



Air Force Association **National**



Convention 2012

By Aaron M. U. Church
Photos by Chuck Fazio Photography



ROUGHLY 6,750 attendees flocked to the Air Force Association's 2012 Air & Space Conference and Technology Exposition this year. Newly appointed Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III headlined the conference, introducing his vision for the service's future. The conference broke all records for the sheer number of speeches and presentations by USAF leaders, academics, and technology experts, while the aerospace and defense industries put in a strong showing on the exhibit floor.

The conference ran Sept. 17-19 at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in National Harbor, Md., along the Potomac River just outside of Washington, D.C.

First thing Monday morning, Air Force Secretary Michael B. Donley assisted in presenting AFA's National Aerospace Awards before his keynote address, formally commencing the three days of conference activities. AFA bestowed six Citations of Honor, in addition to Air Force crew and team awards, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve awards, and civilian professional awards.

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey shared his perspective on the importance of air superiority and battlefield support to the current fight, as well as the future of joint warfare as the US turns to the Asia-Pacific region.

A sizeable contingent of foreign and allied visitors joined those attending a lineup of 78 professional development seminars, roundtables, technology briefings, and speeches. Programs covered everything from Chinese military modernization to prevention of post-traumatic stress after combat and the future of manned spaceflight.

The Technology Exposition bustled despite the budget crunch, as an increased number of efficiency-oriented enhancements and upgrades joined aircraft and big-ticket items on the display floor. The expo boasted 104 exhibitors and pioneered a Speaker's Corner on technology on the exhibit floor for the first time. Expo highlights included Boeing's KC-46A tanker avionics mock-up, AgustaWestland's AW101 Combat Rescue Helicopter

cabin display, BAE's Hawk jet trainer trailer, Alenia Aermacchi's T-100 jet training system, as well as the Esterline NexGen cockpit training simulator.

The combined Air & Space Conference and Technology Exposition attracted some 80 members of the press, along with representatives from Air Force Public Affairs.

AFA members and Air Force officials gathered at the Air Force Memorial in Arlington, Va., for a somber ceremony remembering the deceased on Sunday morning, Sept. 16.

AFA National Chaplain, retired Maj. Gen. William J. Dendinger, memorialized the deceased with a short message. Donley, Welsh, Command CMSgt. Denise Jelinski-Hall of the National Guard Bureau, and AFA Chairman of the Board S. Sanford Schlitt presented a wreath. A memorial tribute listing the names of the 71 people who died in the last year was read by Schlitt, Justin M. Faiferlick, Vice Chairman of the Board for Field Operations, and George K. Muellner, Vice Chairman of the Board for Aerospace Education.

AFA formally congratulated the Air Force's 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year with a dinner following a reception sponsored by Northrop Grumman Sept. 17.

At the dinner, CMSAF James A. Roy congratulated USAF's "Golden Dozen," lauding their exemplary service and commitment to the service's core values. SrA. Laura Beckley acted as master of ceremonies, and Maj. Gen. Howard D. Stendahl, Air Force chief of chaplains, led the gathering in prayer. The United States Air Force Band entertained the audience during the evening's festivities.

Thanks to financial support from ATK Corp., the 12 Outstanding Airmen met with their congressional representatives on Capitol Hill and enjoyed the highlights of Washington, D.C. They toured the White House and the Pentagon, visited Arlington National Cemetery, and paid their respects at the Air Force and World War II memorials during their week in D.C.

AFA's Air Force Anniversary Dinner toasting the service's 65th birthday was Sept. 19. Guests enjoyed music by the Air Force Band's Strolling Strings from JB Anacostia-Bolling, D.C., and



Newly elected Chairman of the Board George Muellner speaks to conference-goers.



During his State of the Force address, USAF Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh III (l) brought SrA. Shemiel Christopher on stage. Christopher manages the Fisher House at Dover AFB, Del., mortuary.



Gen. Larry Spencer (l), USAF vice chief of staff, walks through the Gaylord with AFA member Michael Peters.



TSgt. LaShasta Smith and TSgt. Suezette Douglas look over the day's schedule during the Air & Space Conference.

Patrick Coulter served as master of ceremonies. AFA saluted:

- Retired Gen. Norton A. Schwartz, former Chief of Staff, US Air Force, with the H. H. Arnold Award, recognizing the year's most significant contribution to national security by a member of the military.

- Retired USMC Gen. James L. Jones, former national security advisor and former Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, with the W. Stuart Symington Award, recognizing the year's top contribution by a civilian in the field of national defense.

- The Boeing Co., Wideband Global SATCOM, Global Positioning System, and X-37B Orbital Test Vehicle builder, with the John R. Alison Award for the most outstanding contribution by industrial leadership to national defense.

- The Military Channel, with the AFA Chairman's Aerospace Education Award, for long-term commitment to aerospace education.

- Retired Gen. James P. McCarthy, Air Force Academy professor and Defense Science Board task force leader; Berlin Airlift aircrews; fighter pilots of World War II; Korean War airmen; and Vietnam War prisoners of war, with Lifetime Achievement Awards.

AFA Education Award

Lori B. Bradner received AFA's National Aerospace Teacher of the Year award for her work while she was a teacher at Central Florida Aerospace Academy of Kathleen High School in Lakeland, Fla. AFA bestows the award each year in recognition of an elementary to high school level educator who goes above and beyond the call of duty to mentor students in STEM subjects: science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

DOD and USAF Leaders Attending

Many Air Force leaders attended the seminars and sessions, speaking with the press and giving airmen the chance to ask questions of them, culminating in Wednesday's Four-Star Forum.

Senior leadership speaking at the conference included Dempsey, Donley, Welsh, Schwartz, Ashton B. Carter, deputy secretary of defense, and Roy.

Other high-level leaders included Gen. Herbert J. Carlisle, commander, Pacific Air Forces; Gen. Douglas M. Fraser, commander, US Southern Command; Gen. G. Michael Hostage III, commander, Air Combat Command; Gen. Raymond E. Johns Jr., commander,

Air Mobility Command; Gen. C. Robert Kehler, commander, US Strategic Command; Gen. Edward A. Rice Jr., commander, Air Education and Training Command; Gen. William L. Shelton, commander, Air Force Space Command; and Gen. Janet C. Wolfenbarger, commander, Air Force Materiel Command.

A number of other senior officers took part: Lt. Gen. Eric E. Fiel, commander, Air Force Special Operations Command; Lt. Gen. Michael C. Gould, superintendent, US Air Force Academy; Lt. Gen. James Jackson, commander, Air Force Reserve Command; Lt. Gen. Larry D. James, deputy chief of staff, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; Lt. Gen. Darrell D. Jones, deputy chief of staff, manpower, personnel, and services; Lt. Gen. James M. Kowalski, commander, Air Force Global Strike Command; Lt. Gen. C. D. Moore II, commander, Air Force Life Cycle Management center; Lt. Gen. Harry M. Wyatt III, director, Air National Guard; Maj. Gen. William A. Chambers, assistant chief of staff, strategic deterrence and nuclear integration; Maj. Gen. Christopher C. Bogdan, deputy program executive officer, Joint Strike Fighter program; Maj. Gen. Steven L. Kwast, director, requirements, Air Combat Command; Maj. Gen. Earl D. Matthews, director, cyberspace operations and chief information officer; Maj. Gen. John F. Thompson, tanker program executive officer and KC-46 program director; Maj. Gen. Rowayne A. Schatz Jr., director, strategic plans and requirements, Air Mobility Command; Brig. Gen. Timothy J. Leahy, commander, 23rd Air Force; Brig. Gen. Eric G. Weller, deputy commander, mobilization and reserve affairs, US Special Operations Command; and Brig. Gen. Marshall B. Webb, director, plans, programs, requirements, and assessments, Air Force Special Operations Command.

Election of AFA Officers

George K. Muellner, Huntington Beach, Calif., was elected for a first term as Chairman of the Board. Scott P. Van Cleef, of Fincastle, Va., was elected for a first term as Vice Chairman of the Board for Field Operations. Jerry E. White, of Colorado Springs, Colo., was elected for a first term as Vice Chairman of the Board for Aerospace Education. Edward W. Garland, San Antonio, was elected for a second term as AFA Secretary. Leonard R. Vernamonti, Clinton, Miss., was re-elected AFA Treasurer for a third term.



Jemmarie Silva (l), a business development representative with Aeroscraft, speaks with a visitor during the well-attended technology exposition.



Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Martin Dempsey (l), Welsh (c), and AFA President Craig McKinley (r) head to a conference event.



L-r: SrA. Mohamed Jawar, A1C Kamiron Smith, and SrA. Brian Hulse stop at an interactive expo display.



Other AFA Elections

William R. Grider, Indianapolis, and Gilbert E. Petrina Jr., Williamsburg, Va., were elected National Directors at Large, and Nora Ruebrook, Honolulu, was elected National Director West.

Newly elected Region Presidents are:

Joseph L. Hardy, Maryland, Central East Region; Kent D. Owsley, Ohio, Great Lakes Region; John D. Daly, Nebraska, Midwest Region; Victor C. Seavers, Minnesota, North Central Region; John R. Allen Jr., South Carolina, Southeast Region; and John Toohey, New Mexico, Southwest Region.

SMSgt. Kathleen McCool greets a Warrior Canine Connection dog, a future service dog for mobility impaired veterans.



Famed Berlin Airlift "Candy Bomber" Gail Halvorsen (c) and his wife Lorraine (l) visit with Capt. Sarah Kelly at a conference event.



The sun rises at the Air Force Memorial before the Sunday wreath-laying ceremony.

AFA Business

A total of 211 delegates represented 38 states, the District of Columbia, and overseas chapters at AFA's National Convention the weekend before, Sept. 14-15.

Delegates heard briefings on AFA's CyberPatriot program and on Arnold Air Society/Silver Wings and listened to a presentation by Frederick Gross, president of AFA's Chapter of the Year, the Hurlburt Chapter in Florida. AFA's National Teacher of the Year Bradner stressed the need for the association to provide greater support for the technological education of young people, and delegates were briefed on a recent initiative to update and simplify AFA's field operations guide.

The Air Force vice chief of staff, Maj. Gen. Larry O. Spencer, addressed the assembly, highlighting issues pertinent to the service today. Attendees were updated by Chairman Schlitt, Vice Chairman Faiferlick, and Treasurer Vernamonti on the association's key areas.

The assembly passed a board-approved change to the AFA constitution replacing the dual title AFA Chief Executive Officer and President with the abbreviated title of President. The delegates officially welcomed and accepted AFA's new President, retired Gen. Craig R. McKinley, and incoming Executive Vice President, retired Lt. Gen. Richard Y. Newton III. Delegates reviewed and unanimously approved AFA's annual Statement of Policy and Top Issues as presented.

Acknowledgments

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AFA National Convention Parliamentarian for the final time was Joan Blankenship. Inspectors of Elections were Arthur J. Rooney, Chairman, Lisa Hall, and Richard Holdcroft. Frederick Gross chaired the Credentials Committee, serving with Ellie Constantine, Geri Sutter, and Sharon White.

The Air Force Association sincerely thanks these volunteers and others for their work and generous support during the convention. ■