

# 75 Years of Action: Highlights of AFA's Storied History

The Air Force Association has played a crucial role in support of the U.S. Air Force for 75 years—longer, in fact, than the Air Force has existed as an independent military branch. Today, AFA remains dedicated to its mission to Educate, Advocate, and Support the Air Force, its Airmen, and their families—and to do the same for the new U.S. Space Force, which celebrated its first anniversary in December.

Here are highlights of AFA's most notable achievements in its first 75 years.

## Feb. 4, 1946



AFA is incorporated in Washington, D.C. Gen. Jimmy Doolittle is elected AFA's first president.

## Sept. 18, 1947

*The United States Air Force is made an independent military service, as a part of the National Security Act of 1947.*

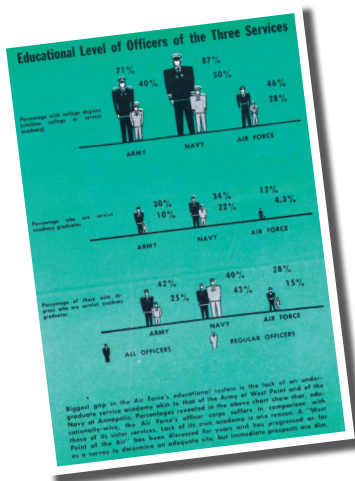
## July 1946



Air Force Magazine, "The Official Service Journal of the U.S. Army Air Forces," becomes the official journal of the Air Force Association.

## 1948

AFA creates its award program and institutes the H.H. Arnold Award, the Flight Trophy (renamed in 1957 as the David C. Schilling Award), the Science Trophy (later renamed in honor of the late Theodore von Karman), the Arts and Letters Trophy (renamed in 1966 in honor of the late Gill Robb Wilson), and the Hoyt S. Vandenberg Award.



## September 1951

The first "USAF Almanac" appears as the "Anniversary Issue" of Air Force Magazine.

## August 1956



The Outstanding Airmen of the Year program is born at the Air Force Association's 10th Annual National Convention, held in New Orleans.

## May 1956

The Air Force Association Foundation (later renamed the Aerospace Education Foundation) is formally established.



## April 1959

AFA's hosts the World Congress of Flight in Las Vegas. It is the first international air show in U.S. history. Some 51 foreign nations participated.

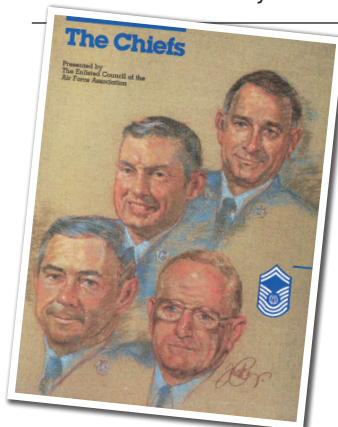
## March 1967

The Aerospace Education Foundation undertakes "Project Utah" in cooperation with the U.S. Office of Education, demonstrating the feasibility of using Air Force technical training courses in the Utah public school system. This later leads to the creation of the Community College of the Air Force.



## October 1969

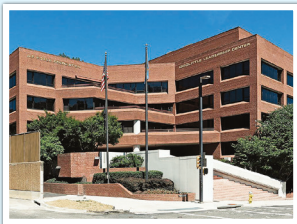
Air Force Magazine cover story, "The Forgotten Americans of the Vietnam War," helps ignite national concern for American prisoners of war and those missing in action, after Readers Digest publishes a version of the story.



## March 1964

AFA's Airmen's Council asks USAF to appoint a "Sergeant Major of the Air Force." Three years later, in 1967, the first Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force is appointed.

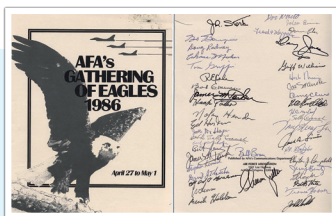
## August 1984



AFA moves into its own building in Arlington, Va., after 38 years in the District of Columbia.

## January 1985

AFA's 1st Tactical Air Warfare Symposium is held in Orlando, Fla. The event later grows into one of the Air Force's two annual departmentwide professional development events.



## April 1986

AFA hosts the "Gathering of Eagles" in Las Vegas to honor WWI, Korea, and Vietnam War veterans.



## September 1987

President Ronald Reagan invites the 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year to the White House and pins the OAY Badge on each.

## December 1995

AFA and the Military Coalition helps convince Congress pass legislation ensuring that "no state may impose an income tax on any retirement income of an individual who is not a resident or domiciliary of such state." As a result, military retirees are spared having to pay taxes to each state they lived in throughout their careers.

## April 1997



AFA hosts the 50th Anniversary of the Air Force in Las Vegas, including a Global Air Chiefs Conference and an air show at Nellis Air Force Base.

## September 1998

Some 587 AFA delegates personally deliver messages to Congress about the difficulty families have getting military honors at funerals for veterans and retirees. The Defense Authorization Act of 1999 orders that an honor guard detail of not less than three persons must be made available on request for any veteran's funeral.



## October 1990

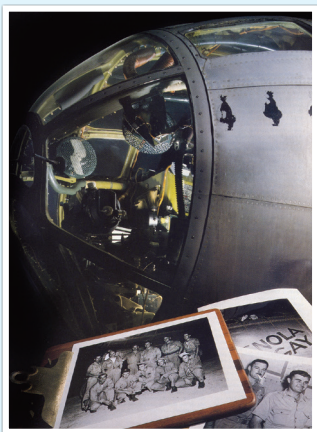
AFA, in conjunction with the Air Force Chief of Staff, sponsors "Stealth Days" at Andrews Air Force Base, Md., to educate members of Congress about stealth technology. Members also view stealth aircraft, including the F-117, the B-2, and early development models of the F-22 and F-35.

## January 1992

AFA leads the way in establishing the Air Force Memorial Foundation to build a national monument to the Air Force and Airmen in or near Washington, D.C.

## March 1994

An AFA Special Report, "The Smithsonian and the *Enola Gay*," exposes the National Air and Space Museum's plan to display the B-29 that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima as a prop in a politically charged exhibition critical of the mission. In response, Congress, the news media, and the public force the museum to change the exhibit and its approach to future exhibition planning.



## September 1995

The Aerospace Education Foundation awards spouse scholarships to 10 select spouses from among more than 500 applicants—its first-ever spouse scholarships.

## March 2001

AFA successfully advocates for eliminating capital gains taxes on the sales of members' private residences as a result of a permanent change-of-station move.

## March 2001

AFA successfully advocates for eliminating dual-compensation penalties for military members who immediately take civilian jobs in the federal government after retirement.

## December 2002

AFA helps secure a Silver Star for Lt. Col. David B. Van Pelt for heroic actions during the Korean War—50 years prior.

## August 2005

### DAILY REPORT

*Air Force Magazine* launches the Daily Report, an email news product covering the Air Force, air power, and defense.

## October 2006



The Air Force Memorial is dedicated, and the United States Air Force Memorial is presented to the nation. President George W. Bush attends.





## May 2007

The Eaker Institute is renamed the Mitchell Institute for Airpower Studies in tribute to air power pioneer Billy Mitchell.

## February 2009

AFA establishes its CyberPatriot Program and hosts its first competition. CyberPatriot was conceived by AFA to inspire high school students to pursue careers in cybersecurity or other science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines critical to our nation's future. The program evolves into a comprehensive National Youth Cyber Education Program, reaching thousands of elementary, middle, and high school students annually.



## April 2010

AFA's CyberPatriot program expands beyond cadets, thanks to Northrop Grumman, which becomes its Presenting Sponsor.

## November 2011

AFA establishes the Wounded Airman Program (WAP) to provide funds that go directly to helping seriously ill and injured Airmen.



## September 2013

The Mitchell Institute becomes the Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies under the direction of retired Lt. Gen. David Deptula as its Dean.

## April 2013

CyberPatriot expands to middle schools. Two years later, it further expands into elementary schools, and less than three years after that, to senior citizens through CyberGenerations, a program designed to help protect seniors from cyber pitfalls and exploitation.



## November 2013



AFA's CyberPatriot becomes an international program, expanding to the United Kingdom (CyberCenturion). In the following years it puts down roots in Australia (CyberTaipan), Saudi Arabia (CyberArabia), and Japan (CyberSakura).

## April 2014

AFA renames its headquarters building the "James H. Doolittle Building" in honor of its first president.

## June 2014

CyberPatriot launches AFA Cyber Camps.

## August 2014

Inspired by the success of CyberPatriot, the Secretary of the Air Force asks AFA to develop a Space-oriented STEM program like it. Two years later, StellarXplorers launches as a STEM education program with a curriculum and annual competition built on orbit determination, satellite design and launch vehicle planning.

## April 2015



AFA's StellarXplorers program hosts its first competition. StellarXplorers is a rigorous, hands-on space system design challenge that involves all aspects of system development and operation, focusing on spacecraft and payload.

## September 2016



AFA's Air & Space Conference is renamed to Air, Space & Cyber Conference to highlight the importance of the cyber domain in the Air Force.

## December 2017

In collaboration with the Air Force and General Atomics, the Mitchell Institute establishes the Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) Squadron of the Year Award.





## December 2018

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency contracts with the Mitchell Institute to study the concept of Mosaic Warfare. It is the institute's first major contract. About a year later the Mitchell Institute is an approved vendor on the General Service's Administration's Professional Services Schedule.

## April 2019

The Mitchell Institute establishes the General T. Michael Moseley Airpower Chair to develop and advance solutions for national security challenges through the domains of air, space, and cyberspace, and appoints Maj. Gen. Lawrence "Stutz" Stutzriem, USAF, (Ret.) to the position.



## December 2019



After successfully seeing the Air Force Memorial designed, constructed, and operated for 13 years, AFA stood down its Air Force Memorial Foundation and granted ownership of (and trademark rights to) the Air Force Memorial to the Air Force District of Washington.

## December 2019

The U.S. Space Force is created as an independent military branch inside the Department of the Air Force.

## April 2020

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and a national lockdown, the Mitchell Institute launches Aerospace Nation, a new virtual medium to help top Air Force and Space Force leaders converse with the public and the media.



## May 2020

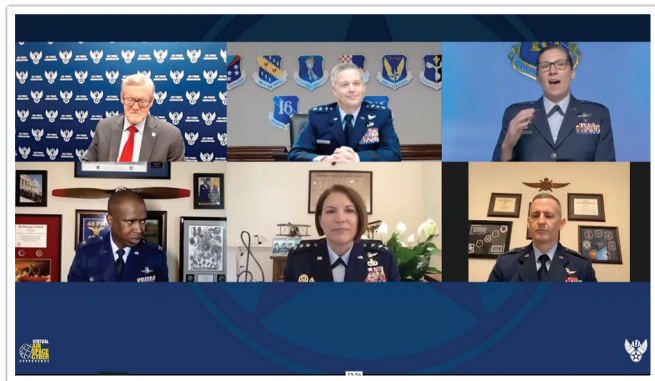
AFA updates its mission statement, establishes a formal commitment to support the new U.S. Space Force.

## September 2020

AFA dedicates the General James Doolittle Leadership Center to improve warfighter and industry leadership interaction.



## September 2020

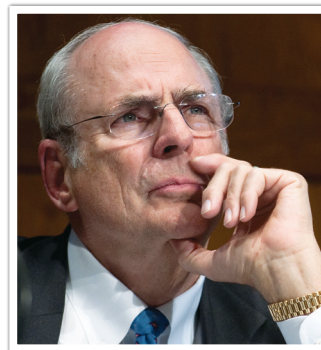


AFA hosts its first-ever virtual conference, necessitated by the global pandemic. The virtual Air, Space & Cyber Conference uses a TV news format to facilitate its national conference, with 10,000+ registrants.

## October 2020

AFA renames its Air Warfare Symposium the Aerospace Warfare Symposium, in recognition of the growing importance of space and the ascendance of the U.S. Space Force.

## November 2020



Lockheed Martin becomes Presenting Sponsor for StellarXplorers enabling further expansion. One month later, former Lockheed Martin Chairman Norman Augustine is named Chairman of StellarXplorers Board of Advisors.

## December 2020

The Mitchell Institute establishes the Neal Blue Chair for Space Studies.

This timeline, compiled by AFA staff, highlights only a few of the Air Force Association's achievements over the past 75 years. Got a favorite AFA milestone not included here? Tell us at [letters@afa.org](mailto:letters@afa.org).