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# *USAF MSC Association* **NEWSLETTER**

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APRIL 2006

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Officers and Key Contacts

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Capt William M. Copeland  
General Counsel

*From the Chairman of*

*the Board –*

Fellow Members:

Howdy from South Texas! Although it's been a very dry year, we have had some of the best weather ever throughout this winter – mild and comfortable – thanks to La Nina. Spring is in the air and the bluebonnets are in bloom.

The MSC Association successfully nominated Colonel Ed Nugent for the 2005 MSC Commitment to Excellence Award (Retiree Category). Colonel Nugent distinguished himself while on active duty and has continued to contribute to military and civilian health care since his retirement in 1973. In 1990, he helped found the USAF Medical Service Corps Association and served the Association as Treasurer, Vice President, President, Board Member and Chairman of the Board. He now holds the sole distinction as Chairman Emeritus. Colonel Nugent continues to inspire MSCs to affiliate with the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) so they may benefit from ACHE's educational and professional development opportunities. He frequently assists active and retired MSC officers by providing career counseling and support.

Colonel Nugent continued his service of excellence through contributions to his local and national healthcare community. He served as a Dean at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) School of Public Health. He also initiated quarterly dinner meetings for the Los Angeles ACHE chapter and served as member and chairman of the ACHE Book-of-the-Year Committee. Colonel Nugent administered oral exams for ACHE candidate members and introduced seminar speakers at the ACHE Congress on Healthcare Management. He is an ACHE Life Fellow. Since his retirement from the USAF Medical Service Corps, Colonel Nugent operated a 1300 bed hospital and is currently a consultant to physicians desiring to

establish their own malpractice insurance company offshore. Colonel Nugent continues to actively support the healthcare management community through consulting, networking and generous contributions of his time.

Colonel Nugent will be presented his award at the MSC Annual Award Dinner, 29 March 2006, at Harold Washington Library Center, Chicago Illinois. This dinner is in conjunction with the Annual ACHE Congress and other Air Force Activities.

This is the third year the association has nominated a retiree to the Corps Chief for recognition with the Commitment to Excellence Award. Previous recipients include Former Corps Chief, Col James (Polk) Polkinghorn (2002) (now deceased), Colonel Lewis Sanders (2003) CEO of PhyAmerica Government Services, Inc., and Lt. Colonel Jimmy Sanders (2004) for his writing of the Anthology of the Medical Service Corps.

With the diligent work of Colonel Raymond (Mac) McClean and Colonel Frank Perri, the Planning Committee has been sorting out the many hotels in San Antonio to select the site of our Reunion in 2007. The Board reviewed the prospective hotels and recently selected the beautiful Crowne Plaza Hotel on the Riverwalk for its site. We are excited about this location and hope that you will plan to attend our next Reunion that will be held October 11-14, 2007. President Art Small will tell you more about this Reunion as plans unfold.

Lt. Colonel Jimmy Sanders continues to work on Phase II (a collection of MSC Stories) of our History Project. This phase of the project calls for collecting stories from MSCs in all Air Force components (retired, active duty and reserve forces). It is the Association's hope that this project will capture what is in the hearts and minds of MSCs by encouraging all officers to contribute to the collection. While many of you have responded to the call for stories, many of you still have stories that need to be told. This phase of the project is planned to be completed and ready for the Association's 2007 Biennial Reunion in San Antonio, Texas. If you have a story to tell, please contact Jimmy at [paradox@zebra.net](mailto:paradox@zebra.net) right away.

Hope you all have a good spring. Diane and I wish you a Happy Easter.

Frank Rohrbough  
Chairman of the Board

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### **The President's Message:**

Greetings from the great northeast where it is still a bit cool. It has been a great winter considering that New York City had more snow in one day than we have had all winter.

Sometimes it may appear that nothing is happening between reunions. That is far from the case. Mac McClean and his committee have been hard at work scouting out the best locations in San Antonio for our 2007 reunion. See story in this issue.

Ray Inman and his committee have been busy preparing aids on how to help a surviving spouse in time of need. Documentation in draft stage is being reviewed and appointments are being made for those who will be on the front line providing assistance.

Nick Nicholson and the nominating committee are working on formalizing selection criteria for nominee ballot selection.

Jim Moreland and the Membership and Awards committee have forwarded to the Board the name of Ed Nugent for the Commitment to Excellence Award. This nomination has been approved by the Corps Chief. Our congratulations to Ed on a well deserved award.

Barry Morrison and the Investment Committee have made some adjustments to our portfolio keeping us well in the black.

The web site committee has started to clean up and update our web page.

To all the members of these committees goes a sincere thank you for your efforts on behalf of YOUR organization.

Yes, there are a few other committees that I have not mentioned, but they also serve who sit and wait. Hang in there; your turn will come.

The only way your organization can grow is with the help of the membership. We are looking for ideas on recruitment and retention. All of our members have held responsible positions requiring insight and decision making. Put on your thinking caps and help your organization flourish and grow.

Keep our men and women in uniform in your thoughts and prayers. May they be kept safe and return home soon.

Arthur Small  
President

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**Save the Date.....**

The Crowne Plaza Hotel in downtown San Antonio has been selected and contracted as the site for the 2007 MSC Reunion from 11-14 October 2007. The Crowne Plaza, a former Adams Mark Hotel, has been extensively renovated. It was beautiful before, and is now even more spectacular.

Located on the magnificent Riverwalk in downtown San Antonio, the Crowne Plaza is within walking distance of excellent restaurants as well as many other amenities. The Alamo, the famous Buckhorn Saloon and La Vallita are all less than a mile away.

Following an extensive review of available sites, the four finalist hotels were visited by our selection team. The Crowne Plaza was declared the winner. Although the MSC Reunion will be at a very busy time of the year in San Antonio, we were able to lock in an excellent room rate of \$129 per day for a limited block of rooms. More information will be forthcoming as the planning process progresses. And, rest assured that when the appropriate time arises, we will put out more specific details—especially as relates to hotel bookings, reservations, numbers to call, etc.

Local tours will be available and at least two dinners – a buffet and our final banquet will be included. The Annual Don Wagner Golf Tournament will be a highlight event.

Start planning now and save your pennies, nickels and dimes so you will be ready for this special event. You will want to have “mucho dinero” when you arrive in San Antonio in 2007. We want to make this MSC Reunion one you will long remember as a high moment in your many travels.

See you in Antonio!

Mac McClean

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### **No retirees Tricare Fee Hikes for Now**

I'm sure many of you have been following the news the past 3-4 months on the many machinations going on in Congress regarding proposed changes to the Tricare program. To keep the issue simple, I won't address the many iterations, but rather provide a brief status report on where the issue stands currently, as we go to press.

Rick Maze, Times Staff Writer advises that in a major concession, the Defense Department has told Tricare contractors to cancel plans for an October 1 increase in health care fees for military retirees under age 65. Defense officials have not given up on their basic proposal, which calls for fee hikes of as much as \$1,500 a year for working-age retirees using the military health care system. But they now seem to recognize that fierce opposition from military and veterans groups and growing concern in Congress have made an October 1 effective date for the increases virtually impossible.

In late March, the Republican chairman and Democratic ranking member of the Senate Armed Services personnel panel promised military associations they would not support the fee increases until an independent audit of the military health care system is completed to determine if there are other ways to cut increasing health care costs. Additionally, the Republican chairman and ranking Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee have announced they oppose the Tricare fee increases, and a

bipartisan bill was introduced in the House to block any increases without specific congressional approval. That bill, sponsored by Rep. Chet Edwards, D-Texas, and Walter Jones, R-N.C., already has 77 co-sponsors.

It is just recognition of reality, Steve Strobridge of the Military Officers Association of America said about the Pentagon's message to Tricare contractors. The Department of Defense really didn't have a choice. That is great news, said Joyce Raezer of the National Military Family Association. We had hoped Congress would send a message to DoD to slow this thing down. They went too fast.

The Pentagon's proposed fee increases, still being reviewed by the White House Office of Management and Budget, would increase enrollment fees, co-payments and deductibles for military retirees under the age of 65 and their families. Increases would be based on pay grade, and would apply to both Tricare Prime and Tricare Standard, with a maximum increase of \$1,500 a year. Defense officials have defended their proposal as necessary to hold down escalating expenses so health care does not squeeze higher budget priorities such as weapons modernization.

Stand by for bulletins (Editor)!

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### **HONORING THE AMERICAN FLAG AND THE MILITARY WHO PROTECT IT**

The following is a letter from retired Army Major General Vernon B. Lewis regarding his views on saluting the American Flag. Many of you may embrace the idea, others may not. But, we're passing it along to you as a relevant issue that you may wish to consider and as an item of interest to the membership. In the final analysis, the choice is the individual's prerogative.

Major General Lewis' Letter:

I gathered some 16 of my old military friends who agreed to sponsor a movement for Veterans to salute rather than place their hands over their heart when honoring the flag, fallen comrades, and/or the country. I have some from each of the four principal services. Three of them were former Vice Chiefs or Assistant Commandants of their service, and several were former CINC's.

We refer to saluting when we do the pledge to the flag, when the National Colors pass or are presented, when the National Anthem or honors are played, or when taps are played and firing squads or guns render honors. We got MOAA magazine to ask veterans what they preferred, hand over the heart or saluting. When last I looked, some 583 veteran respondents had voted 81% in favor of the salute. In addition, my email address was in

the questionnaire and I've had about 150 responses, with all but a dozen or so in favor of the salute. Obviously an overwhelming majority of the veterans want to salute.

There are no regulations telling us veterans what we can and can't do in this matter. If we decide we want to salute, who will dare to tell us “no”?

It is a matter of personal choice. We've earned the right to render a salute. Now the challenge is to get the word out. I believe the unit and branch associations are the best way. The commanders of the American Legion and VFW never answered my emails, presuming they even got them. If we can get this started it will take on a life of its own. Those who object can continue the hand over the heart thing. Gradually the custom will change, as well it should.

Just imagine thousands of fans saluting at NFL, NBA, and Major League Baseball games when the National Anthem is played. It will telegraph a message to all others of how many have served this country in the Armed Forces – will be a positive and patriotic message.

You can help by putting the word out in your organizations, which are made up of patriots like you and me.

Thanks, my friends.

Vernon B. Lewis

End of Lewis Letter

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### **IN BIG OVERHAUL, AIR FORCE MAY CONSOLIDATE UP TO FIVE MAJOR COMMANDS**

In a recent five page lead article in the 16 March 2006 “Inside the Pentagon,” an advance announcement was made that the Air Force is currently reviewing major changes in the way the future Air force will operate. In the interest of brevity, I have taken the liberty of condensing the five page article written by Elaine M. Grossman of ITP to one page.

The Air Force may consolidate three or more of its 10 major commands as part of a sweeping effort to cut billions of dollars from its budget and up to 59,000 military and civilian personnel from its ranks, service officials tell Inside the Pentagon. There are several different proposals under discussion in Air Force circles and some imagine as many as half the service’s major commands – or “majcoms” for short – being substantially reorganized, according to officials.

Service commands at the top of the list for change include U.S. Air Forces in Europe, based at Ramstein Air Base in Germany, and Pacific Air Forces, based at Hickam Air Force Base in Hawaii, according to other Air Force officials.

At the same time, the two commands – known widely as “PACAF” and “USAFE”—may be significantly trimmed down in an effort to eliminate layers of bureaucracy, Air Force officers say. Operational units that previously have reported up the command chain through these two component commands would instead communicate directly with Air Combat Command, which could take on a significantly higher budget and more authority, officials tell ITP. This would leave the top Air Force representatives in the Pacific and in Europe with much smaller staffs, allowing a reduction of thousands of jobs, according to service sources.

But, virtually all the major commands will take some amount of reductions, with several beyond PACAF and USAFE expected to undergo some significant changes, according to Air Force officials. “We’re looking at making all majcoms more lean,” says Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. T. Michael Moseley.

The anticipated major command overhaul is an important element of the large-scale streamlining the service chief believes necessary to save an estimated \$20 billion in budget funds and cut 40,000 active duty forces from its ranks, service officials say. As many as 19,000 additional cuts to “active-duty equivalent” personnel are to come from the civilian, Air National Guard and Air Force reserve workforce, officials say.

“What we are doing is collapsing everything onto a war fighting structure,” says another Air Force officer. There is a potential downside to that process, though. An organizational construct that is more efficient for air operations worldwide could be less functional for the service’s training and support wings, this officer noted.

“I think you have to get to driving those efficiencies, so you squeeze out every opportunity to have checkers checking checkers, who check checkers before a decision is made and we get to ‘operationalize’ a decision,” Moseley told ITP. “That’s what I’m wrestling with.”

May we live in interesting times? (Editor).

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## **MILITARY HUMOR**

### **Reporting for Duty.....**

In a time of national crisis, our U.S. military stands ready to protect and defend. In 1962, a brave, young Air Force medic finds it’s his time to answer the call.

The recent enlistee arrived at Lackland AFB, Texas, in March 1962, for basic training with about 60 other “rainbows.” One day, each of the trainees, based on their test scores, was asked to list their career field preferences. At barely 18 years old and overcome with the glamour of being in the Air Force, the young enlistee just wanted to fly and fight! His last choice was to work in any area of the medical field.

Come graduation day from basic, 58 members of the trainees were selected for either air police or cooks. One classmate was selected to become a chaplain's assistant. And, our young trainee? He was told he was going to become a medic. Not only was it his last choice, but now he would have to stay at Lackland even longer to go through a medical helper's course.

By late summer of that year, our young trainee had completed the necessary training, and his first PCS assignment was to the Air Force's Regional Hospital at Carswell AFB in Fort Worth, Texas, where he was assigned to work in the orderly room.

His boss, a technical sergeant, informed all his co-workers that because he was so young and inexperienced, that he was not to be left covering the orderly room by himself. A bit embarrassing, but our new recruit knew it wouldn't be long before they would all discover his true capabilities.

On Oct. 22 of that year, President Kennedy told the world of the Cuban missile crisis. Since Carswell AFB was part of the Strategic Air Command, even our new orderly room commando's hospital went to 12-hour shifts, seven days a week, to respond to the crisis and its potential crisis.

This was it! His time had come, and he was ready to serve. So that Saturday, he took it upon himself to open and staff the orderly room. Because it was the weekend, and because the orderly room was way off in the hospital basement by itself, there was not much traffic. In fact, in seven hours, there was nary a phone call, not even a visitor. Perhaps our warrior was not needed after all.

But, wait ... He heard footsteps! Soon the colonel who was the hospital XO entered the orderly room, and our young warrior sprang to attention. The colonel looked around at the empty office, then at our proud medical helper, and finally asked, "Airman Biggerstaff, what are you doing here?" He proudly responded, "Sir, I am here because of the Cuban missile crisis!"

The colonel gazed at Airman Biggerstaff for a very long time. Finally, he said, "Son, I think we can handle it OK. Why don't you go on back to the barracks?"

And there you have it — Airman Biggerstaff's very first contribution to a national crisis as a member of the U.S. military.

— **John Biggerstaff** is a retired Air Force Medical Service Corps officer. He lives in Commerce, Texas, where he is president of MOAA's Northeast Texas Chapter.

The foregoing article was written by John Biggerstaff and published in the March 2006 issue of the Military Officer, the flagship publication of the Military Officers of America Association.

## **AIR FORCE IMPLEMENTS NEW CELL PHONE RESRICTIONS**

The Air Force has recently implemented a new cell phone restriction for personnel driving on Air Force installations. This new ruling came into effect in late February 2006. Drivers are not allowed to talk on their cell phones while driving on Air Force installations without a hands free device.

This policy implements recent Department of Defense Joint Traffic Guidance. The DoD joint traffic document states that vehicle operators on a DoD installation shall not use cell phones unless the vehicle is safely parked or unless they are using a hands-free device. With this further clarification, we assume this restriction applies to all DoD military installations.

A word of advice: Do not to use cell phones while driving on a DoD installation (Editor).

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## **THESE AIR FORCE MEMBERS DID WHAT THEIR GRANDMOTHERS WERE NOT ALLOWED TO DO!**



Members of the 376th Expeditionary Air Refueling Squadron recently flew an **ALL FEMALE KC-135 CREW** Stratotanker air refueling mission over Afghanistan. Early one morning in late January 2006, a KC-135 Stratotanker took off from Ganci Air Base, Kyrgyzstan, carrying more than 180,000 pounds of fuel and an all-female crew, consisting of both pilots, a navigator and a boom operator.

The event marked the first all-female crew to fly an air refueling mission into Afghanistan from Kyrgyzstan. All members were assigned to the 99th Air Refueling Squadron out of Robins Air Force Base, Georgia. They were deployed to Ganci Air Base, Kyrgyzstan, back in December 2005.

Truly, this all female KC-135 crew most certainly did what their grandmothers were not allowed to do. Times are-a-changing. Well done ladies!! (Editor).

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## **A SCENARIO OF A HEART ATTACK WHEN YOU ARE ALONE**

Let's say its 6:15 PM and you're driving home (alone of course) after an unusually hard day on the job. You're tired, frustrated and really stressed.

Suddenly you start experiencing severe pain in your chest that starts radiating out into your arm and up into your jaw. You are only five miles from the hospital nearest your home. Unfortunately, you don't know if you'll be able to make it that far!

You have been trained in CPR, but the guy who conducted the course did not tell you how to perform it on yourself!!!

**How to survive a heart attack when alone?**

Since often times people are alone when they suffer a heart attack, the person whose heart is beating improperly and who begins to feel faint, has only about 10 seconds left before losing consciousness. What to do?

**Answer:**

Do not panic. Start coughing repeatedly and vigorously. A deep breath should be taken before each cough. The cough must be deep and prolonged, as when producing sputum from deep inside the chest.

A breath and a cough must be repeated about every two seconds without let-up until help arrives, or until the heart is felt to be beating normally again.

Deep breaths gets oxygen into the lungs and coughing movements squeeze the heart and keeps the blood circulating. The squeezing pressure on the heart also helps it begin normal rhythm. In this way, heart attack victims make it possible for them to get to a hospital for definitive treatment.

Don't ever think that you are not prone to a heart attack because you are only 25 or 30 years of age. Nowadays, due to life style changes, heart attacks are found among people of all age groups.

Pass this along to as many other people as possible – It Could Save Their Lives!!!

Source: An article in the Journal of General Hospital, Rochester, NY (Vol. No. 240).

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**ARMED FORCES VACATION CLUB**

Ed Nugent directed me to the Armed forces Vacation Club web site. Where he finds all these strange and unusual things, I know not. But, this one sounds most interesting.

The Armed Forces Vacation Club (AFVC) is a leisure travel benefits program sponsored by Resort Condominiums International (RCI), and a leader in vacation rental. The AFVC is a "Space Available" program that offers Department of Defense affiliated personnel the opportunity to take affordable condominium vacations at resorts around the world.

The AFVC makes this possible by utilizing marketable inventory at condominium timeshare resorts. Marketable inventory consists of condominium units that resort owners do not use, which generally means off-season or short-notice travel. For more details on this most unusual vacation opportunity, go to [www.afvcclub.com](http://www.afvcclub.com).

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## **“HANOI TAXI” RETIRING**

Preparations Are Under Way for Final Flight of “Hanoi Taxi” by Jeff Rhodes, LM Aero Communications.



On 6 May 2006, the last C-141 Starlifter will be flown to the National Museum of the United States Air Force at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, and retired, closing the book on the 43-year career of the Starlifter. But until then, the Hanoi Taxi, the flagship of the 445th Airlift Wing, shown here, will be flown over the museum, on missions around the country.

The C-141 was first flown on 17 December 1963, the 60th anniversary of the first flight of the Wright Brothers. Since the aircraft's operational debut on 23 April 1965, active duty, Guard and Reserve crews have played a critical role in every conflict, natural disaster and operation that Military Airlift Command or Air Mobility Command has been involved in. That includes delivering passengers, patients, equipment and relief supplies to just about every point on the map. However, one mission still stands above the rest.

With the signing of the Paris Peace Accords on 17 January 1973, the U.S. involvement in Vietnam ended. On 12 February 1973, line crews flying three C-141 with members of the 10th Aeromedical Evacuation Group System also on board, landed at Gia Lam Airport in Hanoi, North Vietnam. Their mission: repatriate the first U.S. servicemen held as prisoners of war, some for close to seven years. The first aircraft to land that day was serial number 66-0177. The aircraft quickly picked up the nickname Hanoi Taxi.

The 40 POWs on that first flight signed the aircraft under the wing box, and those signatures were preserved under Plexiglas. Framed photos mounted on the inside of the cargo compartment show POWs in Hanoi and aboard the aircraft. Aircrew headrest covers on the flight deck are embroidered with the black and white POW/MIA logo, and each of the crew positions has engraved plaques with the names of the crew members on that first Freedom Flight.

There are currently four C-141s still in service; the other three aircraft will be retired early in 2006. Hanoi Taxi will be the last C-141 to retire, and the final flight will consist of a takeoff on the Patterson side of the field, where the 445th Airlift Wing is based, and a landing at the museum on the Wright Field side of the base.

The end of yet another memorable era in the history of aeromedical evacuation (Editor).

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### **AAFES MATCHES LOWER PRICES**

AAFES prices are routinely lower than the civilian competition. However, to insure they continue providing lower prices, AAFES has introduced a new program called “We’ll Match it!” The program works in two ways. First, if customers see a price differential of less than \$10 they can tell the cashier who will match it on the spot. Customers who report a price difference greater than \$10 dollars need only bring a current local competitor’s ad to receive the reduced price. In either case the competitor’s item must be identical to the item in the AAFES store.

“We’ll Match It!” promotes AAFES as a price leader with a pledge that retail stores will match competitors’ current, local price on any identical stock assortment. In addition to this same-day pledge, AAFES also offers a 30-day price guarantee on any item originally purchased from AAFES and subsequently sold at a lower price by AAFES, or another local competitor (excluding unauthorized dealers and warehouse clubs).

Happy shopping (Editor)!

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### **VA OFFERS PRESCRIPTION REFILL SERVICE FOR VETS**

Tens of thousands of veterans are now receiving their prescription drug refills from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) with greater ease, convenience, speed and security, thanks to a new service available to veterans over the internet.

More than 100,000 prescriptions have been refilled using the latest service added to the VA’s “MyHealthVet,” the personal online health record system designed for veterans in the VA healthcare system. The new prescription refill service began last August.

The secure online prescription refill service has quickly emerged as one of the more popular features of the MyHealthVet system, which connects with the VA’s electronic records system. When a veteran orders a prescription refill, the request is routed to the VA’s computer system to be filled by one of the department’s outpatient mail pharmacies. The refill is then sent directly to the veteran, eliminating the need for a trip to the pharmacy and a wait in line.

Try it; you’ll like it (Editor).

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## **GOOD CONDUCT MEDAL ELIMINATION**

The Air Force is no longer awarding the Good Conduct Medal. The Director of Airmen development and sustainment, Brigadier General Robert R. Allardice, said “The quality of our enlisted personnel today is so high; we expect good conduct from our Airmen.” He added, “Having a medal for good conduct is almost to say we don’t expect Airmen to do well, but if they’re good we will give them a medal.”

One must look at the history of why the medal was created in the 1960s, says the Air Force. The military was using the draft and was involved in the Vietnam War. The Air Force didn’t have any other method to recognize Airmen. Today, the Air Force Achievement Medal recognizes outstanding Airmanship.

Airmen who previously earned the Good Conduct Medal are still authorized to wear it [Source: Armed Forces News 24 Feb 2006].

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## **AIR FORCE MSC ASSOCIATION HISTORY PROJECT**

As most of the membership knows, Jimmy Sanders recently completed Phase I of the Air Force MSC Association’s History Project with the publication of the **Excellence from Birth: The Professional Evolution of the USAF Medical Service Corps, The Anthology** which was published in the spring of 2005.

Phase II of the Air Force MSC Association’s History Project is to be a collection of **MSC Stories** which will focus on a foundation of short “stories” told or written by or about MSC Officers. This phase of the project calls for collecting stories from MSCs in all Air Force components (retired, active duty and reserve forces). It is the Association’s hope that this project will capture what is in the hearts and minds of MSCs by encouraging all officers to contribute to the collection. Spouses and other knowledgeable individuals are encouraged to participate and contribute to the project. This phase of the project is planned to be completed and ready for the Association’s 2007 Biennial Reunion in San Antonio, Texas.

### **Guidelines for Prospective Storytellers Include:**

- Tell a short story about anything you think would be of interest to other MSCs – past, present and future; i.e., a noteworthy event, a memorable person, how you felt about a particular job and assignment. If you were a “first” at anything, we need your story.
- There are no limitations on the subjects you can write about.
- Try to limit your story to a one-page single-space page. Microsoft word preferred.

- E-mail your story to Jimmy Sanders at [paradox@zebra.net](mailto:paradox@zebra.net) soonest. Jimmy has sample copies to share.
  - You may contact Jimmy at 334/613-6851, his above email address or at 10850 US Highway 331, Montgomery, Alabama 36105.
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## **GROUP TRUMPETS FINAL HONORS AT VETERANS' FUNERALS**

**By Donna Miles, American Forces Press Service, Release No. 3-04-06. 16 Mar 2006**

At age 99, Leonard "Rosie" Ross attends his share of funerals. But in most cases, it's not for a friend or loved one. Ross, in his American Legion uniform, trumpets "Taps" for fellow veterans he's never met, representing a nonprofit group called Bugles Across America.

Ross is the oldest of thousands of horn players nationwide who believe a recorded rendition of "Taps" playing from a "boombox" doesn't deliver the proper gravesite tribute to veterans who sacrificed for their country. So, they volunteer their time, toting their trumpets, cornets, flugelhorns and bugles to gravesites across the country to play the soulful 24 notes known as "Taps" at veterans' funerals.

Ross, who remembers playing retreat on his trumpet outside Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower's window in London during World War II when he served with 8th Air Force, calls it a privilege to play "Taps" for fellow veterans.

"I'm glad to do it for the family and for the veterans. They deserve it," said the Mayer, Ariz., native. "I'll do it as long as I can, and I thank God I'm still able to."

Tom Day, a World War II veteran from suburban Chicago, founded Bugles Across America in 2001 to keep up with the demand for buglers at funerals for the estimated 1,800 veterans who die each day nationwide. With about 900 requests for buglers every day, and just 500 active-duty buglers available for funeral duty as well as other events, there simply weren't enough live horn players available to meet the need, he said. After Congress mandated in 2000 that every veteran's family who wanted it was entitled to graveside military honors for their loved one, the "Taps" played during the service too often was pre-recorded, Day said. Other times, it was played through a digital device inserted into a bugle that, although it looked more authentic, was still recorded, he said.

"That just wasn't right," he said. "When you have a live horn, you have emotion. And it tells the family that somebody came to the funeral and played in person to honor the

veteran personally. That's a whole lot better than pressing a button and getting 'Taps' on a CD.”

So Day sent out a call to musicians, urging them to join Bugles Across America as a tribute to veterans. They responded in droves. Today the organization's 5,000 members—which include musicians, drill teams and color guards—support about 1,000 funerals a month throughout the United States.

During the past four years, the buglers, who range in age from 10 to 99 and represent every race, creed and color, have played "Taps" at about 55,000 funerals, including about 60 percent of those for casualties of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Day said. They also play at other military events, including Veterans Day and Memorial Day observances.

Participation in the organization is free, open to anyone able to play "Taps" with dignity and willing to volunteer their time. Day regularly scours pawnshops and flea markets in search of secondhand horns, cleans them up and donates them to buglers who don't have their own instruments but want to participate.

"People want to do this. They recognize this as something they can do to play tribute to those who served," said Day, whose long affiliation with the military includes eight years in the Marine Corps, four years in the Navy, three years in the Coast Guard, and eight years teaching Junior ROTC. "It's a way for them to honor veterans and their families when veterans go to God's army in the sky," he said.

Mark Paradis, a former Marine Corps corporal who lives in northern New Jersey, said he feels honored to play at veterans' funerals through Bugles Across America. "To me, it's a way to pay respect to that veteran and provide closure and comfort to that family," said Paradis, a regional director for Bugles Across America. "It's also a way for me to say thank you and to give back to our community and to our veterans. The Marine Corps gave so much to me, and this is my way of giving something back.”

Day, who played "Taps" at a military funeral for the first time when he was just 10 years old, has since played at more than 4,000 funerals, seeing no end in sight.” This brings people comfort, and it's something I can do for them,” he said.

"After all, you know that it's the Marines who guard the gates of heaven," Day said, his smile resonating through the telephone line as he spoke. "And when they hear live 'Taps,' you're in immediately. If it's fake, you have to wait in line," he said. "So you've got to have live 'Taps.'"

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## **TAPS**

Major James L. King

Date Unknown

“Do your duty in all things. You cannot do more; you should never wish to do less.”

—Robert E. Lee—

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### **HOLD THE PRESSES!!**

Just received a bulletin from Ralph Charlip for some last minute items for the newsletter. Better late than never. Here they are!

### **HAVE YOU PURCHASED YOUR COPY OF VOLUME ONE MSC HISTORY ANTHOLOGY?**

There are currently more than 1,000 active duty officers in the Air Force Medical Service Corps (MSC). Most serve in executive leadership roles in administration of freestanding medical treatment facilities and at staff positions at all Air Force levels. A smaller percentage is involved in aeromedical evacuation, recruiting, medical research, and full-time graduate education.

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To get your copy of the Anthology, send the order form (shown at page 17) and your check in today. Copies are \$12 for Association members and \$20 for others. Hurry while supplies last.

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### **ARE YOU AMONG THE FEW WHO DUES ARE OVERDUE ?**

If you are among the few members whose dues have expired, this is a reminder that **NOW** is the time to renew. Get out the checkbooks and send a 2006 \$20.00 membership renewal fee to the Air Force MSC Association Secretary soonest. Don't let your membership lapse and you lose the benefits of this most important organization. Mail

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**EMAIL UPDATES**

The USAF MSC Association email address changed in January 2006. Please direct future email updates to [afmsassociation@comcast.net](mailto:afmsassociation@comcast.net).

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**PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION LEGIBLY**

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