

459th Wing Association

BRINGING THE LATEST NEWS TO ALUMNI AND MEMBERS

Summer 2020 Newsletter

P.O. Box 748, Clinton, Maryland 20735

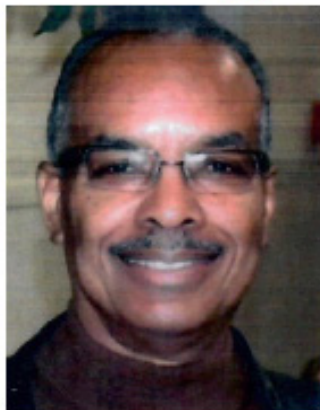
JBA sparks innovation for COVID-19 facemasks: Page 3



President's Message

By Harold Countee
459th Wing Association President

2020 has been a year so far with many ups and downs and I pray that each of you and your families has been able to endure through it all and remain healthy. The coronavirus COVID-19



has dominated all news cycles since the beginning of the year and with that said the remainder of the year also looks to be very uncertain. Many of our Association members are within the senior age group so after consultation with the Embassy Suites Hotel BWI I have decided to cancel our 2020 reunion and focus on getting together again October 7-10, 2021.

Remember you can pay your dues online at www.459thwingassociation.com or mail to 459th Wing Association, PO Box 748, Clinton, MD 20735.

459TH WING ASSOCIATION

SUMMER 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



JBA CHANGES COMMAND, REACTIVATES 316 WG

Col. Tyler Schaff assumes command of the 316th Wing and Joint Base Andrews at Hangar 3 on JBA, Md., June 11, 2020. Schaff now oversees approximately 2,500 Airmen, Department of Defense civilians and contractors in the 316th Wing. He will also serve as installation commander to JBA; home to two higher headquarters, six wings, more than 80 tenant organizations and an estimated 17,000 personnel. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Spencer Slocum)

JBA sparks innovation for COVID-19 facemasks

By 11th Wing Public Affairs

JOINT BASE ANDREWS, Md. -- In the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, personnel at JBA are coming up with ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 while continuing to carry out the many missions on base.

Social distancing is a challenge for personnel in the medical, emergency response and aviation fields, as they balance performing their mission-essential duties and maintaining the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's recommended six feet of distance. The use of facemasks solves this problem but presents another challenge in terms of supply.

A team of Airmen at the SparkX Cell Innovation & Idea Center have been working to solve this very problem and began 3D printing of prototyped facemasks from their facility.

"The SparkX Cell is a place for Airmen to go brainstorm new ideas or solutions to problems in the Air Force," said Maj. Vincent Giacomino, 11th Wing SparkX Cell chief innovation officer. "We saw an emerging need for facemasks and began working a prototype on March 6. Though our production capacity is limited, we knew we could support our community of first responders, security forces, fire and basically your people who come in contact with a lot of people."

According to Giacomino, these printed masks are better than home-made cloth masks due to the materials used in the production. There are different prototype models and sizes that require varying amounts of time to print and fit to the member's face.

"Seeing the SparkX Cell work on this level is surprising, but it's not surprising," said Chief Master Sgt. Kaleth O. Wright, Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force. "They're making things better for all of us and to see them working on something this important, it makes me extremely proud of what they're doing here."

Wright added to the importance of having a team like the one at the SparkX Cell and the creative solutions Airmen are solving problems with.

"We're trying to provide [the best design] where people can mount whatever sort of filter material they have at their disposal," said Giacomino. "Since we started this effort a few weeks ago, we have delivered custom-fit facemasks to our medics at the front lines of this fight, defenders at the gates and aircrew who serve the Presidential airlift mission."

One of the members who helped in the design of these masks is Tech. Sgt. Matthew Walsh, 11th Medi-

cal Group NCO in-charge of cardiopulmonary services. Walsh has been the liaison between both the medical and innovation sides of this project, as he also works as an innovation technician at the SparkX Cell.

"As a respiratory therapist, we deal with the airways, so I'm more of the clinical expert for the creation of the masks," said Walsh. "Here at the SparkX Cell, we have more resources to try and find a solution, and that is a huge asset when it comes to security and safety initiatives for our personnel."

Walsh added that he hopes the SparkX continues to create solutions to combat the spread of COVID-19 through their culture of innovation. That culture is one where Airmen at all levels are actively engaged in finding innovative, cost effective and meaningful solutions to problems within the Air Force.

"Challenging times have historically presented an opportunity for our great Airmen to shine," said Col. Andrew Purath, 11th Wing and JBA commander. "I've witnessed a community effort and innovative solutions by our Airmen to ensure we meet our no-fail mission demands across the board [here at Andrews] while big Air Force works on an ultimate solution."

The 11th Wing is the host wing for Joint Base Andrews providing security, personnel, contracting, finance and infrastructure support for five wings, three headquarters, more than 80 tenant organizations, 148 geographically separated units, 6,500 Airmen in the Pentagon, as well as 60,000 Airmen and families in the national capital region and around the world.



Facemask prototypes rest on a table at the SparkX Cell Innovation and Idea Center on Joint Base Andrews, Md., Apr. 8, 2020. There have been more than five different prototype designs made from multiple different materials. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Spencer Slocum)

2021 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 10/7 and Checkout is 12 Noon on Sunday 10/10/2021.

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 Religious Affairs Airman saves life off duty

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

JOINT BASE ANDREWS, Md. -- Tech Sgt. James Laska recently used his extensive medical background gained from both his military and civilian training to save a life while on his civilian job.

Tech Sgt. Laska is a Religious Affairs Airman with the 459th Air Refueling Wing Chaplain Corps and a Chief Rescue Technician with the U.S. Park Police Aviation Unit in Washington, D.C. His former military background in medicine is what prepared him for one of many days he helped save a life.

On June 4, 2020, while having lunch, Laska heard a call come over the radio from an officer requesting medical help for an individual who passed out while exercising at the Lincoln Memorial. Hearing the stress in the officer's voice, Laska took the call.

"The officer seemed extremely stressed and I knew something was not right about the situation," Laska said. "Me and my technician called for permission to fly, and we got out to the helicopter."

Laska and his team landed at the Lincoln Memorial within minutes to find the patient had died and was being given CPR by nearby military and law enforcement service members.

"We arrived on scene and were briefed that the patient had died prior to us arriving, however, that does not mean she cannot be resuscitated. I took over doing CPR and my technician and I loaded her onto a stretcher and got her into the helicopter to head to George Washington University Hospital," he said. "I also had one of the ANG med techs come to provide assistance."

During the flight, Laska and his team of two continued to provide support hoping that the patient would be revived.

"As a medic, it is my job to always provide life-saving services until I turn over care," Laska said. "Even though our patient was dead on arrival, I still made the decision to continue efforts to save her life. It was the right thing to do."

By the time the helicopter arrived at the George Washington University Hospital, the patient was still dead. As Laska and his team rushed the stretcher to



Tech Sgt. James Laska, 459th Air Refueling Wing Chaplain Corps, Religious Affairs Airman, recently used his extensive medical background gained from both his military and civilian training to save a life while on his civilian job. (U.S. Air Force photo/SrA Andreaa Phillips)

the emergency medical technicians on the ground, a miracle happened, the patient was revived.

"We got her to the emergency room and her pulse was back" Laska said. "I felt a sense of comfort knowing we did all we could and in the end she would be ok."

Laska's love for helping people extends far beyond his duties as a park police officer. He has volunteered to train more than 100 Airmen in the 459th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron over the past few years in CPR and self-aid buddy care.

"I think it is important for every Airman to be able to operate correctly under stress," he said. "Knowing the very basic steps of CPR and self-aid buddy care can save someone's life."

Laska not only is committed to helping civilians while on the job, he is also committed to supporting Airmen any time.

"The religious affairs team and the chaplains are here to support Airmen, especially during this time," he said. "We want Airmen to know that no matter your religion, we are here to talk and serve you spiritually, mentally and socially."

The wing chaplain office and religious affairs team can be reached by calling command post at 240-857-5556.

Continued from President's page 1

Our quarterly newsletter cost to mail it to all members on a quarterly basis has increased. We are still having too many newsletters being returned as undeliverable so with the rising cost of postage future newsletters my go out via email beginning with the fall issue unless you notify us that you do not have an email address.

I truly apologize for not being able to have our 2020 reunion this year but plans are continuing towards our next Reunion to happen in October 2021. Here's some preliminary information about the Reunion so you can make your plans accordingly. I have reserved space for our 2021 reunion with the Embassy Suites Hotel by Hilton at:

BWI Airport, 1300 Concourse Drive
Linthicum, MD 21090.

The dates for the 2021 Reunion will be October 7-10, 2021. Since it will be in the local area it is with hopes that more of our members will decide to join us.

Once plans are finalized I will include more specific details of what to expect with a daily schedule of events in the winter newsletter. Room rates are still \$119 for king bed or double bed. You will be able to make your room reservation online beginning January 1st, 2021 using an online web address which I will be providing in the Winter newsletter. You will also be able to call the hotel reservations line direct on 410-850-0747, press 1 then ask for the 459th Wing Association group rate. I cannot over emphasize enough that you should make your room reservation early to ensure you get your room before our cutoff date of August 30, 2021. Cost for the full (Thursday - Sunday) reunion event is \$175.00 per person, however if you can only attend the Banquet on Saturday evening, Oct. 9th your cost will be \$60 per person.



**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