

Communicator

Official Publication of the AF Cyberspace & ATC Association

2026 Convention



Get ready for fellowship in the company of equals!

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Report From the Chairman

Time flies when you are busy (or having fun) – and here we are midway through 2026 already! I'm thrilled to share some updates and from our Association. This year's AFCATCA Convention will be in Oklahoma City from August 20-22, 2026. Details are included in this Communicator, as well as on our AFCATCA website, but I want to highlight several events. On Thursday, we have scheduled a tour of AFB and the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center. On Friday, the is yours -- our annual golf outing, a visit to the Oklahoma City Bombing Memorial, or free time around the fantastic downtown area. Saturday, we will hold our annual membership breakfast meeting, expert updates on current Cyber & ATC activities. Saturday evening, annual banquet, we will honor our Cyberspace Operations & Air Controller NCO and Senior NCO of the Year award winners! A trip won't want to miss!



On the Association business side, we launched into 2026 with the mindset of ... this is our “Year of Action” ... and we've been busy! Ken Reiff and Jay Adsit have been leading discussions with our National Museum of the Air Force to formalize Communications and ATC artifacts and stories within the museum, thus capturing the legacy of contributions “... Loud and Clear!”. Gil Perez, Billy Davis, and several others finalized our “Association 1-pager” – a superb document that highlights who we are, what we do, and our contributions to the broader Department of the Air Force mission. We will use this in our recruiting efforts and for telling our story. You'll find a copy of the 1-pager in this edition of the Communicator. Linda McMahon has taken charge of aligning our AFCATCA legacy with modern missions, challenging us to inspire and support future generations. More information to follow soon. I'd also like to acknowledge Kevin Kirsch – our Communicator Editor – for leading the seamless transition to an online print edition. Change is never easy.

Further, I'd like to highlight some of the turnover to our AFCATCA Board of Directors: 1) Protocol – a huge salute to Rafael “Q” Quezada for his 12+ years of service and welcome to Art Wunder; 2) PX/BX Manager – a big thank you to Bill Cassatt for his many years of selfless service and welcome to Gil “Coach” Perez; and 3) Chaplain – a sincere thank you to Ed Broestl and welcome to Craig Kirkpatrick. We are fortunate to have those transitioning out remain as supportive members and we sincerely thank those stepping in for agreeing to serve. Organizations like ours depend on those willing to give of their time and talents. Finally, like last year, we've hosted mini-socials in Montgomery and Washington D.C. (around EI Muster) and hosted our second virtual “State of the Association” Address in February.

I'm immensely proud of OUR Association and humbled by our membership. Big things ahead for our 50th year as an Association! May we remember those who have gone before, honor those of today (especially those serving in deployed combat operations), and inspire those of tomorrow. AFCATCA focuses on our Cyberspace and Air Traffic Controller professionals and today's modern battlefield needs our support, experience, leadership, involvement, and mentorship more than ever! Thank you for your ongoing involvement and commitment.

As always, my deepest thanks to all our Communicator contributors. Your Board of Directors and I welcome any comments and suggestions. Please feel free to email me at chadraduege@gmail.com. I hope to see you in Oklahoma City in August. Until then, take care and God Bless!

Respectfully, Chad Raduege
Chairman and CEO, AFCATCA

“Fellowship in the Company of Equals”



Air Force Cyberspace and Air Traffic Control Association

All those interested in supporting AF Communicators, Data Automation, Information/Cyber, Space Operations, Air Traffic Controllers, Air Field Managers, Maintenance, Engineering and Installation, Combat Comm, and related support personnel, veteran active duty, Guard, Reserve, civilian and retired.

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Send photos and stories to Kevin Kirsch, Editor@AFCATCA.onmicrosoft.com .

This magazine is published twice a year in June and November. It is also available online at www.afcatca.org.



Letter from the Editor

I am excited to take over as editor of the Communicator! I have enjoyed reading its articles for several years, and am honored to be able to help continue its mission. I have to start by acknowledging the obvious: it's hard to take over from a living legend, someone who is in our Hall of Honor and the Air Force Cyberspace Operations and Support Hall of Fame. I begin by offering a heartfelt Thank You to Lori for all she's done for our community, our organization, and this magazine over the years.

My goal for the Communicator is straight-forward: to relay what is happening in our organization, and to share the stories of our career field. To that end, I want our vast membership to see something of themselves in every issue. Whether you are Active Duty, Reserve, Air National Guard, civilian, retired, officer, enlisted, warrant officer, communications, air traffic control, or cyberspace operations, I want there to be a story in the magazine that reflects **your** service.

To that end, I'd love your help! If you have a story you are interested in contributing, please send them my way! If you have an idea for a story and would like assistance, please let me know. And if you are interested in helping to assemble and edit the Communicator, I'd love the help!

Lastly, your feedback is important to me. I want to make sure the magazine is reflective of the type of material that you want to read about. What do you want to see in the Communicator? Articles about current happenings in the Air Force? Stories from our history? Letters from the board members? A mixture of all of them? Please let me know at: editor@AFCATCA.onmicrosoft.com

AFCATCA One Pager

During our recent State of the Association meeting, the Board charted our path forward for 2026 and beyond. In an evolving defense landscape, remaining agile and tightly aligned with the needs of our community is essential.

To align our vision, we built our new Strategic One-Pager—a focused roadmap defining our core mission, our value to the force, and our boldest goals for the year ahead. Crafted collaboratively by leadership with direct feedback from key stakeholders, this document translates complex strategic priorities into clear, actionable themes. It is your go-to tool for sharing the impact, advocacy efforts, and future direction of our association.





EST. 1977 · SERVING THOSE WHO SERVE

Air Force Cyberspace & Air Traffic Control Association

"Fellowship in the Company of Equals"

*Strengthen the Department of the Air Force's decisive advantage in
Cyberspace Operations & Air Traffic Control to fly, fight, and win.*

500+
MEMBERS STRONG

106
AWARDS PRESENTED

48
CONVENTIONS ORGANIZED

40
COMMUNICATORS PUBLISHED

171
HALL OF HONOR & FAME

WHO ARE WE

AFCATCA is the professional home & family for our total force Airmen, Guardians, Civilians, Contractors & Veterans.

We are key enablers to Air & Space power through:

- Cyberspace Operations
- Air Traffic Control (ATC)
- Airfield Management
- C3, C4I, or C4ISR
- Combat Communications
- Cyber & ATC Maintenance
- Data Automation
- Engineering & Installation
- Worldwide support & partner forces

WHAT WE DO

FELLOWSHIP:

Networking at Convention & major DAF events with Senior Leader updates.

CROSS-CAREER INTEGRATION:

Cyber & ATC unified for assured ops.

RECOGNITION:

Annual Cyber & ATC Awards; Hall of Honor.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Cross-tier mentoring & Leader Q&A Roundtables

HERITAGE:

Communicator Magazine & Heritage Center support

STRENGTHEN THE DAF

We connect, educate, and empower Airmen and Guardians operators, maintainers, & innovators across two mission-critical enterprises:

We strengthen the Department of the Air Force (DAF) through:

- Preserve 85+ years of heritage from AACs → AFCS → AFCC → AFCATCA
- Connecting past, present, & future professionals.
- Recognizing excellence across ranks/specialties.
- Safeguarding stories no one else writes.
- Fostering Community Esprit de Corps.

If You Operate Or Maintain Networks, Radars, Airfields, Data Or Cyber - Past Or Present - You Belong Here!



CYBER & COMMUNICATIONS



AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL



DAF HERITAGE



TRADITION

WHY JOIN

01. LIFELONG COMMUNITY

A professional family beyond the uniform, connecting you across career stages.

02. SHARED IDENTITY

A home for those who enable Air & Space power through cyber and ATC.

03. TELL YOUR STORY

A platform to document your service, preserving it for future generations.

04. INFLUENCE & NETWORK

Direct access to senior leaders, mentors, and peers across the DAF enterprise.

CONNECT WITH US

✉ afcatcasetary@gmail.com

🌐 www.afcatca.org

in LinkedIn Page:
AFCATCA

f Facebook Group:
AFCATCA



YOUR HERITAGE. YOUR COMMUNITY. YOUR MISSION.

AFCATCA ANNUAL AWARDS: NAMED IN HONOR OF OUR LEGENDS



Lt Gen Harry D. Raduege
Cyber Systems NCO of the Year



Maj Gen Gerald L. Prather
Cyber Systems Senior NCO of the Year



Maj Gen Van C. Doubleday
ATC Enlisted Manager of the Year



CMSgt Walter D. McLain
Air Traffic Controller of the Year



CMSgt Richard P. Sauer
Sauer Life Achievement Award



CMSgt Ronald D. Allison
Recruiting Award



MSgt Thomas F. Buckley
Service Award

Join the association that honors where you came from and empowers where you want to go.



2026 Convention: Oklahoma, OK!

We are excited to welcome you all to this year's annual convention in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma – the Modern Frontier. Oklahoma City offers all of the culture, cuisine, attractions and amenities you'd expect in a modern metropolis. And with its rugged Western past, working stockyards and title as "Horse Show Capital of the World," it's rich in cowboy culture, as well. From family fun to romantic retreats to outdoor adventures you won't find anywhere else, Oklahoma City has plenty of hustle without all the hassle.



The Oklahoma City metro is the home of Tinker Air Force Base, the Federal Aviation Administration's Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center (MMAC) and a host of other attractions. Tinker is the home of the Air Force Sustainment Center (AFSC), including the Oklahoma City Air Logistics Complex. There are numerous cyber units currently assigned to the base, including the AFSC Software Engineering Group, the 72d Air Base Wing Communications Directorate, and the 38th Engineering and Installation Group. The Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center provides critical products and services that touch all aspects of aviation – supporting the training of air traffic controllers, and the safe and efficient operations of our national and international aviation system to include work to integrate unmanned aerial systems (UAS).

Oklahoma City metro area attractions include:

- First Americans Museum
- National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum
- Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum
- Riversport OKC (the venue for multiple LA28 Olympic events)
- National Softball Hall of Fame and Devon Park (venue for LA28 Olympic Softball)
- Oklahoma City Museum of Art
- Skeletons: Museum of Osteology (Natural History)
- 45th Infantry Division Museum
- Oklahoma History Center
- Shopping outlets
- +More...
- [Things To Do in Oklahoma City](#)
- [Restaurants in Oklahoma City](#)



Convention Tours and Events

Wednesday 19 August -- Arrivals! Travel safe!

Thursday 20 August – Tours OR visit OKC attractions

- ~7:45 am: Bus departs hotel for Tinker AFB and FAA Monroney Aeronautical Center tours (lunch included) (\$60 per person). SIGN UP NOW, SPACE IS LIMITED.
- TBD: Members not participating in tours visit Oklahoma City attractions on their own
- ~5:00 pm: Bus returns to hotel from tours
- Evening and dinner plans on own
- Hospitality Suite is Open

Friday 21 August -- Golf OR visit OKC attractions

- ~6:45 am: Depart hotel for Tinker Golf Club (transportation and base access on your own) for those that would like to play. Payment is on your own at the Golf Center. BE SURE TO SIGN UP AND LET US KNOW YOUR NUMBER OF GOLFERS TO GET RESERVED TEE TIMES.
 - Contact the course if you want to rent clubs. (405) 734-2909
 - Cost to play (including any green fee, cart, and lunch) is on your own. Pay at the golf course.
 - Transportation to the golf course, and Tinker Air Force Base access, is on your own. Tinker Golf Club, 6441 Arnold Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73145
 - Members will self select teams to golf with.
 - Drive time is about 15-20 minutes from the hotel.
- TBD: Members not participating in golf visit Oklahoma City attractions on their own
- ~1:00pm: AFCATCA Board meeting at hotel
- Evening and dinner plans on own
- Hospitality Suite is Open

Saturday 22 August -- Breakfast, annual AFCATCA business meeting and "Missed Roll Call" followed by the evening formal Banquet and Awards Ceremony

- 7:30-10:30 am: Breakfast & Business followed by "Missing Roll Call" at hotel (Breakfast included for hotel guests. Others pay on their own)
- Members on their own for the day to visit OKC attractions
- 5:00-6:00 pm: Cocktail Hour (cash bar) at hotel
- 6:00-9:00 pm: Dinner & Awards (Formal/Semi-Formal attire) at hotel (\$75 as a single dinner ticket, or Dinner Included with the Full Conference Registration of \$140). Buffet meal selections.
- 9:00 pm-Midnight: Networking in the Hospitality Suite

Sunday 23 August -- Farewell!

- Farewell! Travel safe!



Oklahoma City is ready for you!



AFCATCA Convention 2026

Registration Information

Oklahoma City



19-23 August 2026

For Air Force Cyberspace, Communications, Data Automation, Information, Space Operations, Air Traffic Control, Airfield Management, Maintenance, Engineering and Installation, Combat Comm, Combat Airfield Operations and related support personnel, Active Duty, Guard/Reserve, Civilian, and retired.

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION:

Register for the conference and its events here:

<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/afcatca-annual-convention-2026-oklahoma-city-ok>

HOTEL RESERVATIONS:

SpringHill Suites by Marriott Oklahoma City Downtown/Bricktown, 600 E Sheridan Ave, Oklahoma City, OK 73104

Members must make their own hotel reservations no later than 17 August 2026. Book your \$116/night group rate for AFCATCA Convention online [here](#), or call the Front Desk at 1-405-601-6206. The Group name is AFCATCA. If you wish to cancel, please do so by Noon on 17 August 2026 to avoid 100% cancellation charges.

There will be an additional \$22 daily valet vehicle parking fee as there is not onsite parking available. Complementary breakfast included.



Legends and Lore

By Ken Reiff

Almond Strowger

Mr. Strowger was an undertaker in Kansas City, Missouri in the late 1800's. Legend has it that the wife of his only competitor worked the manual switchboard at the local telephone company. Whenever a caller asked to be put through to Strowger

Undertaking she routed the call to her husband. Strowger could see his business was falling off by the number of obituaries printed in the local newspaper. After years of complaining to the local switchboard company, he found a

way to solve his problem by inventing the first automated telephone switch out of magnets and hairpins. He often bragged that his exchanges were "girl-less", "cuss-less", "out of order-less", and "wait-less". He also said that the distinctive round cylindrical can which housed the switch components was designed from a new shirt box which had a round collar at the top.

In 1891 his switch design, Patent Number 447,918, led to the first Strowger automated telephone exchange. It was installed by his company, Automated Electric, at La Porte, Indiana, in 1902. Several more were installed and the company, along with the patents, was eventually sold to American Telephone and Telegraph and Bell Operating Companies. The switch became the backbone throughout the United States and overseas in the 1900's.

As the automated exchanges grew, how to equip them became an issue. Imagine a 1000-line exchange. Would each customer, at the same time, pick up their phone to make a call. Not likely. The designs, still using the Strowger switch, had line-finders

(gave the customer dial tone), selectors (which accepted the dialed numbers) and connectors (completed the call and provided ringing). But how many of these were needed? Mathematicians to the rescue.

Simeon Denis Poisson

Professor Poisson was a French mathematician renowned for his work on probability. His equations were used in the early telephone exchanges to meet customer demand at certain service levels and equip the switch appropriately. Applying his probability equations (how many customers would use the switch at the busiest time of the day and the duration of their calls) the line-finder, selector and connector banks were populated.

Anger Karup Erlang

Professor Erlang invented the field of telephone traffic engineering and queuing. He also developed mathematical theories used in interconnecting telephone exchanges (trunking). Those were commonly called Erlang B equations. His most significant work "Solutions of some Problems in Theory of Probabilities of Significance in Automatic Telephone Exchanges" is classic.

Erlang continues to be relevant today. His Erlang C formula is used in an online Call Center Erlang Calculator which businesses such as airlines, on-line shopping, etc. use to calculate the number of staff and answer positions required.

Since the first automatic Strowger switch, Panel Switch, Crossbar Switch to Electronic Switching Systems (ESS 1) and currently Voice over Internet Protocol and certainly cell phones the technology contributions of Strowger, Poissan and Erlang are most remembered and used.



The Return of the “Mobsters”

How the 5th Combat Communications Group is Redefining Expeditionary Airpower

By CMSgt Brianna Lynn Oberg 5th Combat Communications Support Squadron Senior Enlisted Leader

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. When the call echoes through the halls of the 5th Combat Communications Group (5 MOB) at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, to support United States operations across the globe, there is no hesitation. Needless to say, the 5th MOB stands up and shows out. From deploying Airmen to undisclosed, austere locations to ensuring vital expeditionary communications systems remain online in high-threat zones, Expeditionary Communication (XCOMM) Airmen are playing an absolutely vital role in achieving national military objectives, proving that the digital bedrock of the joint force is more critical now than ever before.

For a time, a narrative circulated within some military circles that XCOMM capabilities were yesterday's technology - relics of a past era no longer essential in a modern, highly contested wartime environment. Critics argued that commercial satellites and permanent regional hubs might render mobile combat communications obsolete. However, recent global events and shifting operational landscapes have thoroughly shattered that myth. Modern warfare demands rapid movement, deceptive positioning, and instant connectivity in places where infrastructure does not exist. Combat comms ability to deliver communications ensures commanders maintain the critical command and control and decision-making capability during military operations. As Colonel Jennifer Carns, Commander of the 5th Combat Communications Group, recently emphasized, “Establishing a secure tactical network out of nothing in contested, austere environments while under fire is a strategic discriminator our adversaries cannot match. Far from a legacy capability, XCOMM is the vanguard of future multi-domain command and control.”



To understand the prowess of the "MOBsters," one must look at the foundation upon which the unit is built. Stood up on July 1, 1964, the 5th MOB has spent more than six decades at the absolute tip of the spear. The group's storied heritage is etched into the history of American military operations, spanning vital deployments in Vietnam, Desert Shield, Desert Storm, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and specialized operational surges like Operation Southern Spear and Operation Epic Fury. For over sixty years, whenever the nation required immediate, scalable air base infrastructure in the world's most unforgiving environments, the 5th MOB answered the call. Today, that legacy drives a clear, unyielding mission: to provide combat-ready communications and systems that deploy globally to support U.S. military operations. Their operational footprint ranges from compact, highly mobile fly-away communication packages for small special operations teams to deploying complete theater air base infrastructures capable of supporting hundreds of personnel and aircraft. The group brings scalable, state-of-the-art voice, secure messaging, and high-speed data communications to deployed personnel, transforming an empty strip of dirt into a fully lethal, networked node of combat power.



Executing this mission requires more than just advanced equipment; it demands a radical reimagining of the human weapon system. This is captured in the 5th MOB's forward-looking vision: to cultivate highly agile, mission-ready Airmen who are prepared to project combat communications power globally at a moment's notice. The unit focuses heavily on continuous innovation, seamless joint force integration, and absolute resiliency to ensure operational superiority in contested, austere environments.

Our Airmen begin their expeditionary journey long before any official Request for Forces or Warning Order (WARNORD) ever arrives at the headquarters. From the very moment they are assigned to the group, the distinct "MOBster" mindset is deliberately built into their daily training regimen. This journey begins at the grueling Combat Readiness School (CRS). At CRS, Airmen hone a lethal, diverse skillset focused on hand-to-hand combatives, advanced land navigation, and small-unit tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs). They are trained



not just as technicians, but as tactical warfighters capable of defending themselves and their gear in high-threat environments.

Upon mastering these combat survival skills, the focus shifts to absolute technical proficiency. Airmen spend countless hours mastering the exact equipment and capabilities of the complex communications systems they are assigned. Yet, the training does not stop at their primary specialty. In alignment with the Air Force's Agile Combat Employment (ACE) construct, MOBsters continuously refine their warfighter skills and further their technical knowledge outside of their primary assigned core duties. A cyber systems specialist learns how to operate a tactical power generator; a satellite communications operator

trains to assist with airfield security or basic system maintenance. This cross-functional evolution is what truly embodies the "Multi-Capable Airman" (MCA) - a flexible, lethal asset capable of operating with a footprint that is small, light, and lean.

In an era defined by peer-to-peer, where static command posts are easily targeted by long-range adversary precision munitions, the 5th MOB offers the exact solution the Joint Force needs. By operating as an agile, distributed force, they deny the enemy a fixed target while maintaining the robust, unyielding networks commanders need to direct combat operations.

Our MOBsters pride themselves on being able to answer the call at any given moment, anywhere on the globe. Whether setting up high-speed tactical data links in a remote jungle, or defending a newly established node in the Arctic, the spirit of 1964 lives on in every deployment. The environment may change, and the technology will continue to evolve, but the core identity of the unit remains completely unbroken.

5th MOB.....LET'S GO!!



Chaplain's Corner

First a quick, very brief introduction. A month or so ago, AFCATCA leadership reached out and asked for a volunteer to fill the Chaplain's position in our organization recently vacated by retiring Ed Broesti. For many years Ed graced the pages of The Communicator. He provided prayerful insight, encouraged us with wisdom only a man of faith could provide, and was always there—for each of us as well as the organization. We will miss him and wish him well in future endeavors. Inspired by Ed and other AFCATCA members, I held up my hand to replace Mr. Broesti.



My name is Craig Kirkpatrick, my background is primarily Air Traffic Services along with a little Comm thrown in for good measure. I served 26 years active duty. I am not an ordained minister, just a practicing Christian who stumbles frequently along that path, but keeps on trying. I hope you will bear with me in our walk together.

So, what's this "Moral Compass" stuff all about? Back in 2018, I came across an article in Linked In by General Martin E. Dempsey, a former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In this short narrative, General Dempsey described a small memento given by his Aide De Camp, LCDR Mike Wisecup, USN. It was an antique brass compass engraved with "Moral Compass" in the center of the cover and eight attributes engraved at evenly-spaced points around the circumference. Centered on the back was the word "trust." General Dempsey went on to explain each element and how they relate to leadership of any organization, especially the military.

Let's start with "Trust." The ultimate goal of leadership. Everything we do should contribute to developing trust among leaders and those they lead. Everything we are should reinforce that we are worthy of trust.

Second, "Justice:" Speaks to the responsibility of the leader to respect the law and promote fairness.

Third, "Courage:" The leader must be willing to do the right thing even at personal risk, both physical and to such things as his/her career.

Fourth, "Patience:" The leader has to take time to listen and value the input of others. Leaders who act precipitously and unpredictably or who value only their own counsel are unlikely to act to the benefit of all.

Fifth, "Honor:" Encourages the leader to do the right thing for the right reason without expectation of personal recognition or reward.

Sixth "Tact:" Calls on the leader to be courteous and respectful.

Seventh: "Loyalty:" Provides those we lead with the confidence that we will be there for them when they are vulnerable. Loyalty must work both ways, cannot be blind, and must be earned.

Eighth, "Truth:" The foundation of trust among leaders and those they lead and, therefore the currency of leadership.

While I never met General Dempsey, I have a feeling working for him was such a privilege. I hope this quick summary of his article has left us with something to think about. It sure did for me.



Communications-Data Automation Merger

By Ken Reiff

It was 1982 and I just reported to my new assignment at AFCC headquarters as deputy to the DCS Operations, Plans and Readiness. In our first discussion session he informed me that I would back him up while he was on the road and that I would manage the command Secretariat (responsible for the command Program Objective Memorandum; or POM). Anyone would have found this a real challenge. When we finished the various program packages, we briefed Commander and Staff and headed to Washington to defend our programs. While there were many to brief and defend, the highest priority was military construction of a new headquarters building. We were successful. Meanwhile in 1983 the DCS Operations, Plans and Readiness decided to retire, and I was chosen to succeed him. Then it happened.

The commander decided to reorganize the headquarters. I did not know why but as the details came to light it seemed the Combat Communication “tribe” wanted their separate DCS. Also, we renamed the DCS OPS and units as “Teleprocessing” and I became the DCS/TP. (As the story progresses that became humorous.) I was opposed to both. I felt that the term was less actionable, that communications was far better understood by the war fighters. I was overruled.

Then in 1984, the U.S Air Force undertook a massive organizational shift termed the Communications-Data Automation Merger. This was formalized by Program Action Directive 84-1 which executed the USAF Chief of Staff’s vision to integrate communications and data automation into a single functional area, calling it Information Systems. Under the directive Air Force Communications Command became the lead agency absorbing the functions of the Air Force Data Automation Agency. The Headquarters was again reorganized and the Data Automation staff moved to DCS Information Systems. The subordinate units were again renamed as Information Systems units. The DCS was charged by the new commander as the lead for the Command.

A summary of the units affected by the directive follows:

The Air Force Data Service Center, Pentagon, merged with the 2044 th Communications Group and became the 1st Information Systems Group. The San Antonio Data Services Center eventually came under the Standard Systems Center at Gunter. The Air Force Computer Acquisition Office, Hanscom AFB was realigned to the Standard Systems Center. Standard Systems Center, Gunter AFB, was first designated as Standard Information Systems Center in March 1985 and finally back to Standard Systems Center in May 1986. The Phase IV Program Management Office at Gunter AFB was absorbed into the Standard Systems Center and the Air Force Data Systems Design Center at Gunter AFB as the Data Systems Design Office and reported to the Standard System Center. The Air Force Communications Computer Programming Center at Tinker AFB was redesigned as the Command-and-Control Systems Office and placed under the Standard Systems Center. The 1st Information Systems Group was later realigned as part of the National Capital Region in Washington, D.C.

The merger wasn’t limited to the Pentagon and Gunter AFB. Information Systems Divisions were established at the Major Commands from existing communications divisions. New Divisions were formed at Air Force Logistics Command and Air Training Command. The Doctrine Center at Keesler AFB was tasked with developing new 700 series regulations which replaced those of comm and data.



This massive change taxed my Plans and Programs staff as they traveled to the various commands to write their programming plans (PPlans) and they still had the POM to do for the Command Secretariat. In May 1985 I was selected to set up the new division at Air Training Command. Prior to my departure I was interviewed by the Command Historians and gave my views on the merger of the 291/295/511 enlisted, officer and civilian career fields. It should be noted that with the arrival of a new commander to AFCC all the “information systems” naming conventions were reverted back to communications. At base level many in the field joked that their baseball caps had Velcro to accommodate the frequent changes. During my visits to bases the Wing Commanders did not think it was funny.

Since the merger there have been numerous studies, GAO reports, unit histories evaluating the merger. Most of what I read posited that it wasn’t a success. They negatively state that it was the culture clash caused by the communications “tribes” forced the data “tribes” into an operational command and control mindset. The data “tribes” resisted citing different “Administrative Data” required different lifecycle rules than tactical comm. These tribes, sometimes referred to as “silos,” caused significant clashes. The failure to overcome the culture clashes, in my opinion, resulted in the failure and led to the “de-merger” years which resulted in many actions being cancelled. I differ with many. I believe that the merger was necessary. The blend of data to operate communications systems was essential. For example, the fielding of the Standard Remote Terminals in Communications Centers was based on computer modernization. The Interservice Automated Processing Exchange improved writer to reader service. Command and Control for the war fighter was enhanced. Office information systems were being connected to the internet, etc.

During my tenure as a technical support contractor to the Standard Systems Center it was clear that organization became far more effective with the changes that were made.

Finally, I strongly view the deactivation of Air Force Communications Command by the Chief of Staff who got rid of the one command with the vision and leadership for handling the various cultures and could have led to fully implementing the merger.

Editor’s note: Many, many thanks to Mr Ken Heitkamp for providing information on unit changes.



National Museum of the US Air Force Displays

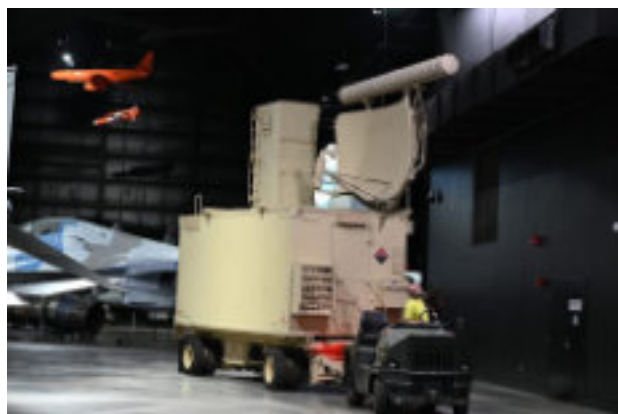
AFCATCA members work to tell the communications and ATC stories

Most of us were impressed with the scope of artifacts and the stories told in the National Museum of the USAF when we visited it during AFCATCA's 2024 Convention. Our members, Mr. Ken Reiff and Mr. Jay Adsit, have worked with the Museum on multiple displays.

As of Memorial Day 2026, there is a display of Major General George Owen Squier's contributions in the "Early Years Gallery." Maj Gen Squier was a pioneer who fundamentally transformed global telecommunications by inventing telephone carrier multiplexing in 1910. As Chief Signal Officer of the U.S. Army during World War I, he applied his scientific expertise to modernize military signaling and establish the groundwork for early army aviation. He was inducted into our Hall of Honor in 2023.



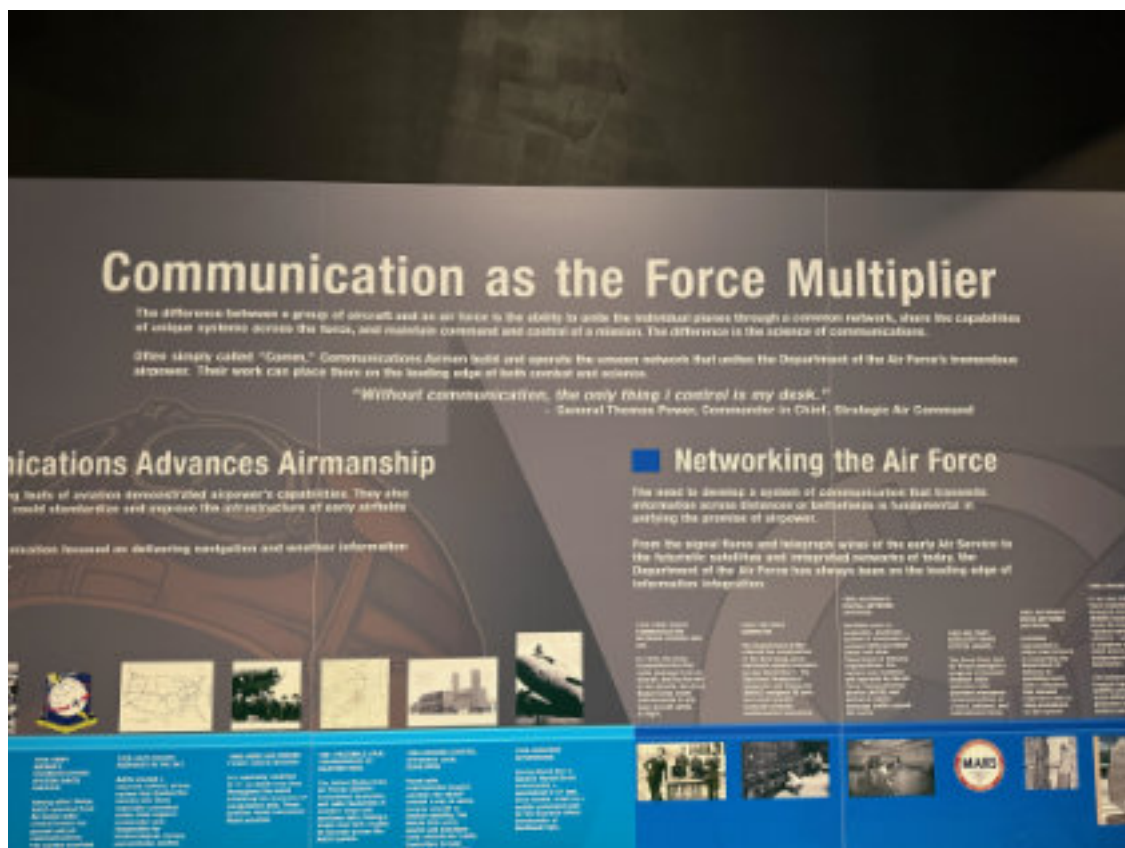
Additionally, our teammates in the Air National Guard have delivered an AN/MPN-14 to the Museum. It tells a story of air traffic control, beginning with just an airfield and completing equipment and personnel deployments to make it usable. It can be found in the Cold War Gallery.



Lastly, Mr. Ken Reiff and Mr. Jay Adsit worked with the Museum for a display highlighting the contributions of communications and air traffic control to the USAF mission. We provided content that the museum experts will turn into a display taking up nearly the entire length of the hallway connecting Hangar 3 with Hangar 4. Those photos can be found on the following pages.

If you have stories to tell and pictures to share about setting up airfields in deployed environments, please contact Jay Adsit, jadsit@att.net. We have teammates working with the Museum on the information content for that display. Stay tuned for more!





Air Force Museum Displays





AF CYBERSPACE AND AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL ASSOC



Name: _____ Date: _____
Email: _____ Phone: _____
Address: _____

QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION	SIZE	TOTAL
_____	AFCATCA baseball cap (adjustable) @ \$18 each	_____	\$_____
_____	AFCATCA Blue Golf Shirts (unisex) S M L XL @ \$42 each	_____	\$_____
_____	AFCATCA Challenge Coin @ \$14 each	_____	\$_____

(Note: Price increases are due to postage increase and increase in costs to the association.)

Jackets will only be available by special order with a price of approximately \$115 depending on the postage, and will be sent directly to the purchaser.

TOTAL OF ABOVE ITEMS: \$_____

TOTAL WOOD PLAQUE ORDER (\$40each): \$_____

Donation (Taxdeductible within limits of law) Receipt: Yes___No___ \$_____

GRANDTOTAL \$_____

POSTAGE AND HANDLING ARE INCLUDED IN ALL PRICES.

MAKE CHECKS OUT TO 'AFCYBERSPACE & ATC ASSOC'

MAIL TO: Bill Cassatt, 1200 Homelife Plaza Apt D-3, Rolla, MO 65401

Phone 573-263-3334 clarkwcassatt@gmail.com





Who We Are

Our association is comprised of about 1,000 members (Communicators, Data Automation, Cyber, Space Operations, Air Traffic Controllers, Air Field Managers, Maintenance, Engineering and Installation, combat communications, and related support personnel) who have served or are serving in any communications or air traffic control unit. This includes those who served in the U.S. Army Air Corps or hold or held a communications, data automation, information/cyber, air traffic control, maintenance, engineering and installation or related support skill set.

The term Communicators includes ALL operational, maintenance, and administrative skills and other skills in the U.S. Army Air Corps and the U.S. Air Force (including Air National Guard and Reserve, veterans, active duty, civilian, and retired) communications, data automation, or air traffic control units.

We were formerly called the “AACS Alumni Association” from 1977 until September 27, 2008.

We changed our name to AF Communicators and Air Traffic Controllers Association because the Airways and Air Communications Service (AACS) was elevated to Major Air Command status and re-designated Air Force Communications Service in 1961.

We changed again July 1, 2020 to AF Cyberspace and Air Traffic Control Association. Throughout the Air Force, Cyber Warfare Operations has become the communications career field. All Air Force members who traditionally were identified as communicators are now referred to as Cyberspace Operators.

Mission

- To foster continued awareness of the Air Force communications, data automation, air traffic control and cyberspace missions previously accomplished by AACS, AFCS, AFCC, AFC4A, AFCA, AFNIC, CCC, AFFSA, other past and current commands (AFSPC, ACC, AMC, AFMC, etc.)
- To provide a forum for educational and humanitarian services, to renew and make new friendships, and to exchange ideas of common interest concerning people and activities associated with communications, cyber, and air traffic control.
- To fully support the goals and missions of the U.S. Air Force and to honor each year the ATC Enlisted Manager, Air Traffic Controller, Cyber Systems Senior NCO, and Cyber Systems NCO of the Year.
- To make charitable contributions to worthy veteran organizations or related causes.
- To manage our Association to be viable for those airmen/officers/civilians serving today.