



AIRFIELD 858

The newsletter of the Air Force Sergeants Association—Chapter 858

Winter 2002

Key chapter positions filled

Tech. Sgt. Doug Altrichter with the Minnesota Air National Guard stepped forward to accept the Chapter 858 vice president's position.

Bob Hatz, retired Air National Guard senior master sergeant and previous chapter vice president accepted the treasurer position to give the chapter some stability in that key role.

Master Sgt. Laura Lemaster with the Air Force 342nd Recruiting Squadron accepted the secretary position until May 2002, when she will PCS to another duty location.

Master Sgt. Lin Davidson with the Air Force Reserve and past chapter president is now serving as a senior advisor.

More valuable help

Trustees Bob Smith and Dave Hammer are currently presenting AFSA certificates to Eagle Scouts.

Hammer, Tom Foss and Don Zupan are arranging visits to veterans homes.

Chief Dick Grewe is spreading the AFSA word to members of the Air Force Reserve, and Chiefs Todd Thompson, Tom O'Keefe and Dave Himmer are getting the AFSA word out to members of the ANG.

Chief Pyle and Don Kent still provide us with valuable advice, and invaluable contacts with the other military organizations in the Twin Cities area.

Davidson now acting president

Mark Davidson, trustee and retired Air Force Reserve senior master sergeant, volunteered to serve as acting chapter president from Nov. 1, 2001, until Feb. 28, 2002. The former president, Master Sgt. Al Eakle, resigned in September due to work commitments and time constraints.

Davidson, who is the husband of former chapter president Lin Davidson, will not run for chapter president in the 2002 chapter election. "I would like to remain as the membership trustee and work with a membership representative at the Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard, Air Force Recruiting and in the retiree community," he said.

New leadership or chapter disbanding

If no one steps forward to run for chapter president, Davidson added, the chapter will be dissolved and disbanded by Sept. 1, 2002. "If this chapter is to continue, a new president must be found," he said.

There are some very experienced AFSA chapter 858 trustees who will help a new person, especially in the president's position, he said, but additional new officers and trustees are needed, especially members younger than 40. "And have no fear," said Davidson. "We won't just turn over a chapter officer position without plenty of training and mentoring."

Chapter members volunteer at veteran homes

Under the leadership of Chief Master Sgt. Tom Foss, Air Force Reserve, several chapter members have volunteered throughout this past year to help out at the area veteran

homes. The chapter volunteers spent time visiting with the residents, reading to them and more.

Members plan to continue this volunteer service in 2002. Foss will still serve

General membership meeting and elections scheduled

The general membership meeting and elections for chapter officers is scheduled for 10 a.m., Saturday, Feb. 9, 2002, at the American Legion in Bloomington, Minn., located at the corner of Lyndale Avenue South and 94th Street, just a couple blocks east of I-35W.

All AFSA members wanting to run for chapter office must submit a short letter by mail or e-mail by Feb. 1, 2002 to: AFSA Chapter 858, 10007 Harriet Ave. S., Bloomington, MN 55420 or Ldavidson7@juno.com. Copies of this letter or e-mail will be made available at the meeting to all attendees.

The first paragraph of this letter must state your name, mailing address, e-mail address, telephone numbers and the office you are running for in the chapter. The second paragraph of this letter must show your past and current AFSA, work, military and volunteer experiences that you think have a bearing on the AFSA chapter position you are running for.

If you can't meet the above deadline for election application but you are an AFSA member with a sincere desire to run for a chapter officer position, you won't be turned down or away at the election.

as the coordinator of this activity, and Don Zupan will serve as his alternate. To get involved in this activity, call Foss at 612-713-1718 for arrangements.



Chapter 858 begins recruiting drive

AFSA membership is for everyone — not just people who serve(d) in the military. Auxiliary membership is open to anyone 16 years old or older who support the Air Force and its mission. Please share the enclosed membership form with a relative, friend or someone you know that might benefit from being an AFSA or Auxiliary member.

Air Force Sergeants Association Chapter 858

10007 Harriet Ave. S.
Bloomington, MN 55420-4726
(952) 884-6077
afsa858@worldnet.att.net
<http://afsa858.home.att.net>

Officers:

Acting President, Mark Davidson
Vice President, Doug Altrichter
Treasurer, Bob Hatz
Secretary, Laura Lemaster
Senior Advisor, Lin Davidson

Trustees (not all inclusive):

Don Kent, Don Zupan, Francis O'Brien
John Moses, and Ralph Hubbard

Auxiliary Chapter:

President, Becky Prine
Vice President, Rose Patterson
Senior Advisor/Treasurer,
Fern Schneider

Airfield 858 Editor:

Shannon L. Armitage Bauer
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Why belong to the Air Force Sergeants' Association?

Serving the enlisted Air Force

AFSA is the ONLY professional military organization that strictly represents the interests of past/present/future ENLISTED personnel. There are many other worthwhile, effective professional military organizations — AFSA works with these organizations on a daily basis in Washington, D.C., to form a joint military coalition. But if you are enlisted, you should make AFSA your first choice.

Legislation that benefits YOU

AFSA lobbies on behalf of its members for pay raises, cost-of-living-adjustment increases, benefits, etc. Who do you really think gets you those annual increases? The senior DoD leadership sets minimum ceilings for these pay raises and benefits, but it's AFSA that gets you the extra money in your paycheck to make these increases worthwhile. AFSA has also secured many benefit issues for the Guard and Reserve, the active duty and the retired community. AFSA lobbies on your behalf as a member in the offices of the elected members of the U.S. Congress and Senate.

November chapter trustee meeting held

There was an AFSA Chapter 858 trustee meeting on Nov. 10 at the Bloomington American Legion. There was 16 people in attendance from the 342nd Recruiting Squadron, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, the AFSA Auxiliary chapter and the retired Air Force community. All facets of the Air Force community in the area were represented.

The biggest issue discussed is the immediate, very serious need to have AFSA chapter 858 members who have not served in a leadership role to step forward for the 2002 elections and become a chapter leader. The other part of this large issue is to get E-1 to E-5 personnel to JOIN AFSA and to get some of these young people to step forward as chapter officers.

It was decided there will be communications with the first sergeants of the Air

Added membership benefits

AFSA has many member benefits in the areas of health, travel discounts, insurance discounts, etc. There are scholarship opportunities available for members and their families, as well as access to a federal credit union. Just taking advantage of one or two of these discounts annually pays for your membership.

A large degree of activities and funds are directed toward others — nonmembers, communities, local projects and activities, as well as the military establishment. AFSA is, indeed, a worldwide organization serving its stakeholders.

Supportive community

AFSA provides an organization for military members and their family members to be part of a supportive community on-base and off-base. Let's face it — the Twin Cities area, greater Minnesota, western Wisconsin and Iowa doesn't have an active-duty Air Force base to bring people together. AFSA Chapter 858 provides the total Air Force community an organization to work together and get together.

Force Reserve, Air National Guard and Air Force's 342nd Recruiting Squadron in November and December 2001 to tell them of the "dire" need to have their people step forward. The chapter election in February 2002 for chapter officers will be highlighted.

The issue of a stand-alone AFSA awards banquet was also brought up and a noteworthy exchange of dialogue took place. It was decided that a survey of all chapter members will be placed in the next newsletter asking chapter members for their opinions. (See bottom Page 3.) Based on the experience of chapter trustee, and the recent experiences of Lin and Mark Davidson in the two awards banquets they put on, it was agreed that this is a high labor experience for the volunteers planning, developing and executing this kind of event.

Local news to note ...

Trustee meeting scheduled

The next trustee meeting of the Chapter 858 Trustees will be Saturday, Jan. 12 at 10 a.m. at the American Legion Post in Bloomington, which is located at the corner of Lyndale Avenue South and 94th Street, just a couple blocks east of I-35W.

Issues discussed will be to tentatively plan some 2002 events such as: having an AFSA recruiting booth/popcorn machine/snowcone machine at the family day festivities for the Air Force recruiting squadron, the ANG and the AFRC; will there be a Minnesota Military Expo event at the end of July 2002 and how the war impacts it; how do reach the thousands of retirees in Minnesota/western Wisconsin/northern Iowa who don't know about AFSA; some fundraising events; etc.

All trustees and current AFSA Chapter 858 members are encouraged to attend.

Website now posted

Chapter member Senior Master Sgt. Dave Hammer, Air Force Reserve, volunteered his computer expertise and Internet know-how to set up an AFSA Chapter 858 website. Check it out at:
<http://afsa858.home.att.net>

Auxiliary adds members

Congratulations to all Auxiliary members for their hard work in recruiting and retaining new members. Chapter 858 added two members! That may not seem like much, but it is wonderful considering our membership had actually been dropping some months. Let's keep it up!

Awards banquet held

Chapter 858 held a joint awards banquet with the local Air Force Association General E.W. Rawlings Chapter on Nov. 17 at the 934th Airlift Wing Noncommissioned Officers Club.

Outstanding performers from the 133rd Airlift Wing, the 934th Airlift Wing, the 342nd Recruiting Squadron and the Minnesota Wing Civil Air Patrol were recognized during the evening's festivities. AFSA received an appropriate amount of positive publicity during this event.

New copayment system for outpatient care

The VA has set up a new copayment structure for outpatient care. The new three-tier system should lower, and in some cases eliminate, bills received for outpatient care for nonservice connected conditions, primarily for veterans enrolled in Priority Group 7.

The first tier will be for preventive care visits and will cost veterans nothing. Preventive care includes flu shots, labora-

tory tests and various other services. The second tier will be comprised of Primary Care outpatient visits and will require a \$15 copayment. The last tier includes specialty care, like outpatient surgery and optometry, and will require a \$50 copayment.

Division convention scheduled

The 2002 Division 8/9 joint convention is scheduled for May 24-26, 2002, in Omaha Neb. This is Memorial Day weekend. The convention will be held at the Clarion Hotel Executive Center, 3650 S. 72nd St. Omaha, NE 68124. The number is 402-397-3700. Room rates are \$65 for a single and double. Registration rates will be furnished in the near future.



AFSA — Chapter 858 Opinions Sought

Do you think Chapter 858 ought to have its own awards banquet this year?

Yes: _____ No: _____

If so, would you be willing to help out?

Yes: _____ No: _____

AFSA — Chapter 858 Fund Drive

Thank you for your support of the Air Force Sergeants Association!

Your contributions are tax deductible!

Contribution: \$5 _____; \$10 _____; \$20 _____; Other: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Please mail to: AFSA — Chapter 858, C/O Mark Davidson, 10007 Harriet Ave. S., Bloomington, MN 55420-4726.

Legislative news to note ...

VA accepting Gulf War veteran claims for ALS

The VA and the Department of Defense have found preliminary evidence that veterans who served in Desert Shield-Desert Storm are nearly twice as likely as their non-deployed counterparts to develop amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), commonly called Lou Gehrig's Disease.

Because of this finding, the VA is now accepting claims from veterans who served in the Persian Gulf Aug. 1, 1990, to July 31, 1991, and have subsequently developed ALS. Additional information can be obtained by contacting the VA toll-free at 1-800-827-1000.

Base Realignment and Closure Authority returns

The Fiscal Year 2002 National Defense Authorization Act included a provision to authorize another round of the Base Realignment and Closure Authority.

While the BRAC process approved by the conferees is similar to previous base closure rounds, there are a number of important changes, including: "Military value" must be the primary evaluation factor to be used in the base closure process; DoD and the BRAC Commission must consider the extent and timing of costs and savings, the impact of potential environmental remediation costs, and the impact on existing communities in the vicinity of military installations when making closure and realignment decisions; and, additionally, loopholes in past BRAC legislation that allowed the decisions to be politicized have been eliminated.

The actual process will be as follows: In February 2004, the Secretary of Defense must submit to Congress a detailed force structure plan, including an infrastructure inventory that supports future U.S. military needs; SECDEF must also certify that proceeding with base closures is necessary and justified. In addition, he must also cer-

tify that his recommendations for closure will result in annual net savings for each of the services by 2011. The president will appoint nine members of the BRAC Commission, who will convene in March 2005. In May 2005, the SECDEF must deliver a list of bases and facilities to be closed; the BRAC Commission will assess and may modify the plans of the SECDEF, submitting their recommendations to the president in September 2005.

Lastly, upon receiving the list, the president will have 15 days to accept or reject the entire list. If he approves it, Congress will have 45 days to approve or reject the entire list. If the president rejects the list, the BRAC Commission will have 30 days to consider the president's objections, make adjustments to the list, and resubmit the list to the president. Upon receiving the resubmitted list, he will have another 15 days to approve or reject it. If approved, Congress will have 45 days to approve or reject the entire list.

Defense Appropriations Bill and National Defense Authorization Act completed

Congress adjourned for the holidays and the end of the first session of the 107th Congress. Before leaving, it completed the final three appropriations bills needed to fund activities in FY 2002, which began on Oct. 1; these bills included the \$318 billion Defense Appropriations Bill. Also, before leaving town, Congress sent to the president S. 1438, the FY 2002 National Defense Authorization Act.

Meanwhile, two veterans bills also await the president's signature. The first is H.R. 2716, the "Homeless Veterans Comprehensive Assistance Act." It would provide \$1 billion for programs to aid homeless veterans and prevent veterans from becoming homeless. Also included in the bill is \$10 million for medical care for homeless veterans with special needs,

including older veterans, women, and substance abusers. It would require the VA to provide mental health programs wherever Primary Care is provided; and require the VA to provide technical assistance to non-profit, community-based organizations seeking federal funding for homeless programs, among other things.

The second veterans bill on the president's desk is H.R. 1291, the "Veterans Education and Benefits Expansion Act of 2001." It would boost the Montgomery G.I. Bill benefit by 46 percent during the next two years, increasing the amount for full-time students using the MGIB to \$800 beginning Jan. 1, 2002; \$900 beginning Oct. 1, 2003; and \$985 beginning Oct. 1, 2004.

It would also restore lost MGIB benefits for reserve component members called up to active duty. H.R. 1291 would also increase burial and funeral expense benefits by 25 percent and double burial plot allowances. It would increase the Home Loan Guaranty Program; and it would add undiagnosed conditions, such as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and Chronic Multi-Symptom Illnesses to the list of service-connected conditions for Gulf War Veterans.

Lastly, the House has passed H.R. 3423 which would eliminate the requirement for reservists to reach age 60 before they are eligible for burial at Arlington National Cemetery. If passed by the Senate and then signed by the president, H.R. 3423 would correct the current inequity by allowing all reservists eligible for retirement pay the entitlement to be buried at Arlington.

Capitol Hill Update Line

This toll-free service gives up-to-date information on proposed and pending legislation. Call 1-800-638-0594 from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m. E.S.T./E.D.T. Monday through Friday; 24 hours on weekends/holidays.