

# We are an AFSA family

AIR FORCE SERGEANTS ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 872

## ✧ Welcome to AFSA ✧

<https://www.facebook.com/AFSA872/>

### WORDS FROM OUR PRESIDENT

AFSA Nation,

It has been a great start to the new year! We are certainly a busy chapter and on behalf of my entire Executive Council, we can't thank you enough for all you do to make Chapter 872 such a great association to be part of. You demonstrate the four pillars of AFSA:

Membership  
Legislation, Communication  
and Fraternity. As we continue the legacy of Chapter 872, remember what AFSA stands for

and what it does and continues to do for all military members and their families past, present and our future members. I appreciate your resiliency and mission focus

as we continue to give back and still preforming our daily missions. As we continue through the year, I challenge you to recruit new members and most importantly get your family involved.

AFSA is all about family and giving back...bring your families to any and all AFSA events! I look forward to what Chapter 872 will do this year!



### Division 3 Conference

*It was a great time at the Division 3 Conference in April 2016. We thank Division 3. volunteers, GrandForks AFB, and the surrounding area for hosting such a wonderful event! Can't wait to see all of you at the 2016 Professional Airman's Conference in San Antonio.*

#WEAREAFSA  
#AFSAGIVESBACK

### Farewell from SMSgt Michael Gralewski the outgoing President

It has been a great honor serving as your President for 2015. It was amazing to see all of you lead from the front as AFSA warriors! Not only was

Chapter 872 named 2015 Large Chapter of the Year, but we also executed the base wide Inaugural CMSAF Binnicker "Bear Claw" Run, a spectacular Inter-service Enlisted Dining Out, and a 24-hour Veteran's Vigil Run, to name a few, all while maintaining our day-to-day programs.

Thank you for everything you do for AFSA and everything you did to make

Chapter 872 the best Chapter in the Air Force. I leave you in the capable hands of your newly elected President, SMSgt Mary Belt, and your 2016 EC. May your successes continue and may your efforts help to grow AFSA International while we all fight "To advocate improved quality of life and economic fairness that will support the well-being of the Total Air Force enlisted personnel and their families." Never forget the mission!



*Congratulations to our Chapter winners*

AFSA Member of the Year 2015: MSgt Chris Tennyson

Senior Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year 2015: MSgt Eva Friend

Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year 2015: TSgt Joshua Hite

Airman of the Year 2015: SrA Robert A. Niebauer II



*872's Satellite Chapter at Fort Leonard Wood, MO*



The 364 TRS, Detachment 1 recently founded an Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA) Satellite Chapter at Fort Leonard Wood (FLW), Missouri. Prior to four months ago, there were few private organizations that supported the Air Force and zero organizations that impacted the Total Force. With all the great accomplishments of AFSA, many Airmen assigned at FLW felt a need for a Chapter of their own on the Army installation. In October 2015, Technical Sergeant Jessica Zerby first made contact with Mr. Steven Zalesky, the Division 3 AFSA President.

Shortly after, she established 3 sub-committees and Technical Sergeant Patrick Gallagher, Staff Sergeant Stephen Baskiewicz, and Staff Sergeant Ashley Depuy were elected as committee leads for the new chapter.

The FLW Satellite Chapter is currently up and running thanks to all the support from the Mr. Steven Zalesky and the Scott 872 AFSA Parent Chapter. There are four career field technical trainings schools held on FLW with new students arriving weekly. This presents a great opportunity to brief our new Airmen coming in from BMT and other locations about AFSA. With help from the USAF Detachment 1, all students will now leave FLW with AFSA knowledge and with the opportunity for membership. The FLW Satellite Chapter is also reaching out to the local Veterans in the area to support their needs and bring them into the organization.



Above: SSgt Ashley Depuy, Satellite Chapter Vice President  
Left: SSgt Stephen Baskiewicz, Satellite Chapter President



# Thank you Volunteers!



We can never say thank you enough to our AFSA volunteers for all you do! We have had blood drives, warm coat donations, caring hearts food box filling, and the EFMP Easter Egg Hunt...we couldn't do what we do without your support!

## Save the Date

GIVING BACK!	MAY 19 Missouri Vet Home	MAY 24 MVRBC Blood Drive	MAY 25 Missouri Vet Home	TBD Habitat for Humanity
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### Legislative Update

written by MSgt Chris Tennyson

Fellow Airmen, no law exist which protects our military or veteran benefits. These benefits are developed and preserved by people like us. To develop, maintain, and foster these benefits, our chapter needs every member to voice their likes and dislikes in regards to issues which may negatively affect their present and future benefits and entitlements.

These benefits and entitlements may be, but are not limited to: Pay and Compensation, Tuition Assistance, Post 9-11 GI Bill, VA accommodations, Family Care etc...

This year saw greatness as Chapter 872 lead the Scott AFB Vigil Run. Not only did we honor our veterans, but also reached many new local military members and supports unfamiliar with AFSA and our cause stated above. These efforts must continue into 2016.

You can find the latest proposals and concerns and action items of these areas on our chapter and/or HQ AFSA webpage, and Facebook ([https://www.facebook.com/AFSA872?ref=aymt\\_homepage\\_panel](https://www.facebook.com/AFSA872?ref=aymt_homepage_panel)).



# Military Retirement Reform

*Provided by Jill Pietrusinski*

If you joined the military in 2006 or later, the 2016 National Defense Authorization Act could allow you to make drastic changes to your current retirement plan. In 2018, the traditional 20-year, all-or-nothing military retirement program will be restructured as part of an effort to reduce long-term government liabilities and ensure that a higher percentage of service members leave active duty with some form of retirement benefit. Those who join the military on or after January 1, 2018 will automatically enter under this new system, but current service members who joined between January 1, 2006 and December 31, 2017 will have the option of staying in the old plan or converting to this new system, which includes four significant changes.

**Pension Calculation.** Retired pay is currently calculated by multiplying the average of the highest three years of basic pay (High-3) by 2.5 percent per year. Under the new system, the multiplier is reduced from 2.5 percent to 2.0 percent. If, for example, you retire after 20 years in the new system, you will receive an annuity equal to 40 percent of your High-3 monthly basic pay (2.0 percent x 20 = 40 percent). That's 20 percent less than the 50 percent (2.5 percent x 20 years = 50 percent) those who serve 20 years in the current system receive.

**TSP Contributions.** To help compensate for the lower pension, under the new system, you will be eligible for Agency Automatic and Agency Matching Contributions through the Department of Defense. Based on the latest available information, the program will include an automatic contribution of 1 percent and matching contributions up to 4 percent. It is expected that the first 3 percent will be matched dollar for dollar and the next 2 percent will be matched at 50 cents on the dollar. Government contributions will continue until the completion of 26 years of service.

**Continuation Pay.** After 12 years of service, you will be offered a "continuation pay bonus" if you agree to reenlist for at least four additional years of service. You will have the option of receiving the bonus in a lump sum or in annual installments over the next four years. If you do not complete four additional years of service, you will be required to repay this money.

**Lump Sum Payments of Certain Retired Pay.** Once you reach retirement, you will have the option to start receiving full retirement pay immediately. You can also elect to receive a 25 percent lump sum pension payment with retirement payments based on 75 percent of calculated retirement pay or a 50 percent lump sum pension payment with retirement payments based on 50 percent of calculated retired pay. For both lump sum options, retired pay will be restored to the full amount once you turn 67.

Though future pensions will be reduced, officials estimate that approximately 75 percent of service members in the new system will leave active duty with some form of retirement benefit. That constitutes a marked increase from the 17 percent who serve the necessary 20+ years to qualify for a pension in the current system. It will be important for service members to take full advantage of the matching TSP contributions in order to help compensate for the pension reduction. It will also be important for those service members who get to choose between staying in the current retirement system and moving to the new system in 2018 to carefully assess their individual needs and objectives before making a decision. A financial advisor who is familiar with military benefits may be able to help.

Jill Pietrusinski is a Financial Advisor at First Command Financial Services Inc. in O'Fallon, IL. This article was written by First Command Financial Services, Inc., and it is intended to promote the professional services of the company and its affiliates.

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# Senior Advisor Corner

Written by CMSgt Derek T. Crowder

## TAKE THE CHIEF'S CHALLENGE

Greetings AFSA Chapter 872. It is hard to believe we are almost half of the way through 2016. Where does the time go? Sometimes I feel each day pass so quickly and I can become overcome with events and lose sight of what is important to us as military members. If you are reading this, thank you for being a member of AFSA, as you know your membership counts. Your membership counts to not only those on Capitol Hill but also to those you serve with every day. You are not just a number, you are a member of the family known as AFSA. A family we all should believe in and work to make it grow. Our organization cares for each and every one of you and goes to great lengths to make sure you are taken care of while you wear the uniform as well as when you hang it up for the last time. I want you to think about what being a member of the AFSA family means to you and the reason you joined AFSA. Each of us have a different reason for joining. For me, it was when I was in ALS and I joined because everyone else was. I wasn't really involved the first year and let my membership expire. It wasn't until a few years later when I had a supervisor explain to me who they were and what they did for me. I was amazed an organization would work so hard on preserving the things we were promised upon

enlisting such as education benefits, healthcare, etc....

Often times I talk to individuals and they are surprised AFSA is behind gaining and preserving our benefits. Knowledge is power and the more you have the more you can share with others. As you reflect on YOUR reasons whatever they may be I ask each of you to pencil some time each week to talk about AFSA, even if it is only ten minutes with someone at work or in passing at the Commissary. I challenge you to not only talk to members, but also those you know who are not. It is our job to help others see the benefits of being a member as well as continuing their current membership. As I always say, you can reach most people by hitting on the big four: education, retirement, pay, and healthcare. Even if you only reach one person, that is one more than we had before and that is a win for team AFSA. Let's work together to make our family grow one member at a time...Give a hoot, go recruit!



# VETERANS VIGIL RUN 2015



On November 6th, 2015, Chapter 872 led Team Scott and the local community with the 6th annual Veterans Vigil Run. The 24-hour event began at 1700 and concluded at 1700 the next day paying tribute to all veterans, past and present. Keeping that focus in mind, our chapter also selected Lt. Roslyn "Roz" Schulte from nearby Ladue, MO as our honoree for this year's event. Lt. Schulte was killed in Afghanistan by a roadside bomb on 20 May 2009. She is the first female Academy graduate to be killed by enemy action.

She was posthumously awarded the National Intelligence Medal for Valor and the Hawaii Medal of Honor. She also had three buildings named in her honor. In 2010, The Air Force Academy created the Lt. Roslyn Schulte Cadet Award to recognize a cadet who "Embodies the same impeccable character, unwavering leadership, and spirit of service that distinguished Lieutenant Schulte."



Col Green, Vice Commander 375 AMW, kicked off the event by providing opening remarks. He then joined Lt Schulte's parents (Bob and Susie) in a ceremonial lap to start the vigil. Showing their strong support for our veterans, three mayors from the surrounding communities were in attendance and participated in the ceremonial lap. For 24-hrs, Team Scott and the local community carried the flags around the 1/2 mile track. Col Lenderman, Commander 375 AMW, concluded the event by providing closing remarks. In all, approximately 400 runners and volunteers participated in the event and completed 118 miles. Following the event, Lt Schulte's parents expressed their gratitude saying, "What a wonderful and symbolic event. We were so honored to participate and even more honored that Roz was honored."

# A HEART OF GOLD,

## CARING HEARTS PROGRAM

From September to December 2015 MSgt Larry Adams has led the Caring Hearts program ensuring it is filled to capacity with AFSA volunteers every month. Caring Hearts is a local food drive charity which AFSA Chapter 872 supports on a monthly basis. It is under the direction of the First United Methodist Church in O'Fallon.



Our chapter assists in assembling and filling the food boxes at the O'Fallon location. Volunteers also meet up at a warehouse in Mascoutah to distribute food to the Nashville location. The churches in these two communities utilize this program in order to purchase essential sustenance for their underprivileged members and elderly homebound. In addition to assisting those in need, local citizens can order boxes if they wish to purchase food in bulk. The fresh meat and produce in a typical box is worth about \$60. However, the food boxes assembled by the program are available for only \$26.

The Caring Hearts food drive usually occurs every fourth Saturday at the church. During the months of September through December, 97 volunteers from AFSA Chapter 872 and their family members filled 439 food boxes, a total of \$24,000 of food distributed to the O'Fallon and Nashville communities. After over 23 years, the program ended in December. Discussions are currently underway to potentially restart the program under different management mid/late 2016.

This program has been a blessing to the community!

Thank you MSgt Adams and chapter members for your invaluable support!







The flagship event for the Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA) is its annual Professional Airmen's Conference (PAC) and International Convention.

The PAC normally convenes in the third quarter of the calendar year at a location somewhere within the 48 contiguous United States. During the PAC the AFSA conducts its general membership business. The AFSA delegates, general membership, and International Committees share invaluable information, discuss and ratify such things as AFSA's Legislative Platform for the coming year and other goals and objectives.

In addition to AFSA's general membership business, the AFSA is proud to host past and present military and congressional senior leaders as part of our professional development forums.

These forums consist of keynote addresses from senior congressional decision makers, Department of Defense and Air Force senior leadership, war historians, and other professional speakers, just to name a few. Each speaker provides a rich insight to the Air Force's past, its present and its future. Moreover, these forums continue to build on the strong, solid foundation of our professional Total Air Force enlisted corps.

Go to <https://members.hqafsa.org> to find out more about the PAC.

**The 2016 Professional Airmen's Conference will convene in San Antonio, Texas August 20-24, 2016.**

