

Air Advisor Memorial Fund
<http://www.airadvisormemorial.com/>

7 March 2016

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My name is Ken Arteaga and I am the President of the Air Advisor Memorial Foundation here at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst (JB MDL), New Jersey. Airmen in all career fields travel to JB MDL from bases all around the world to earn their Air Advisor qualification at the USAF Expeditionary Operations School (EOS) prior to deploying to partner nations in the Middle East, Africa, South America, and the Pacific. During their month at the USAF EOS, students learn fieldcraft skills, language, region and culture studies, and Air Advisor core knowledge.

While at JB MDL, our students make South Central New Jersey home, by eating at local restaurants, visiting local attractions and social venues while building lifelong friendships with their classmates. These friendships are critical, as these classmates soon become battle buddies when they deploy overseas shortly after graduation. As Air Advisors, these Airmen work and live closely with our partner nations' personnel to develop their own aviation resources. This is an extremely important, and at times, dangerous mission, with the ultimate goal to improve our partners' capability and capacity so they can better defend themselves and work more effectively with US forces.

On 27 April 2011, an Afghan Air Force officer walked into an office at the Kabul Int'l Airport and opened fire with his 9MM pistol, killing eight USAF Air Advisors and one retired US Army Lt Col contractor; the gunman was also killed. That event inspired Col John "Oly" Holm to work with the local community and build the Air Advisor Memorial as a tribute to his friends, the Advisors who were killed that day, and to any future fallen Air Advisors. At the time, Col Holm was the first Commandant of the newly established Air Advisor Academy which has since closed. Fortunately, the Air Advisor training mission remained and has now moved under the USAF Expeditionary Center's Expeditionary Operations School. In 2015, two more Advisors were added to the Memorial wall as a result of a helicopter accident in Afghanistan.

Current and former Air Advisors identify JB MDL as the home of the USAF Air Advisor. This is where they train; this is where the Memorial should be. Since Air Advisors come from every career field and every Major Command in the Air Force, this is the one place where we can honor the Fallen together. Throughout the year, the Memorial hosts a stream of visitors who pay their respects and honor our fallen Advisors. Each class of Air Advisor students is introduced to the Memorial and told the story of what happened, and almost all Distinguished Visitors include a stop at the Memorial as part of their agenda. More importantly, the lessons learned in the heartbreaking events that inspired the creation of the Memorial have been incorporated into the USAF EOS' training programs.

Please consider contributing to the Air Advisor Memorial Fund so we can continue to properly honor our great Americans who paid the ultimate price on behalf of our country.

Sincerely,

Ken Arteaga
President, Air Advisor Memorial Foundation