

Commander's Call Topics



June 28, 2012

"I remain committed to [removing as many barriers as possible](#) to make America's military a model of equal opportunity, to ensure all who are qualified can serve in America's military, and to give every man and woman in uniform the opportunity to rise to their highest potential." -- Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta thanking [gay and lesbian service members](#) for their dedicated service to the nation, June 25.

► CURRENT ISSUES

[Academy evacuates: Airmen must log in to accountability system](#)

A 15,500-plus acre wildfire raging outside Colorado Springs, Colo., has resulted in the U.S. Air Force Academy being evacuated and the AFPAAS activation

[Air Force spouse testifies on military families with special needs](#)

An Air Force spouse testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee about programs and policies that support military families with special needs.

► PERSONNEL ISSUES

[Information is best weapon against suicide](#)

Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta has called suicide one of the most complex and urgent problems facing the DOD

[Officials seek Air Force ROTC instructors](#)

Eligible first lieutenants, captains and majors interested in teaching tomorrow's leaders must indicate that interest on their statement of intent, via the Airman Development Plan

[Commander calls for command-wide investigation of inappropriate relationships](#)

Concerned by allegations of misconduct by Air Force Basic Military Training instructors, the commander of Air Education and Training Command has directed an investigation that goes beyond BMT

► FAMILY, HEALTH AND SAFETY

[Program encourages Airmen to 'Be Ready'](#)

On June 1, when hurricane season officially begins, Airmen at bases along the East Coast and the Gulf of Mexico start to pay more attention to the weather

[Creech crew chief feared drowned following boating incident](#)

Local authorities continue to perform search and recovery operations for 28 year-old Staff Sgt. Antonio Tucker, who disappeared after leaving his rental boat on June 23

► ENVIRONMENT, SPACE, TECHNOLOGY

['New AFNIC' offers cyber advantage](#)

AFNIC officials are focused on providing cyber solutions for Air Force Network integration, cyber simulation and network standards, architecture and engineering

[Air Force awards \\$960 million in small business IT contracts](#)

The Air Force is announcing the award of 12 contracts worth up to \$960 million that will make it quicker and easier for the warfighter to obtain innovative information technology services

[AF top engineers give tips on saving energy, money](#)

The Air Force spends more than \$1 billion a year to power its facilities. Federal laws require government agencies to reduce energy 30 percent by 2015

► RESOURCES

AF.mil

<http://www.af.mil>

Airman magazine

<http://www.airmanonline.af.mil/>

Air Force Community

<http://www.afcommunity.af.mil/>

Air Force Outreach

<http://www.afoutreach.af.mil/>

Military OneSource

<http://www.militaryonesource.com/>

Military HOMEFRONT

<http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/>

Air Force Personnel Center

<https://gum-crm.csd.disa.mil>

<http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/>

Air Reserve Personnel Center

<http://www.arpc.afrc.af.mil/>

Department of Defense

<http://www.defense.gov>

Department of Defense News

<http://www.defenselink.mil>

Department of Veterans Affairs

<http://www.va.gov>

TRICARE

<http://www.tricare.mil>

U.S. Government Website

<http://www.firstgov.gov/>

Employment Opportunities

www.usajobs.com

www.nafjobs.org

Air Force Association Scholarships

<http://www.afa.org/aef/aid/scholars.asp>

► Fourth of July Fireworks

"The day will be the most memorable in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival...it ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade...bonfires and illuminations [fireworks] from one end of this continent to the other, from this day forward."

This is part of a letter, dated July 3, 1776, from John to Abigail Adams. The Continental Congress had just proclaimed the American colonies independent of England and our yet-to-be-elected second president was displaying his usual enthusiasm.

Years later (1814) another patriot, Frances Scott Key penned the poem, "The Defence of Ft. McHenry," that became our national anthem, "The Star Spangled Banner." Key's "...the rocket's red glare; the bombs bursting in air..." once more joined fireworks and patriotism.

In 1892, the 400th anniversary celebration of Columbus' arrival in the New World, an unprecedented fireworks display lit up the Brooklyn Bridge. It is estimated that over a million people witnessed the event, then-considered to be the greatest show in the Western Hemisphere. And 91 years later, in 1983, the Brooklyn Bridge was the site of its own centennial celebration, complete with fireworks display, some of which had never been seen before.

Even though we most associate fireworks and summer—ballparks, outside stadiums and amusement parks often use fireworks to signal a spectacular finish to a summer evening, winter has its claim on fireworks displays, as well. No longer is it only the Chinese who herald the arrival of the new year with fireworks and loud reports to scare away evil spirits. Cities around the globe signal the new year's auspicious arrival and feeling of new beginnings with brilliant displays. Yet, it's our patriotism that trumps it all. According to the American fireworks industry, more fireworks are ignited on the Fourth of July than for any other national celebration in the world.

Controlled combustion provides the loud sound, chemicals provide color. For example, combining charcoal and iron with the gunpowder produces a bright orange color; barium nitrate, vivid green; strontium salts, radiant red. The most difficult color to reproduce in a brilliant and saturated way is blue. Even today, pyrotechnicians are searching for the "perfect blue."

People the world over love fireworks displays, lighting up the night sky, or changing a dusky backyard into a carnival of sound and light. However, pyrotechnicians use their skills to make this a better—not just prettier—world. Pyrotechnics—"the science of fire"—has brought us safety matches, road hazard flares, and the solid-fuel rocket boosters of the space shuttle.

Whether it's a backyard display for the neighborhood, the coast-to-coast PBS broadcast of the nation's birthday from the National Mall, or the booster rockets of the space shuttle—the galaxy is limited only by our imagination, fueled by pyrotechnics.

*--Martha Lockwood
Chief, Information
Products Air Force Production*

► THIS WEEK IN AIR FORCE HISTORY

June 28, 1957 - The first phase of project Far Side ended when the world's largest balloon lifted a load of military equipment and instruments weighing almost two tons above 104,000 feet. This flight was part of a series of tests to reach extreme altitudes using the "Rockoon" concept -- hanging a 4-stage sounding rocket under a balloon and launching it from altitudes above 100,000 feet. The four-stage vehicle included two Recruit and two Arrow II rockets. The vehicles reached 4,000 miles in the tests.

June 29, 1972 – Capt Steven L. Bennett, a forward air controller, and his observer found enemy troops attacking a friendly unit. He then strafed the enemy forces into retreating. After a surface-to-air missile hit and crippled his OV-10 Bronco and shredded his observer's parachute, Bennett ditched his OV-10 into the Gulf of Tonkin even though he knew the OV-10 was not likely to survive the ditching. He died, but his observer survived. For his heroic sacrifice, Bennett received the Medal of Honor posthumously.

June 30, 1995 - 27 C-5 Galaxies and 53 C-141 Starlifters airlifted 4,742 British and Dutch military personnel and 1,504 tons of cargo to Croatia, through August 10, 1995, in support the UN action operation Quick Lift.

July 1, 1946 - Maj Woodrow P. Swancutt, of the U.S. Army Air Forces 509th Composite Group, flew a B-29 Superfortress, named "Dave's Dream," to the Bikini Atoll, where he dropped a Nagasaki-type atomic bomb from 30,000 feet on 73 ships. He sank five and heavily damaged nine ships.

July 2, 1952 – The Air Force announced that the Lockheed F-94C Starfire was first fighter to be armed solely with rockets.

July 3, 1949 – The Air Force gave the B-29 Superfortress Enola Gay, the plane that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, to the Smithsonian Institution.

July 4, 1985 - C-141 Starlifters transported 285 fire fighters and 460 tons of flame retardant to suppress forest fires in Idaho and California. C-130 Hercules aircraft flew 200 sorties to drop flame retardant on hot spots though July 10, 1985.

For more information on Air Force heritage, visit <http://www.airforcehistory.af.mil>.

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► Fireworks Safety

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, between 2004 and 2007 (the most recent years for which data are available), there were approximately 10,000 injuries from fireworks each year. Here are seven ways to increase your safety this Fourth of July and lessen your chances of becoming one of the statistics:

- 1. Consumer fireworks are for outdoor use only. So-called "indoor" or "arena" displays are planned and staged by professional pyrotechnicians only.*
- 2. Fireworks are not legal everywhere, so ask your neighborhood fire department if they are legal in your area. Obey local laws. The types of fireworks allowed vary from state to state, and often from county to county. Also, weather and climate conditions such as high winds and drought may result in a temporary ban on fireworks.*
- 3. Keep a water source at the ready—either a bucket of water or, better, a garden hose that is connected, turned on at the spigot, and off at the nozzle so it can be activated quickly.*
- 4. Use fireworks as intended. Buy from a reputable source, and instructions for maximum enjoyment will be on the package. And don't try to alter or combine them. In most states that constitutes a "homemade" firework. It's illegal—and possibly fatal.*
- 5. Never try to relight a "dud." Wait until it is cool to the touch, and then soak it in a bucket of water.*
- 6. Common sense goes a long way toward fireworks enjoyment: Spectators should keep a safe distance from the shooting area, use long matches or a barbecue lighter to ignite the fireworks, and the shooter should wear safety glasses or goggles.*
- 7. Know that alcohol and fireworks don't mix. Have a "designated shooter" who will refrain from alcoholic beverages until the fireworks are over.*

--Martha Lockwood