



VER three extraordinarily busy days, throngs of Air Force officers and enlisted members joined with civilian professionals, officials, and academics to launch the Air Force Association's inaugural Air & Space Conference and Technology Exposition.

Some 1,000 blue-suiters attended the Sept. 13-15 event in Washington, D.C. They came from around the US and the world.

It was a conference unique in the business of airpower. Events were



Some 1,000 blue-suiters jammed the rooms and halls at the AFA conference.

pitched to the professional requirements of a broad range of Air Force personnel—USAF enlisted members and officers, Guardsmen and Reservists, and civilians.

Numerous workshops and forums unfolded before standing room only crowds. Featured speakers included James G. Roche, Secretary of the Air Force; Gen. John P. Jumper, Air Force Chief of Staff; and R. James Woolsey, former Director of Central Intelligence.

That was only the start. Conference

attendees were given opportunities to attend forums and workshops on a wide range of Air Force and national security topics, many of which are covered in the following pages.

The companion Technology Exposition included displays of cutting-edge aerospace technology. The exposition was subscribed to by 141 exhibitors (see p. 80).

On hand to cover the speakers and events were 116 reporters and other news media representatives.

Honored guests were USAF's 12



CMSAF Gerald Murray (left) talks with Lt. Gen. George Taylor Jr., USAF surgeon general, during the conference. Murray chaired the Command Chiefs' Forum (see p. 74). One of the many forum speakers, Taylor gave a presentation on the state of military medicine.

Outstanding Airmen of the Year, who were recognized at a special AFA dinner addressed by Gen. T. Michael Moseley, Air Force vice chief of staff, and hosted by CMSAF Gerald R. Murray.

The speakers and workshops drew large crowds of service members intent on learning more about their profession. For example, the conference featured forums of four-star officers, command chief master sergeants, senior space officials, and top acquisition officers.

Leaders of the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve Command each gave a heavily attended briefing. So did Brig. Gen. Richard E. Webber, commander of 21st Space Wing, Peterson AFB, Colo., who





Above, Gen. T. Michael Moseley, Air Force vice chief of staff, converses with Air Force Secretary James Roche. Moseley addressed the special dinner recognizing the Air Force's 12 Outstanding Airmen for 2004.

Gen. Gregory Martin, commander of Air Force Materiel Command, spoke at two forums—one on acquisition and one on USAF policies and plans.

James Webb (left) spoke about the similarities between the war in Vietnam and the war in Iraq. (See "James Webb: The Real Vietnam War," p. 76.) John Correll (right) recounted the history of the Enola Gay controversy, which surfaced again recently with the opening of the Smithsonian's new Udvar-Hazy Center near Dulles Airport. The B-29, which dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, has long been the target of antiwar and antinuclear partisans.

spoke on the topic of space operations. Also getting lots of attention was military history. Former Navy Secretary James H. Webb offered a thought-provoking comparison of Vietnam and Iraq, while former Air Force Magazine Editor in Chief John T. Correll revisited the Enola Gay controversy. Historian Howard M. Hensel gave two lectures on federal strategy in the Civil War.

Lt. Gen. Ronald E. Keys, deputy chief of staff for air and space operations, presented a close-up review of how things are going for the air expeditionary force concept. Airpower expert Rebecca Grant reviewed Air Force operations in the first 600 days of the Global War on Terror.

In between sessions, the narrow hallway between the main salons and the side conference rooms was full of small groups comparing notes and deciding who would go where next. There were many options, including topics such as "Communicating the Air Force," by Col. James DeFrank III, the Air Force's deputy director of public affairs.

Rep. Jim Marshall (D-Ga.), a member of the House Armed Services Committee, presented an overview of the future of Iraq that sparked such a lively audience response that he ran far past his allotted time and a second speaker on the subject had to be rescheduled.

At the same time, the conference displayed an unprecedented human relations component. Service personnel wheeled toddlers into a family support seminar. Listeners jammed into Ron Culberson's presentation, "Humor in the Workplace." Also popular were presentations such as "Issues of the Mobile Child" by Jean L. Silvernail, "Air Force Family Support and Crossroads" by Linda Smith, and "Military Medicine and the State of Tricare" by Lt. Gen. George Taylor Jr., the Air Force surgeon general.

In that same vein, attendees saw a presentation on the "VA Today and Tomorrow" by Darryl Kehrer, staff director of the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Benefits, and an Air Force "Recruiting Showcase" by Brig. Gen. Robertus C.N. Remkes, commander of Air Force Recruiting Service, Randolph AFB, Tex.

Subjects that reflected on current operations seemed the biggest drawing cards. Thus the Air Force reserve component sessions drew big crowds and produced lively question-and-answer sessions. Grant's briefing filled two-thirds of a sizable ball-room.

The fact that the US is engaged in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan was a prominent factor in the week's events. Pedestrians walking up the driveway toward the hotel were required to produce picture identification for security's sake. Questioners prefaced queries with references to their own experiences in Afghanistan or in Iraq.



Rebecca Grant gave a presentation based on her work with USAF's Task Force Enduring Look, a review group which studied the lessons to be learned from Air Force operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Staff photo by Guy Ace