

# 459th Wing Association

BRINGING THE LATEST NEWS TO ALUMNI AND MEMBERS

Summer 2021 Newsletter

P.O. Box 748, Clinton, Maryland 20735

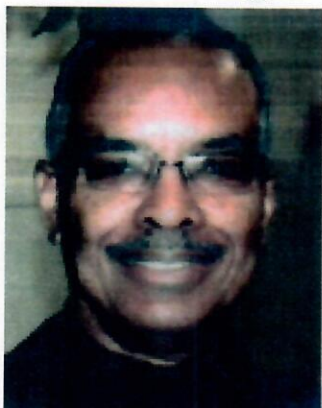


***459th teams with Denton Program for humanitarian mission: Page 4***

## President's Message

By Harold Countee  
459th Wing Association President

What a year we have just come through. Welcome to summer 2021 as we begin moving beyond the Pandemic. I have been in touch with a few of our members and everyone seems to have



endured all the restrictions imposed on all of us, however, we pray for those who may have suffered due to loss or reduced employment and/or health issues.

I have had the opportunity to attend the 459th Air Refueling Wing's Change of Command Ceremony in hanger 11 on June 6, 2021, when Col. Greg Buchanan officially assumed command of the Wing. I had the chance to speak with him and promote the Association to the new commander and command chief master sergeant.

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# 459th WING ASSOCIATION

SUMMER 2021 NEWSLETTER

## Staff and Board Members

Harold Countee - President

Tim McConnell - Vice President

Jim Lacey - Secretary

Charles Hawkins - Treasurer

Henry Hinnant - Assistant Treasurer

Patti Fitch - Membership

Charles Fitch

Nancy Oliver

Rodney Walker

Dr. Warren Johnson

Shirley Hawkins - Honorary Member

Kat Justen - Newsletter Editor

The 459th Wing Association consists of current and former members of 459th wings throughout history. The Association provides a means for members to maintain contact with those with whom they have served and delivers news about Wing events and member-news via annual reunions and quarterly newsletters.

Reunions are generally held in cities within a 300 mile radius of Washington D.C. The 459th Wing Association began in 1989 and has consistently provided financial support for the 459th Annual Awards program and the annual family day events. The Association also donates to the Fisher House.

Membership is continuously open to all wing personnel for an annual contribution of \$15. Look for the membership application included in this newsletter.

Mailing Address:  
P.O. Box 748  
Clinton, Md. 20735

## Pictures from the 459th ARW



**SECAF COINS 459TH AIRMEN** - Acting Secretary of the Air Force John P. Roth poses for a group photo with Airmen from around the installation after a coining ceremony July 14, 2021, at Joint Base Andrews, Md. During his visit to Joint Base Andrews, Mr. Roth recognized 12 outstanding Airmen from around the installation. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Cierra Presentado/Released)



**459TH AEROMEDICAL STAGING SQUADRON CONDUCTS TRAINING DURING UTA** - Members of the 459th Aeromedical Staging Squadron (ASTS) practice litter carrying techniques as part of annual training April 10, 2021. ASTS squadrons are responsible for stabilizing injured patients during ground transport between vehicles of opportunity and treatment facilities. (U.S Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Anna-Kay Ellis)

# 459th Chief supports vaccination efforts as a U.S Marshal

By Staff Sgt. Cierra Presentado  
459th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

**JOINT BASE ANDREWS, Md.** -- Some reservists from the 459th Air Refueling Wing contribute to COVID-19 relief efforts through their civilian jobs. One of those members from the 459th Mission Support Group assists the federal government with U.S. vaccine delivery efforts across the nation.

Chief Master Sgt. Winstone Nisbet is the 459th Mission Support Group superintendent. When not on reserve duty, he's a full-time 12-year Deputy U.S. Marshal with the U.S. Marshals Service. For the past two years USMS assigned him to Strategic National Stockpile Security Operations where, most recently, he's been a part of a task force directly impacting COVID-19 vaccine operations in the U.S.

"I was assigned to the Strategic National Stockpile Security Operations (SNSO) and we are tasked through Operation Warp Speed with providing armed security for all vaccine movement across the U.S" he said.

What began as Operation Warp Speed is now Operation COVID Response, and it's a partnership between the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Defense aimed to help accelerate the development of a COVID-19 vaccine. Operation COVID Response and pharmaceutical companies adopted several strategies to accelerate vaccine development and mitigate risk.

Nisbet has been on the task force since November of 2020, and the possibility of contracting COVID-19 did not stop his efforts.

"When I got on the task force, I was not nervous at all," he said. "I knew there was always the possibility of contracting COVID, but we took the necessary precautions to mitigate that."

Nisbet's responsibilities range from coordinating agency support to escorting shipments.

"Operation COVID Response provides a warning order to our liaison on required missions," he said. "From there, we determine the level of security required to escort the shipment. We coordinate with multiple agencies to include our state and local law enforcement agencies for support. Once all coordination is complete we will provide armed escort from the manufacturing to the distribution site."



**Left:** Chief Master Sgt. Winstone Nisbet, 459th Mission Support Group superintendent, is also a full-time Deputy U.S. Marshal. There, he is assigned to Strategic National Stockpile Security Operations and is currently on a task force providing armed security for all vaccine movement across the United States. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Cierra Presentado/Released)  
**Right:** (Courtesy Photo)

The task force allows for safe shipment of vaccines and protection from any disturbance in the supply chain so American people can get vaccinated as quickly as possible.

"The mission, while it may seem simple from the outside, is complex with all the coordination that goes into preparing and executing," he said. "We would not be able to safely accomplish each mission if it were not for our state and local law enforcement agencies across the country and the hard working deputy U.S. Marshals that work every day to ensure the safe distribution of vaccines."

Nisbet, a former Air Force Security Forces Squadron Airman, said his training in SFS complements his job as a U.S. Marshal.

"Both jobs complement each other," he said. "As a security forces member, my training in convoy operations gave me more knowledge in conducting these escort missions, and I am able to adapt to operate in an urban environment."

# 459th teams with Denton Program for humanitarian mission

By Staff Sgt. Cierra Presentado  
459th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

**JOINT BASE ANDREWS, Md.** -- The 459th Air Refueling Wing recently teamed with the Denton Program to deliver donated laptops to underprivileged children in The Bahamas.

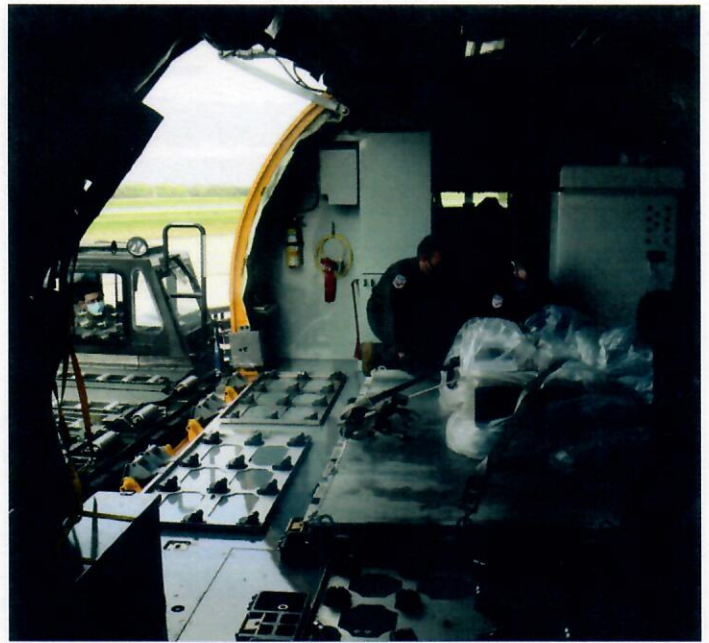
The purpose of the Denton Program is to allow U.S. based non-governmental sources to transport humanitarian aid at little or no cost to the donor while simultaneously putting extra space on U.S. military transport assets to good use.

The program is a joint effort administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Department of State and the Department of Defense. The Denton Program provides transportation for approved humanitarian assistance commodities destined for approved countries like The Bahamas.

In 2019, the Bahamas was hit by a category five hurricane that destroyed most of the island's schools, businesses and homes. As a result of the damage, many children were left without school supplies such as laptops. The Bahamian Embassy in Washington, D.C. partnered with North Thumberland High School in Virginia and a local Rotary Club to refurbish laptops for the children in need.

"The laptops are fully loaded with touch screens, up to date applications, and are internet ready," said Ambassador Sidney Collie, the Bahamian Ambassador to the U.S. "The 459th Air Refueling Wing is ready to go and we are grateful for their participation in this."

The 459th Air Refueling Wing's 756th Air



Members of the 756th Air Refueling Squadron load a pallet of laptops onto a KC-135 Stratotanker April 21, 2021, at Joint Base Andrews, Md. The squadron was tasked with delivering the laptops to The Bahamas as part of the Denton Program humanitarian mission. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Cierra Presentado/Released)

Refueling Squadron with assistance from the 89th Airlift Wing loaded 100 laptops onto a KC-135 that flew straight to The Bahamas.

"The mission was a great experience, it was my first time executing a humanitarian mission, and it was very rewarding," said Maj. Benjamin Mattalino, 756th Air Refueling Squadron, KC-135 pilot. "When we landed we were greeted by the local Bahamians; they thanked us for bringing the laptops and explained the devastation Hurricane Dorian and now COVID-19 has caused their country. It was humbling to play a small part in something so significant."

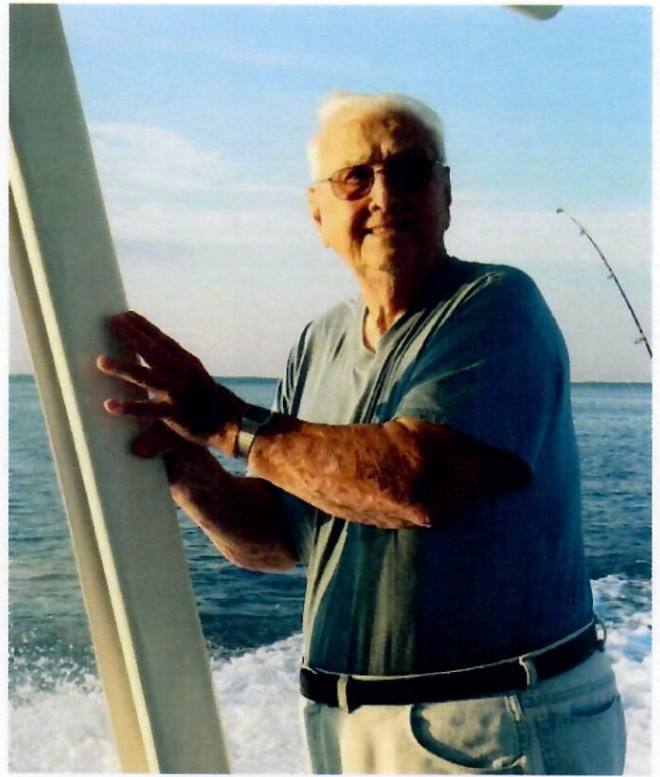
The 756th ARS was able to pick up the mission due to available cargo space on a planned refueling mission near Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. The squadron hopes to pick up more humanitarian missions in the future.

## Final Flyby... Carlton R. "Buck"

Thomas, Sr., 91, of Fishing Creek passed away on Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at his home with his family by his side. He was born on May 22, 1929 in Hoopers Island and was a son of the late George C. Thomas and Virginia Creighton Thomas.

Mr. Thomas graduated from Hoopers Island High School. He served in the United States Air Force and retired with 37 years of service at the rank of Senior Master Sergeant. Mr. Thomas also worked with the Department of Natural Resource Police and retired with 28 years of service and also crabbed with his son Carlie. He enjoyed fishing, and making biscuits at the firehouse. Mr. Thomas was a member of Hoopers Island Volunteer Fire Company, the American Legion Post 91, and the Grand National Waterfowl Association.

He is survived by his wife Edythe Thomas of Fishing Creek, a daughter Diana Willey and husband Mike of Hoopers Island, a son Carlton "Carlie" R. Thomas, Jr. of Golden Hill, two grandchildren CJ Thomas and Stacey Spicer and husband Buzz, a sister Melva Simmons of Fishing



Creek, and several nieces and nephews. Besides his parents, Mr. Thomas is preceded in death by a brother Lowell J. Thomas, Sr.

**WARRIOR SPOTLIGHT**  
459TH AIR REFUELING WING

**Senior Airman  
Perry Howe**  
459th Aeromedical Staging Squadron  
Medical Technician

*"There's training that I recieved here on base and at tech school as well that I am able to implement in my civilian career. Most people under pressure may freeze, but due to the training I've recieved, I know exactly what to do and how to do it without being inhibited in any form or fashion. I am able to perform under duress and persevere through whatever is going on at the time."*



**COL. GREGORY BUCHANAN  
ASSUMED COMMAND OF THE  
459TH ARW JUNE 6, 2021.**

### **Continued from President's Page 1**

Our next Reunion is scheduled for Oct. 6 - 9, 2022, at the BWI Hotel, LLC Embassy Suites at BWI Airport, 1300 Concourse Drive, Linthicum, MD 21090.

The URL for making online room reservations will be provided in the fall and winter newsletters along with the registration forms. Cost person is set at \$175.

I pray that since we will have been apart for two years by the time we meet for the



**We now have the ability to pay  
dues online through PayPal!**

Log onto:

**[www.459thwingassociation.com](http://www.459thwingassociation.com),**  
scroll to the bottom and click,  
"pay dues online."

Annual membership is \$15.00 per year due March 31st. You may also pay dues for multiple years. Your newsletter will have the year you are paid through printed in the upper right hand corner of the address label.

*Note: For your information, according to the IRS we are not an organization described in Internal Revenue Code Section 170 (c) so donors cannot deduct contributions.*

next reunion that everyone has decided to get vaccinated against the Covid-19 and its variants.

Activities for the next reunion will include, but are not limited to, fun and games, hospitality suite, formal banquet on Saturday evening, visit to the Medieval Times Dinner Theater, shopping at Arundel Mill shopping mall and/or visit to Maryland Live Casino.

I am in hopes that we will have maximum participation in this reunion and that everyone is looking forward to seeing one another again.

# MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND ANNUAL DUES

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Dear Fellow 459th Members and Former Members,

The general purpose of this association is to promote and encourage current and former members of the 459th Wing to remain in touch with those with whom they served, and to support morale programs for active 459th reservists and their families. Activities of the Association include:

- Publishing a quarterly newsletter containing articles regarding Association members, Association events, and 459th Air Refueling Wing activities.
- Providing financial support for the 459th ARW Annual Awards program.
- Providing financial support for the Family Day Picnic.
- Donating to the Fischer House.
- Holding annual reunions in cities within an approximate 300 mile radius from Washington, D.C.

459th Troop Carrier Wing      459th Airlift Wing  
459th Tactical Airlift Wing      459th Air Refueling Wing

Please cut here and return completed form with check

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Membership Application and Renewal of Annual Dues, 2018.

Please complete this form and return with check for \$15.00 payable to:

**459th Wing Association**  
P.O. Box 748  
Clinton, MD 20735

I am/was assigned to 459th Wing or  
associate unit.

From \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone – home \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

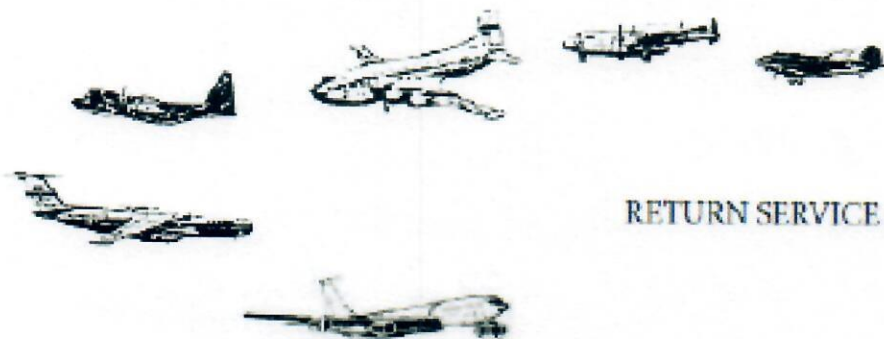
Current or last position in the 459th \_\_\_\_\_

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# 459th Wing Association

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P.O. BOX 748, clinton, maryland 20735-0748



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