

459th Wing Association

BRINGING THE LATEST NEWS TO ALUMNI AND MEMBERS

Spring 2020 Newsletter

P.O. Box 748, Clinton, Maryland 20735

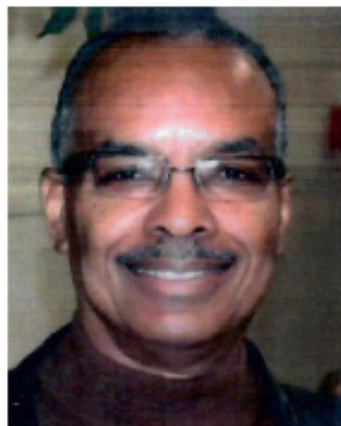


THIS ISSUE: 31st Reunion

President's Message

By Harold Countee

459th Wing Association President



A quarterly 459th Wing Association board meeting was held January 28th at the Joint Base Andrews Golf Course. Discussions covered a wrap-up of the 30th Reunion held in Virginia Beach Oct. 3-6, 2019, which was a total success. The board discussed the status of mem-

bership dues currently due for 2020. The board agreed that those members whose dues are more than 3 years in arrears, we have no choice but to drop them from our roster. If you have not paid 2020 yet, please send in as soon as possible. Remember you can pay your dues online at www.459thwingassociation.com or by mail at 459th Wing Association, PO Box 748, Clinton, MD 20735.

Board members also discussed the quarterly newsletter cost that is mailed to all members on a quarterly basis. We are still having too many newsletters being returned as undeliverable. With the rising cost of postage it was decided that future newsletters will go out via

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459TH WING ASSOCIATION

SPRING 2020 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 to receive 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 DC. 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 459 ARW



PORTRAIT HONORING RESERVE PIONEER UNVEILED AT WOMEN IN AVIATION CONFERENCE

Secretary of the Air Force Barbara Barrett, Lt. Gen. Stayce Harris (retired), Senior Master Sgt. Darby Perrin, heritage and combat artist and Maj. Gen. John Flournoy, AFRC deputy commander unveiled a painting a portrait of Harris during the 2020 Women in Aviation Conference, March 6 in Orlando, Florida. The portrait shows Harris standing in a flight jacket with flight crew checklists in hand with a KC-135R and C-141-B flying overhead, both aircraft were flown by Harris. Gen. Harris was commander of the 459th Air Refueling Wing from May 2005 - August 2008. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff. Sgt. Cierra Presentado)



459 SFS PARTICIPATES IN RUCK MARCH

Members of the 459th Security Forces Squadron participate in a ruck march during Unit Training Assembly weekend, March 7, 2020, at Joint Base Andrews, Md. The unit participated in the march as part of their physical fitness training. (U.S Air Force photo/SrA Andreaa Phillips)

459th LRS Airman saves life during annual tour

By Staff Sgt. Cierra Presentado

459th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

JOINT BASE ANDREWS, Md. --“I can’t let him drown. If I panic, we could both possibly lose our lives; focus, breathe, and get him to shore.”

These thoughts that ran through Tech Sgt. Kyle Waddy-Jordan’s head as he fought to get his wingman safely to shore.

Waddy-Jordan is a material management craftsman with the 459th Logistics Readiness Squadron. While on annual tour with his squadron at Kadena Airbase, Japan, the team decided to have a morale function at one of the nearby beaches outside the base. While the team was on shore, one Airman ventured out to the floating obstacle course that was about 13 feet away in the ocean.

“I was in the water and saw that there was an obstacle course nearby,” said Senior Airman Adetokunbo Osibowale, 459th LRS material management journeyman. “I decided to go check it out.”

As Osibowale began wading out to the obstacle course, suddenly, he dropped about seven feet under water. Panicking, he came up to the top and began screaming for help.

“I was in the water and all of a sudden I heard a scream for help. I looked over and saw Airman Osibowale about 10 feet away going under and coming up flailing his arms, choking and screaming,” Waddy-Jordan said.

At this moment, Waddy-Jordan realized he was the only other person in the water and the closest to Osibowale. He immediately began swimming over to the panicking Airman while trying to stay calm himself.

“I swam about 10 feet to him and grabbed him and brought him above water; he started panicking and began dragging me under as well. I knew I needed to stay calm or else we both may end up drowning,” Waddy-Jordan said.

Waddy-Jordan began yelling for help in hopes that his team will hear and come over to help. The team jumped in the water, swam over and began dragging both Airmen out the water to shore.

“We got him out the water and saw that he went unconscious, we were getting ready to start CPR when he came to,” Waddy-Jordan said.

Osibowale, who was not an experienced swimmer, gained consciousness and immediately expressed his gratitude for Waddy-Jordan saving his life.

“I had no clue there was a drop in the water, there were no signs or anything,” Osibowale said. “I am grateful Tech. Sgt. Jordan was there to save life. If it wasn’t for him being there, I may not be alive right now.”

Waddy-Jordan shares how his experience has made him understand the importance of staying calm in situations that could possibly affect someone’s life.

“This situation easily could have been tragic. If I would have panicked, we both may have drowned,” he said. “I advise people to always have a buddy with you when you are in an open body of water and make sure people know exactly where you are. You never know what can happen.”

Waddy-Jordan’s leadership shares how grateful they are for his actions.

“It does not surprise me that those were the words, thoughts and actions of TSgt Waddy-Jordan,” said 1st Lt. Astin Moore, 459th Air Refueling Wing installation deployment officer. “While he is often quiet and reserved, one thing about him is that he is ALWAYS looking out for his Airmen. Constantly looking for the best way to help and support them while staying calm and ensuring not to make any situation worse, because he thinks first and acts second! In this situation it wasn’t PME, growth, or training but ensuring his Airman has the opportunity to spend more time with his friends, family and loved ones.”



Senior Airman Adetokunbo Osibowale (left) and Tech Sgt. Kyle Waddy-Jordan, 459th Logistics Readiness Squadron, pose for a photo Sept 3, 2019 at Joint Base Andrews, Md. Waddy-Jordan recently saved Osibowale’s life during training at Kadena Air Base, Japan.

2020 Reunion Registration Form

Member Name:

_____ **Phone#** _____

Guest Name:

_____ **Phone #** _____

Full Program: \$175.00 Per Person

Number attending: _____ X \$175 = Total enclosed _____

Hotel room reservation been made? (separate cost): Y__ N__

Attending Banquet Only: \$60 Per Person:

Number attending: _____ X \$60 = total enclosed _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Note: If you are staying the hotel check-in time is 4PM on Thursday 10/8 and Checkout is 12 Noon on Sunday 10/11.

Please send your registration form and check payable to:

459th Wing Association

P.O. Box 748

Clinton Maryland 20735

For questions please call or email Harold Countee

Cell# 301-785-0225 or email hmcountee@verizon.net

459th Civilian reflects on life during Civil Rights Era

By Staff Sgt. Cierra Presentado

459th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

Joint Base Andrews, Md. -- Arthur "Art" Miles is a civilian at the 459th Air Refueling Wing and is currently the oldest member in the wing. He shares his journey of how he joined the military at a time when the United States was still segregated and how he persevered and reached the point he is today.

Circa 1960, Miles is a young man fresh out of high school. His options were to pursue school, volunteer to join the military, or get drafted into the military. With influence from his father who served during World War II, Miles made the decision to volunteer and join the Air Force. It wasn't until he reached his first duty assignment that he truly began to experience segregation and racism.

"Being born and raised in Washington, D.C., we didn't experience anything too crazy regarding segregation and racism," Miles said. "I recall being told when you go down south, you will experience racism like never before. I didn't know what to expect. I wasn't prepared, but I knew I had no choice but to deal with it."

Miles shares his first experience of being mistreated because of the color of his skin.

"I was stationed in the state of Arkansas at the time. My job was to train B-52 Bomber pilots on combat measures. Me and my friend, who was a Caucasian male, decided to leave base to go get some food. After we ordered, they brought his food out to the table and told me my food was in the back, and if I wanted it, I had to eat in the back of the kitchen. My friend, being Caucasian, got to stay up front and eat in the restaurant. I went in the back and had my meal."

This would be the first time Miles experienced racial discrimination.

"I couldn't believe it, I always heard of this happening in the South, but I never knew it could happen to me," he said. "It was my reality. I was living in a time where even though I volunteered to serve my country, there were still people that hated me because of the color of my skin."

Miles went on to experience racial discrimination for the duration of his time in Arkansas. It wasn't until he reached his next assignment, in Africa, where he felt more at peace.

"They reassigned me to Africa, and for once, I finally felt accepted," he said. "We still had to be cautious of course, but not because of race. I was finally at peace with serving my country."

Miles recalls the first time he saw an African-American officer. He never imagined that a person of color would be a high-ranking officer.

"Jaws would drop, and anyone he came around would be in awe," he said. "One of our own people made it to colonel.



Little did he know, he inspired so many of us. Made us believe in ourselves; that we are better than what they perceive us 'Blacks' to be."

Miles finished his military career shortly after his return from Africa and returned to his home in Washington, D.C. Sometime later, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. would be assassinated.

"I've seen so much. I watched the city of Washington, D.C. crumble after the death of Dr. King," he said. "Buildings, businesses, homes, everything going up in smoke and flames during the riots."

Miles, after experiencing so much, made the decision to leave federal service and become a metro police officer. He attended the police academy and started a new journey. With his new career came hatred from not just the opposite race, but from his very own people.

"I wanted to do something different and I always wanted to be a police officer," he said. "At this time, there was not much respect for officers from the Black community. I knew what I was getting into, but I didn't want it to stop me from reaching one of my goals."

Miles remained a metro police officer for 21 years, and when given the opportunity, he joined the Air Force Reserve where he became a traditional reservist with the 459th Air Refueling Wing. After a year he became an Air Reserve Technician and later transitioned to a straight civilian with the 756th Air Refueling Squadron where he serves today.

"The 459th ARW is my final place of work," he said.

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email beginning later this year unless you notify us that you do not have an email address.

Plans are well underway for the 2020 Reunion. Here's some preliminary information about the upcoming 31st Reunion so you can make your plans accordingly. We have chosen:

Embassy Suites Hotel by Hilton at BWI Airport
1300 Concourse Drive
Linthicum, MD 21090

The dates for the 2020 Reunion are scheduled to be Oct. 8-11, 2020. Since it will be in the local area this year it is with hopes that more of our members will decide to join us. Once plans are finalized, I will include specific details with a daily schedule of events in the next newsletter. Room rates are \$119 for king bed or double beds. You may begin to make your room reservation online now using the following website: http://embassysuites.hilton.com/en/es/groups/personalized/B/BALIAES-45W-20201008/index.jhtml?WT.mc_id=POG or call the hotel reservations direct on 410-850-0747, press 1 then ask for the 459th Wing Association group rate. I cannot over emphasize enough that you will need to make your room reservation early to ensure you get your room before our cutoff date of Aug. 30, 2020. Cost for the full (Thursday - Sunday) reunion event is \$175.00 per person, however, if you wish to attend the banquet only on Saturday your cost will be \$60 per person. Please see the 2020 Reunion registration form enclosed.

CORONAVIRUS INFORMATION: I am monitoring the situation as I know you all are being impacted by the Coronavirus (Covid 19) pandemic. I want everyone to know that I have coordinated with the reunion site (Embassy Suites Hotel) who has agreed to honor any cancellation should we need to as a result of the current health crisis with no penalty. I will evaluate the situation in June/July and follow-up with everyone in the next newsletter with what we will do going forward. Please be safe and follow CDC guidelines that can be found at: [CDC.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

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"Throughout the years I have witnessed so much ranging from the first African-American president taking office to the first African-American chief becoming the highest enlisted member in the Air Force. If you would have asked me this 50 years ago, if I can see a Black man or woman in any position of power, I would have strongly doubted it."

After 40 years of federal service, currently Miles takes the cake as being the longest working member in the wing. He plans to retire Feb. 28, 2020.

"Mr. Miles is the equivalent of a quiet giant," said Senior Master Sgt. Kim Robinson, 756th ARS Superintendent. "Always willing to go the extra 'mile' to help another. Almost five decades of selfless service. He will be sorely missed!"

As Miles gears up to start his retirement, he hopes this generation understands the struggle he and many other African Americans dealt with to pave the way today.

"We overcame oppression, racism and segregation. Yes, we might still experience some hatred today, but understand we have come such a long way," he said. "I want young black men and women to know they can do anything. Our ancestors and those after them endured so much so we can have an equal chance at life. Learn your history, appreciate it and take action."



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

Log onto:

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.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND ANNUAL DUES

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

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 _____

459th Wing Association

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



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED