



## The Official Newsletter Of The Aircraft Armament Chiefs Association (AACCA)

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AACAnewsletter@gmail.com

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### ***AACCA President's Corner***

#### **Outgoing President:**

The AACCA elections were held in Oct for the positions of President and Secretary. The AACCA elections resulted in Bob Sherrill as President and Joe Gassler as Secretary. Congratulations to Bob and Joe, they have represented our aircraft armament community well during their Air Force careers, and it will be an honor to have them support and lead the AACCA during their retirement years. Turnover for the positions are currently happening during the month of December with each one assuming official position 1 January 2014 for a two year term. The Vice President and Treasurer will remain in position until the following year to ensure continuity remains with the strategic plans and within the Board of Directors.

Passing of time as we approach the New Year, 2014, our Aircraft Armament Chief Association continues to grow and meet the milestones of the strategic plan. Our membership has grown over the past year, we continue to contribute a significant amount of funding to the Chief Kebil Scholarship fund, and we recently voted to support an awards program that fosters our appreciation and support to the Aircraft Armament community. Our AACCA store has an array of items that can be purchased, our newsletter and website continues to improve as we gain more knowledge of what our membership wish to read on the association and armament community. The passing of time has brought positive efforts to the Aircraft Armament Chiefs

Association and for the past two years it has been a pleasure to serve as the President. I will soon move on and most likely capture a project here or there to continue the growth and maturity of the AACCA.

Cheers to all,

*Michael Lucchesi*

#### **President Elect:**

Fellow AACCA Members,

I hope your Holiday Season has been enjoyable so far and your good fortunes will continue into the coming years. As your newly elected AACCA President, I look forward to continuing down the great path Mike Lucchesi, Jeff Hulme, and the returning inaugural Board of Directors have set us on. I realize I have some big shoes to fill for the next couple years and with your help, I feel up to the task.

Starting a viable organization is one huge task to be sure, keeping it viable is also very challenging. This past year has been a very successful chapter in the AACCA. We were able to solidify our support to the CMSgt Gregory A. Kebil Memorial scholarship fund, initiated the AACCA Recognition Program to recognize individual excellence achieved in aircraft armament career field, and pulled off our second AACCA Reunion in Las Vegas to name a few.

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Speaking of the AACA reunion this past September, as you'll see in this issue of the AACA Newsletter, it was a huge success. Unfortunately I was unable to attend, but heard a lot of great stories coming from the weekend of fellowship. We will continue to pursue our opportunities to get together and share our trials, tribulations and enjoyments during our time on active duty and for some of us, the second chapter in our lives and professional careers.

With your help, we will continue to excel in our Charter to "encourage and facilitate camaraderie amongst all Aircraft Armament Chiefs; to provide useful services to the membership and the Aircraft Armament Community; and to promote the welfare of their dependents, survivors, and the Aircraft Armament Community." Don't hesitate to propose ideas for us to do just that.

I look forward to working with the returning board and our new Secretary, Joe Gassler, as well as all of the AACA members in the coming year. I wish you and yours a fantastic holiday season and a prosperous New Year.

*Bob Sherrill*

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### ***Editor's Comments***

I would like to begin by congratulating Bob Sherrill on being elected as our next leader and thanking Mike Lucchesi for his outstanding leadership over the past few years. If it wouldn't have been for Mike and the other Board of Directors members' drive and persistence, I doubt our organization would have been as successful as it has been. I'm sure Bob will

continue to provide the AACA with exceptional leadership throughout his term.

As Bob mentioned, the September AACA reunion was great. At the risk of missing someone, I would like to thank Ernie Valencia and the rest of the reunion committee of Mike Cannon, Jim McMahon, Jeff Hulme, Dick Vancil, Bob Cisneros, Pete Romeo, Lloyd Canty, Evan Godwin, and Mike Lucchesi for putting together an unforgettable event. I missed the first reunion, but was pleased that I was able to attend this reunion. It was great to see old friends and colleagues!

In this addition of the newsletter you will be treated to an article on the AACA Recognition Program by Bob Sherrill; a great article on continued service by Earl Ballenger; an article about the heroic actions of some Sheppard AFB students after a car wreck; and some Edwards AFB history and news from Nate Dixon. Thanks to all for your contributions.

Best wishes to you and your families for a safe and happy holiday season! Have a very Merry Christmas and an excellent new year!

*Keith*



*"Anyone who believes that men are the equal of women has never seen a man trying to wrap a Christmas present"*

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### **AACA Recognition Program**

Mike Cannon

The development of an Aircraft Armament Chiefs Association Recognition Program is well under way. The AACA Charter includes "advocating for continued efforts



and sponsorship of Aircraft Armament Community related awards and recognition activities for active duty Aircraft Armament troops". The goal is to develop and implement an AACA Recognition Program in 2013. In order to accomplish that goal, the AACA Membership will have to determine whether AACA will have a Recognition Program, and how AACA will recognize the award winners.

During the annual reunion, the AACA Membership helped to define different Recognition Program options. Those options have been used to develop a draft presentation of the AACA Recognition Program, which was included in the January 2013 General Membership Meeting Minutes. AACA members will have an opportunity to review the different options and are encouraged to provide recommendations and feedback on the Recognition Program options and development. A final AACA Membership vote will be held in the near future to determine which option AACA will use for its Recognition Program.

The 4ea draft Recognition Program options are: (1) Sponsor recognition of AF-Level 2W1 award winners (for example, recognize winners of the Lt. Gen Leo Marquez Award or AF Level Weapons Load Crew/Armament Technician awards), (2) Sponsor recognition of AF-Level and

MAJCOM-Level 2W1 award winners (same categories as option 1), (3) Develop, manage and sponsor an AACA-Level 2W1 Award (by using the AF-Form 1297s that are submitted for the AF category awards), (4) No AACA Recognition Program. Each option includes choices on method of recognition (for example, coins, certificates, letters, etc)

and the different approximate costs for each option.

The AACA Recognition Program would also be used to recognize AACA Members for their outstanding achievements.

Once the AACA Membership determines the type of Recognition Program and categories, I will work with AACA Membership to build a Recognition Program document that will define selection criteria, program management and program execution. That document would be ready for BoD review/approval and presentation to the AACA Members in 2013.

An AACA Recognition Program will support the Active Duty Aircraft Armament Community and recognize outstanding achievements by Aircraft Armament troops and AACA members. The program will also help to spread the word about our AACA and promote the preservation of the Aircraft Armament Community and its Heritage. I appreciate and look forward to all of the feedback and recommendations from all members as we move forward on developing the AACA Recognition Program. Thanks,

*Mike Cannon*





## Sheppard Airmen respond to accident

by Tech. Sgt. Mike Meares  
82nd Training Wing Public Affairs

11/20/2013 - SHEPPARD AIR FORCE BASE, Texas -- On their way back to base from an evening out, three Sheppard Airmen witnessed a single-car crash so horrific, they didn't know if anyone could've survived it.



*Airman Basic Kristen McLaughlin, Airmen 1st Class Jacob Curran and Timothy Walden, 363rd Training Squadron Airman in training, Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, witnessed a horrific single car accident Nov. 17, 2013, after eating dinner at a local restaurant in Wichita Falls. McLaughlin, of Copperas Cove, Texas, leapt from the car she was a passenger in and sprinted toward a small pickup truck continuing to twist itself around the large concrete pillars holding the bridge above it up. Curran and Walden jumped into action, calling the emergency response teams and blocked traffic to avoid further injury to the driver. (U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Mike Meares)*

Airman Basic Kristen McLaughlin, 363rd Training Squadron Airman in training, of Copperas Cove, Texas, leapt from the car she was a passenger in and sprinted toward a small pickup truck continuing to twist itself around the large concrete pillars holding the bridge above it up Nov. 17. As it came to a rest, she didn't have a clue what she would find inside, but she feared the worst.

"As we were sitting (at the redlight) near the underpass on Kemp, we heard a loud noise," McLaughlin said. "I looked to my left and see this Chevy S-10 come off the bridge. All I really saw

was smoke, dust and sparks."

McLaughlin ripped off her seatbelt, jumped out of the car and ran toward the accident scene before the vehicle ever came to a rest. As she quickly approached, she took the scene in with disbelief.

"There is no way anyone could survive," she remembers thinking about the damage. "I thought I would be dealing with someone who had passed away due to his injuries."

The small pickup truck came to rest in a heap of scrap metal barely recognizable. The front end was torn apart and the headlights were ripped out of the vehicle. The bed was twisted and the rear axle was no longer attached to the frame, and the wheels were separated completely from the axels. McLaughlin described the front wheels as "tacos" because they were folded in half. Glass, oil and gasoline littered the entire roadway.

McLaughlin's first love is for the medical field as she is as she holds credentials as a certified nursing assistant. Responding to the accident came natural to her and she immediately took over the scene. Some bystanders, narrowly escaping the truck as it twisted into a heap, helped pull the drivers from wreckage.

"I was surprised to find a pulse on his neck, and thanking God he wasn't dead," she said. "Watching it happen as I ran toward it, I was praying this guy would survive the crash."

"I got to the truck about the time (one of the bystanders) started pulling the driver out," she said. They laid him on the ground as flat as possible and she immediately started first aid. She stabilized his head and neck, and helped him regain consciousness. "I could tell he had been drinking because I could smell the alcohol."

Airman 1st Class Timothy Walden, Brownsville, Texas, stepped in to calm down a couple of teenagers who were bystanders narrowly escaping injury, while emergency technicians made their way to the scene. Airman 1st Class Jacob Curran, Gilbert, Ariz., parked his car to block traffic, then alerted emergency responders to the scene.

In today's computer generated graphics era, a talented graphic artist can make fantasy come alive on the video screen. In the digital age, anyone can see these kinds of accidents at any time with simple internet searches. For the trio of Airmen, witnessing the incident first hand is more eye-opening than seeing it on a video screen.

"You don't get the full effect and trauma out of it as if you saw it in person," Walden said.

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"I was in shock really. I don't know exactly how to take it," He said. "From what I saw, the guy could've died. The truck was in pieces."

McLaughlin treated the driver of the accident while kneeling down in the broken shards of glass, oil, water and gasoline mixture on the roadway. Needing to purchase a new pair of jeans, she returned to the area in town the next day and saw the scars on the concrete where the driver wrapped the truck around the concrete supports.

"I'm grateful that I was there to be able to help someone else, which is a reason I joined the Air Force," McLaughlin said. "But at the same time it made me kind of angry when I see people drinking, laughing and cutting up when I just pulled someone from an accident. It takes something like that to open someone's eyes."

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## Significant Edwards AFB Events In History Nate Dixon

**September 1956:** Capt. Iven Kincheloe became the first man to soar above 100,000 feet, as he piloted the Bell X-2 to a then-remarkable altitude of 126,200 feet. Flying the same airplane, just weeks later, on September 27, Capt. Mel Apt became the first man to exceed Mach 3, as he accelerated to a speed of Mach 3.2 (2,094 mph).

**November 17, 1972:** The Airborne Warning and Control System Joint Test Force completed an airborne tracking demonstration three months ahead of schedule. The demonstration involved using Westinghouse "Brassboard" radar components mounted on a prototype E-3 AWACS aircraft to track some 84 sorties flown by F-106 and F-4 target aircraft.

**November 23, 1994:** The first test of a GPS-Aided Munition was successfully carried out by an F-4 over the nearby China Lake NAS weapons range. The precision bomb, intended for deployment on the B-2, impacted 44 feet from its target, well within the predicted range.

### **Congratulations!!!**

- Congrats to TSgt Cantu (WS) and Mr. Sykes (Arm Shop) on being selected AFMC's Weapons Professionals for June-August 2013.

- Congrats to our newest SSgts: SSgt Jesse Pointer and SSgt Michael Higgins (WS), SSgt Dexter High and SSgt Bryan Dann (JSF) and SSgt Timothy Escalon (Shadow)

- Congrats to SMSgt Carling on making Chief Master Sergeant...line number 308!!!

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## ***Continuing to Serve*** *By Earl Ballenger*

Every year some people enter the Weapons career field, and every year people leave the career field. Some give four years; others give 40 years, and most serve somewhere in between. It is very difficult to find a harder working group than that of the USAF weapons troops. Ok, I might be a little bias on that, but you have to admit, weapons troops work very hard and have each other's back both on and off duty. This is a trait of the best 462s/2W1s out there.



*Earl Ballenger briefs F-16 AMRAAM system at the AMRAAM International Users Review*

I would like to take a few minutes to look at the subject of supporting the career field a little closer. It is very clear that you; the active and retired Chiefs are doing everything in your power to support the career field – good on you! But what about other weapons troops, those of us that stay in the career field until we made Chief? What are the rest of doing to help the career field? Sure, we donate to the Chief Kobil fund, but there has to be more, right? Hard to say, it is unknown what the rest of the career field may be doing. As I mentioned in the opening statement, most weapons troops give somewhere between 4 and 40 years of service to the career field, but what about those that never stop giving to the career field. What I mean by that is, many continue to support the career field as part of a job they were hired into after they left active service. Ok, it's a job; you have to do what the boss says right? That's true to a point, but the weapons troops I work with now give far more than the job's minimum requirement. These people do everything they can to help the current

weapons troops to the fullest extent possible. Let's take a closer look.



*Earl provides F-16 Boresight on site technical support in Taiwan.*

Ok, a little background is in order, I work for a major defense contractor, and we provide sustainment services to the world wide fleet of a specific aircraft. By sustainment, I mean we provide direct support (of course under a contract) to the warfighter in order to resolve issues that may be preventing them from accomplishing their mission, be it training or combat. Additionally, we perform weapons loading and weapons system maintenance technical order authoring, support equipment procurement as well as the associated engineering required to accomplish these tasks. These are contracted tasks, we have to perform to contract, that's the job. But what often goes unnoticed is the extra level of support provided to the warfighter, the support above the job minimums. The former weapons troops I work with are in constant contact with the active troops today, be it Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve or the active duty forces. Through this contact we are able to provide a level of support that in most cases exceed the

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contract requirements, this is because we have all been in tough situations where a little support from outside would have gone a long way.

The company I work with is just one example; there are many companies, both large and small that provide the support to the warfighter. There are the independent consultants, the Air Force Engineering Technical Services (AFETS), and that provide support to the career field. Again, I hear some people saying it is your job to provide such support; you are getting paid to do so. Fair enough, however, just as when back in the Arm Shop or Fighter Squadron, you had those troops that did the job because they had to and those that did the job because they choose to. The people I have met that are still involved in the defense industry and more importantly involved in the support of the weapons career field are doing so because they choose to. These people can directly related to today's weapons troops and do everything in their power to make certain the mission is accomplished. I for one, take great pride in the support provided, and look forward to the next challenge.

Remember, there are many ways the career field is being supported and when you are facing a tough problem and are uncertain of where to look for assistance, take a look at those former weapons troops performing a wide range of jobs for various companies around the globe, the answer may be right there.

*"Of the four wars in my lifetime, none came about because the U.S. was too strong."*

*Ronald Reagan*

## ***AACA Reunion***

As I commented in my editor's notes, the second annual AACA reunion was a blast (pun intended).

As you may have seen from the annual membership meeting notes, Dick Vancil brought up the issue of holding the reunion every year and people getting burned out. The members agreed and decided to hold the next reunion in 18-months and by 2016 set the schedule for every two years.

I would like to put out a call again for reunion photos. The only one I've seen is the following from Ed Story. If you have pictures, stories, etc. from the reunion, please send them in and I will include them in the next newsletter. Thanks!!



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## ***The AACCA Store***



### ***Show Your AACCA Pride***

Have you misplaced your AACCA coin, outgrown your shirt, or haven't had an opportunity to purchase either yet? If so, please contact me to let me know you're interested in some goods! We still have plenty of high-quality coins for sale for \$10 each plus shipping, thanks again Wayman, but the store is temporarily sold out of the polo shirts at the moment. I'm in the process of pricing shirts and hats to get the best "bang for your buck" and will push out a price guide and selection to everyone via email once complete. Take care!!

*Evan Godwin*

#### **Contact info:**

Evan Godwin  
Cell 808-561-4048

*"The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things. He is the one that gets the people to do the greatest things."*

*Ronald Reagan*

## ***Links to Loading Competition Videos***

From Don Felch

Links to the Maryland ANG loading competition:  
Here is the link to the MMR:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gpkWYmycqiU&feature=c4-overview-vl&list=PLFE1C0AB21EC56194>

This is the story used for the MMR in its entirety:

<http://www.dvidshub.net/video/298541/175th-maintenance-group-weapons-load-competition>

Loading competition from Kadena Air Base:

<http://www.dvidshub.net/video/286513/weapons-loading-competition>

## **AACA website**

<http://ArmamentChiefs.org>

*Bob Sherrill*

We now have a public accessible website that is available for everyone to view. Much of the information posted on the Air Force knowledge Now community page will migrate to this website in the future. We will continue to maintain the AFKN community for official and confidential correspondence and storage. This public site will potentially reach a much larger population and searchable by search engines such as Google, Bin, and Yahoo. Next month it will also be mobile phone accessible as well.

Information for the upcoming AACCA Reunion can be found on the [www.ArmamentChiefs.org](http://www.ArmamentChiefs.org) website.

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## **AACA Knowledge Now WEBSITE**

Our webmaster, Neil Reinsmoen, maintains our KnowledgeNow.net Community of Practice at the below link. Neil posts AACA documents and the current contact list on this site. You may access from your home computers and it's restricted to AACA members only. If you haven't already done so, please register at the following site.

<https://www.knowledgenow.net/Community/Views/Home.aspx?Filter=170>

## *Photos*

Please submit photos you would like to share with the group. I'm running out of pictures of myself!! I'm sure the photos will bring back fond memories of the past. The photos may also be current. Some of us old guys enjoy seeing the great things that the young troops are doing out there.

Please provide a caption with as much information you can recall.



*SSgt Keith Hilton "riding" an ALCM at Lowry AFB, CO around 1986*



*SMSgt Keith Hilton installing a WGU-25 guidance unit on a GBU-27 on the F-117A at Air Force Plant 42, Palmdale, CA around 1997*



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