESSIONAL CORNER



"You will have an opportunity to help make that history -- an opportunity for a service career more varied and demanding than any that has been opened to any officer corps in the history of any country.

There are some who might be skeptical of that assertion. They claim that the future of the Air Force is mortgaged to an obsolete weapons system, the manned aircraft; or that Air Force officers of the future will be nothing more than "silent silo sitters." But nothing could be further from the truth. It is this very onrush of technology which demands an expanding role for the Nation's Air Force and Air Force officers, and which guarantees that an Air Force career in the next 40 years will be even more changing and more challenging than the careers of the last 40 years."

- Pres. John F. Kennedy, Address to Graduating Class of the US Air Force Academy, 5 June 1963

Despite the short-term optimism for on-time defense appropriations, the House and Senate passed a short-term continuing resolution (CR) to provide appropriations funding through Nov. 21 for the federal government. So...Congress' streak of funding the defense department on time resets again at only one-year.

Continuing resolutions or CRs, are short-termed appropriations measures. And they are needless and wasteful. Yes, they do avoid a government shutdown, however, since the start of the fiscal year (Oct. 1) comes at the same time every year, CRs are short-sighted, costly, and can be argued as dangerous. Our nation's military members and defense civilians deserve better. Our nation's 20-plus million veterans warrant fulfillment and not just a half-hearted, "Thanks for your service."

CRs prevent the USAF from ending unnecessary programs. They prevent essential new programs from starting.

Because they are for short duration, the military is unable to plan properly or get contracts finalized. Funding is at the previous year's level despite the military services'

growth in both force size and requirements. The services are forced to hoard funds instead of doing necessary hiring or training. Industry partners are unable to plan for expansion or contraction, so the taxpayers ultimately pay more in costs. Most importantly, the warfighters are unable to get the crucial programs and services in a timely manner. Programs end up delayed, and ultimately cut, due to excessive cost overruns.

Ultimately, this failure in leadership and responsibility is seen by our nation's Airmen as breaking faith.

This specific three-month interruption in funding will affect readiness and maintenance and adversely stop hiring and recruitment. Specifically, for the Air Force, two modernization priorities will be adversely affected:

- Long-range hypersonic weapon. This is a department priority because the Chinese and Russians have eclipsed our capabilities in this area. Delays in research and critical long-lead purchases jeopardized the delivery of this needed weapon.

- B-52 GPS interface unit replacement: The B-52 bomber awaits a series of upgrades, and a short-term CR delays procurement of "critical processing chips/circuit cards"—causing an 18-month slip in enhancing the 1960s era B-52s.

Even more concerning is that some in Congress are ready to punt and consider a full-year CR.

Last week, I met with the Exchange's CEO, Mr. Tom Shull, as part of the Exchange Retiree Advisory Council, to discuss the latest issues with the Exchange (AAFES). As an aside, I recently was part of a defense department engagement regarding consolidation of the Exchanges and Commissary. AFA supports consolidation of shared services that lead to savings, however, we are skeptical regarding their recent commissioned study for consolidation and are advocating against any actions that jeopardizes the overall shopping benefit or the approximate \$400 million in Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) funds resulting from current exchange profits. Those funds support members and their families.

Recently, I took part in a distressing DOD engagement on military suicides. The recent quarterly report depicts suicides at a rate near that of the general population, except the National Guard's rate is higher. Also disheartening is the fact that the Air Force Reserves number is higher than this same time last year. The Air Force recently held a down-day to discuss suicides, however, they are short answers to a complex and tragic issue.

"Their sacrifice was great, but not in vain. All Americans and every free nation on earth can trace their liberty to the white markers of places like Arlington National Cemetery. And may God keep us ever grateful."

- Pres. George W. Bush, 2003

In addition, I attended an event at Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) where Army officials and ANC leaders announced the long-awaited new criteria for burial at Arlington. AFA has long advocated and testified that the current eligibility for in-ground and above ground burials should continue in order to honor the service of our members. Along with other military and veterans service organizations, we did win some concessions, however, most retirees will no longer have in-ground burial eligibility. 96 percent of the 229,247 survey respondents wanted Arlington National Cemetery to remain an active cemetery “well into the future,” and Congress agreed in legislation to revise the eligibility criteria to keep the cemetery viable for 150 years. Over the next nine months, the US Army, who oversee the cemetery, will work on a public rule to finalize the eligibility changes, and we will keep our members updated, so that they can engage on the issue.

In mid-September, AFA hosted a fantastic [2019 Air, Space & Cyber Conference \(ASC\)](#) at the Gaylord Hotel, National Harbor. As we expected, this premier development event was the most widely attended conference in many years. Below in this update, we will present some of the highlights. [ASC Videos](#)

AIR FORCE HIGHLIGHTS

[AFA's Air, Space & Cyber Conference Highlights](#)

- Keynote speaker Virgin Group Founder Richard Branson offered that the capability of replacing low-Earth orbit satellites within a day could make them less vulnerable
 - The U.S. is engaged in a great power competition with China and Russia; adversaries are closing the gap and status quo is not acceptable
 - The National Defense Strategy and Air Force Readiness were themes
 - Taking on additional risk was also a theme, however, the understanding and significance of that word is not widely understood by strategic decision makers
 - Air Force we need in 2030 requires Air Force to recapitalize and modernize
 - The B-21 bomber remains on schedule, and its first flight is scheduled for December 2021
 - The Air Force likely needs at least 225 bombers including maintaining the B-1 fleet, according to Gen. Timothy Ray, Commander, Global Strike Command
 - A new information warfare focused organization called 16th Air Force will combine cyber, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, electronic warfare and information operations, according to Lt. Gen. VeraLinn Jamieson, deputy chief of staff for Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance and Cyber Effects Operations
 - Every year, the Air Force brings in about 30,000 new Airmen
 - The Air Force now has 36 percent fewer aircraft and 37 percent fewer people
 - Air Force Reserve has 70,100 members, and the entire organization focuses on readiness. They have 3 strategic priorities: 1) Accelerate Readiness, especially training 2) Develop Resilient Leaders and 3) Reform the organization, starting with recruiting

- Air Mobility Command (AMC) is short 570 pilots
- Suicides are about connectedness. Last year, the Air Force Reserve had one suicide; this year they have had 14

[Army Announces Proposed New Criteria for Burial at Arlington](#)

AirForceMag.com | 25 Sep 2019 | by Brian Everstine

Acting Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy on Sept. 25 announced new criteria for interment and inurnment at Arlington National Cemetery, to keep from running out of space in the nation's most hallowed military cemetery. Congress had called on the Army to revise the criteria for burial at the cemetery, with the aim of maintaining it as an active burial ground for another 150 years. With 95,000 remaining burial spaces, and another 60,000 planned in an upcoming expansion, the cemetery will be full by the mid-2050s unless current rules are changed, the Army says.

[Alarming VA Report Totals Decade of Veteran Suicides](#)

Military.com | 23 Sep 2019 | by Richard Sisk

The [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) released an alarming report Friday showing that at least 60,000 veterans died by suicide between 2008 and 2017, with little sign that the crisis is abating despite suicide prevention being the VA's top priority. Although the total population of veterans declined by 18% during that span of years, more than 6,000 veterans died by suicide annually, according to the VA's 2019 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report.

[Boeing's withdrawal from the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent program must not cause delays](#)

DefenseNews.com | 22 Sep 2019 | by M. Thomas Davis

Boeing sent seismic shock waves through the defense acquisition system this past July when it announced it would not compete for the U.S. Air Force's [Ground Based Strategic Deterrent, or GBSD, program](#), a major defense effort worth at least \$63 billion.

[Air Force Names the T-X the T-7A Red Hawk](#)

AirForceMag.com | 16 Sep 2019 | by John A. Tirpak

The Boeing-built T-X advanced trainer has been officially named the T-7A "Red Hawk." Acting Air Force Secretary Matt Donovan announced the name at AFA's 2019 Air, Space & Cyber Conference, explaining that the name honors the Tuskegee Airmen—known as the "Red Tails"—as well as the Curtiss P-40 Warhawk, which the unit flew in their early WWII deployment to Europe. Donovan was joined by several Tuskegee Airmen for the announcement. The T-7A completed its Critical Design Review last week, and the program is progressing well, company program manager Steve Parker told Air Force Magazine.

[Ray: USAF Needs Many More Bombers, Should Expand the B-1 Mission if They'll Last](#)

AirForceMag.com | 16 Sep 2019 | by John A. Tirpak

If the B-1 can hold up structurally, it could go back to its roots as a high-speed attack bomber loaded with standoff weapons, helping the Air Force fulfill its requirements under the National Defense Strategy, Global Strike Command chief Gen. Timothy Ray said at AFA's 2019 Air, Space & Cyber Conference. The B-1 has been ground down by excessive use as a loitering bomb truck in the Middle East, Ray said, leading to an unhealthy fleet, but could be a quick fix for what Ray characterized as an inadequate bomber force.

[Leavitt: Less than 25 Percent of USAF's "Target Market" Is Eligible to Serve](#)

AirForceMag.com | 16 Sep 2019 | by Jennifer-Leigh Oprihory

Air Force Recruiting Service Commander Maj. Gen. Jeannie Leavitt told reporters Sept. 16 that less than a quarter of American youth in the service's "target market" actually qualify to serve in USAF, and that an even smaller fraction is actually interested in serving their country in uniform. But she said she believes educating young people about the Air Force can be key to changing that statistic.

[KC-46: Too Crucial To Fail](#)

BreakingDefense.com | 13 Sep 2019 | by Theresa Hitchins

The Air Force and Congress are simply sucking up the latest calamity to befall the KC-46 tanker, with representatives on both sides of Capitol Hill — and the prospective new Air Force Secretary Barbara Barrett — expressing support for the beleaguered program.

"There is no other option at this point," explains Todd Harrison, the director of the Aerospace Security Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). "The Air Force needs new tankers, and Boeing is the only one making them."

This is despite the fact that the most recent deficiency discovered by the Air Force — a cargo lock that unlocked itself in mid-air — could endanger the safety of personnel or even cause the plane to crash, as first reported by colleague [Valerie Insinna at Defense News](#). The incident caused the Air Force to indefinitely ban the plane from carrying any cargo or passengers.

YOUR AIR FORCE – DID YOU KNOW?

AFWERX: "Established in 2017 by the Secretary of the Air Force and reporting to the Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force, AFWERX is a catalyst for agile Air Force engagement across industry, academia and non-traditional contributors to create transformative opportunities and foster an Air Force culture of innovation. The ultimate

aim is to solve problems and enhance the effectiveness of the Air Force. We enable thoughtful, deliberate, ground-up innovation across the Air Force. We do this through an innovation approach that combines startup urgency with the largest pool of motivated talent in the world to uncover opportunities to improve Air Force capabilities, connect and engage the right stakeholders, and facilitate outcomes.”

Col (Ret.) William F. Andrews. Air Force Cross Recipient from Operation Desert Storm. Citation: “The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, takes pleasure in presenting the Air Force Cross to Captain William Francis Andrews, United States Air Force, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against the armed forces of the Republic of Iraq, while serving as a Pilot with the 10th Tactical Fighter Squadron, Hahn Air Base, Germany, in action approximately 30 miles northwest of Basra, Iraq, on 27 February 1991, during Operation DESERT STORM. On that date, while leading an F-16 flight against heavily defended armor and mechanized forces, Captain Andrews' F-16 suffered major damage from enemy air defenses forcing him to eject in enemy territory. While in the parachute descent, he made contact with his flight using his survival radio and, despite being fired upon by enemy forces while in the parachute descent, provided an area description and direction to his flight. After landing, at which point he broke his leg, Captain Andrews made numerous threat calls and directed members of his flight to execute a break turn and to initiate decoy flares in response to surface-to-air missile launches. “

QUOTES TO NOTE

“We’ll never have enough Air and Space power.”

- Lt. Gen. Timothy Fay, Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategy, Integration and Requirements

“I would prefer to field what’s available now and get it to the warfighters.”

- Lt. Gen. James Slife, Commander, AFSOC

KEY DATES TO WATCH

2019

Oct 1	FY 2020 Began
Oct 24	AFA Breakfast AFA Breakfast, Capitol Hill Edition, with Mr. Randy Walden, Director and Program Executive Officer for the Air Force Rapid Capabilities Office, at Capitol Hill Club
Nov 6	AFA Breakfast, Capitol Hill Edition, with Gen. David Goldfein, Chief of Staff, US Air Force at Capitol Hill Club

If you have questions, please contact:

Keith Zuegel, USAF (Ret.)
Senior Director, Government Relations
Air Force Association (AFA)
GRL@afa.org



CONNECT WITH US

© Copyright 2019, Air Force Association
1501 Lee Highway, Arlington VA 22209-1198 | Tel 703.247.5800 | Fax 703.247.5853 | www.afa.org

To unsubscribe or to change your preferences, please visit our [preference page](#)