

459th Wing Association

BRINGING THE LATEST NEWS TO ALUMNI AND MEMBERS

Spring 2021 Newsletter

P.O. Box 748, Clinton, Maryland 20735

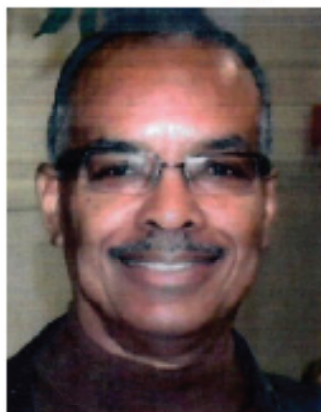


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President's Message

By Harold Countee
459th Wing Association President

Welcome to spring 2021! As we continue to endure the most ferocious pandemic in over 100 years we are now facing variants of the Coronavirus that will more than likely affect our 2021 reunion.



Although we have vaccines now rolling out, we still need to wear mask and social distance through the summer and very possibly into the fall. Since many of our members I've spoken with are still unsure of whether or not we should get together in a group setting this year I've decided, along with consulting Board Members, to cancel the 2021 reunion and look ahead to October 2022. Generally, to make hotel reservations requires a deposit to confirm hotel space and room blocks. Reservations for fall events would need to

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459th WING ASSOCIATION

SPRING 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

459TH AIRMEN RECEIVE FIRST ROUND OF COVID-19 VACCINATIONS



Staff Sgt. Mark Simmons, 459th Air Refueling Squadron boom operator, receives a COVID-19 vaccine from Staff Sgt. Kevin Nemo, 459th Aerospace Medicine Squadron medical technician, Feb. 10th, 2021, at Joint Base Andrews, Md. Simmons was among the first group of Airmen to receive the vaccine in the wing.



Col. Janette Thode, 459th Air Refueling Wing vice wing commander, receives the COVID-19 vaccine Feb. 10th, 2021. The wing is now administering the vaccine to Airmen and DoD civilians. (U.S. Air Force photos by Staff Sgt. Cierra Presentado/Released)

459th ARW officer reflects on Desert Storm era

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

JOINT BASE ANDREWS, Md. -- Operation Desert Storm, Jan. 17, 1991 – Feb. 28, 1991, was the first major foreign crisis for the United States after the end of the Cold War, and this year marks its 30th anniversary.

The 459th Air Refueling Wing's Lt. Col. William Short was one of 697,000 U.S. troops who took part in the war.

Short serves as the Director of Operations for the 759th Logistics Readiness Flight here. He participated in both Operations Desert Shield (predecessor to Desert Storm) and Desert Storm from Jan. 4, 1990 to June 13, 1991. His duty locations during that time included King Fahd Airbase, Dammam and Saudi Arabia.

"At the time, I was a command post specialist, 2740 series," he said. "I recall when I deployed with the 706th Tactical Fighter Squadron as an operations specialist, we would receive daily mission taskings and break out our A-10 Warthog missions. We would also prepare the knee boards for the pilots, pre-brief them, then the flight followed. During their mission and upon return, we debriefed them and prepared the daily situational reports for higher headquarters."

Desert Storm saw the first use of MIM-104C Patriot missile system in combat, where it was used to intercept Scud missiles. It was also the first time the Air Force used stealth and space systems support capabilities against a modern, integrated air defense.

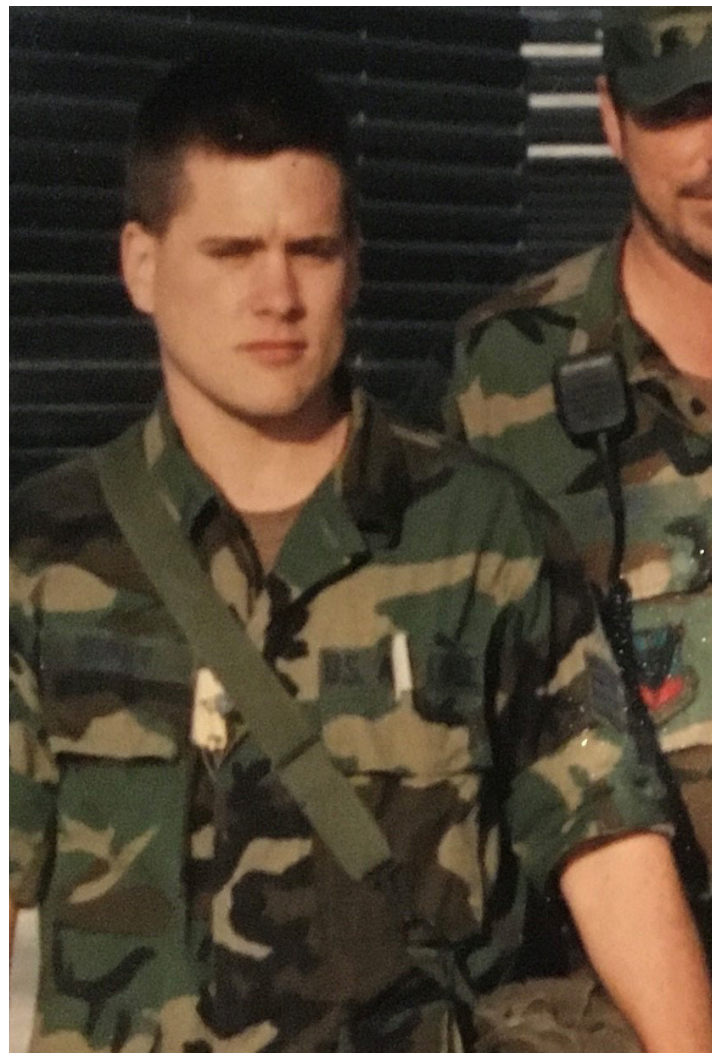
When asked if he recalled any specific memories of that day, Short shared the following:

"I recall plenty. The ops tempo from the start of the air campaign until weeks after was incredible," he said. "We worked 16 to 20 hours a day, 7 days a week, throughout combat operations. The A-10s and a forward deployed F-16 squadron were flying 24 hours a day, and the Iraqis were launching Scuds overhead every few hours to keep us from sleeping, but it was so exciting we didn't mind. It was a successful operation, the A-10 proved itself to be a valuable asset and even included an air-to-air kill when one pilot shot down an Iraqi helicopter with the 30mm gun. We lived in tents with 12 persons to a tent on cots and all other facilities were tents as well - latrines, showers, recreation, dining halls. After combat ops we set up some fairly elaborate patio/lounging facilities competing between tents for décor honors to pass the time. Eventually, Saudi

locals set up dining halls for a meal option and those of us that liked spicy food ate there every meal. Also, the difference between Air Force and Army was made very obvious. They lived in small tents and their showers were from 55 gallon drums mounted on wood frames while the lucky ones set up in the parking garage."

Today, the United States remains in good standing with many of the countries involved in the coalition that began with Operation Desert Storm 27 years ago.

"The camaraderie developed during that time was second to none that I've ever experienced in my 30-plus year Air Force career," Short concluded.



Lt. Col. William Short, 759th Logistics Readiness Flight director of operations, poses for a photo in June of 1990 while deployed in support of Operation Desert Shield in Saudi Arabia. Short, then an Air Force staff sergeant, was one of 697,000 U.S. troops to participate in the operation. (Courtesy photo)

FSS Commander shares experience as an African American woman in leadership



Lt. Col. Miriam Carter poses for a photo Feb. 17, 2021 at Joint Base Andrews, Md. Carter was recently selected to be the 459th Force Support Squadron commander and shares her journey of being an African American woman in leadership. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Cierra Presentado/Released)

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

JOINT BASE ANDREWS, Md. -- Fifteen percent of personnel currently serving in the Air Force are African American. An even smaller percentage are African American women who make up the Air Force officer corps. As part of Black History Month, the 459th Force Support Squadron commander, Lt. Col. Miriam Carter, shares her experience of being a Black leader in the military.

Carter is from Trinidad and Tobago. As a young adult she made the decision to leave her country of origin to move to the United States to pursue a better life for herself. Joining the military hadn't originally crossed her mind, until one day when she realized the opportunities it afforded would

allow her to better herself, her education and serve others.

"Growing up, I wanted to be a flight attendant or lawyer though I did not have a plan," Carter said. "I knew I wanted to serve others in some capacity. I never dreamed of joining the military."

In November of 1995, Carter made the decision to join the Air Force on active duty. When she was a senior airman she met a fellow African American female enlisted Airman who was out-processing to start Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC). It was then she knew it was possible for her to become an officer as well.

"Around this time I didn't really come across many African American female officers," she said. "We started talking and she convinced me to look into commissioning. Seeing her pursue her

goal of becoming an officer allowed me believe in myself. I did my research and realized that this is something I could also do.”

Carter applied and was accepted into the ROTC program at the University of Nebraska in Omaha. During her time in ROTC, Carter recalls being the only African American in her class.

“There were no other Black females in my class, but rather than letting it discourage me, I let it empower me,” Carter said. “I was not treated any different than anyone else. I had a normal experience. I just knew I was ready to show other female Airmen that looked like me that this is something they could also achieve.”

Carter separated from active duty as a captain and shortly after transitioned to the Air Force Reserve. She remained at her duty location where she admits there was not much diversity.

“The location I was in lacked diversity,” she said. “I knew I wanted to change locations. The base was nice, but I was ready for something more.”

Carter eventually chose to come to Joint Base Andrews, Md., in October 2011, as a traditional Reservist. She deployed to Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar, and post-deployment she had assignments at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., and the Pentagon. In September 2018, she would promote to the rank of Lt. Col. In 2020 she applied, interviewed, and was selected for the position of squadron commander for the 459th Force Support Squadron.

“Being selected for a squadron commander position was a blessing,” she said. “I’m thrilled for the opportunity to affect Airmen’s lives in a positive way. I want to set an example and I will do what I can to help other Airmen realize there are opportunities available for them.”

Carter shares advice for African American Airmen who aspire to reach heights that they believe are unattainable.

“As a young Black island girl, I didn’t see myself being where I am now, I didn’t even know it was possible,” she said. “My advice to young African American Airmen and all Airmen is to go to school and get your education. There is something out there that you will love, but you

have to step out of your comfort zone to do it. Also, get several mentors. It’s impossible to obtain your dreams on your own. There are people out there just like me waiting to help you.”



Airman Basic Miriam Carter poses for a photo during Basic Military Training in November 1995 at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. Carter relocated from Trinidad and Tobago as a young adult to come to the United States where she enlisted on Active Duty. (Courtesy Photo)

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be made by April of that year. Even after vaccinations (which many of us would have by then) there may be some who may not have been vaccinated or may be uncomfortable with getting together in a group event. CDC recommendations still suggest local restrictions remain in effect for now so let's not put anyone at risk.

I will make tentative arrangements to move our next reunion reservations to Oct. 6-9, 2022. Reservation information for 2022 will be included in a future newsletter.

I would like to solicit any ideas of whether or not we could have an outside gathering sometime this summer or early fall so we could at least see one another and share some fellowship time at a local park. Please email me (hmcountee@verizon.net) or text me (301-785-0225) if there's any interest to plan an outdoor single day event.

Finally, please remember to remain safe, wear a mask, social distance, wash your hands often and make a plan to get vaccinated as soon as your group age becomes authorized to make an appointment.



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.



AMC COMMANDER MEETS 459TH AIR REFUELING WING TOP LEADERS

Gen. Jacqueline Van Ovost, Air Mobility Command commander, is escorted by Col. Greg Buchanan, 459th Air Refueling Wing commander, on her way to visit the 459th ARW at Joint Base Andrews, Md., Jan. 25, 2021. Van Ovost met with members of wing leadership to talk about wing's mission, issues and accomplishments as part of her visit to Joint Base Andrews. (U.S. Air Force photo by Maj. Tim Smith)

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