

Major Nicole Lauth Keating

United States Air Force, 86th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron

Medals: Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal, Aerial Achievement Medal, Air and Space Commendation Medal with Bronze "C" (Combat) Device and 4 Oak Leaf Clusters, Air and Space Achievement Medal with 4 Oak Leaf Clusters, Army Achievement Medal with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster, Meritorious Unit Award with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters, Air and Space Outstanding Unit Award with Bronze "V" (Valor) Device and 4 Oak Leaf Clusters, Combat Readiness Medal with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters, Air Force Good Conduct Medal (enlisted) with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with 2 Service Stars, Iraq Campaign Medal with 1 Service Star, Global War On Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Armed Forces Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal with 1 Service Star, Air and Space Overseas Ribbon (Long tour), Air and Space Expeditionary Service Ribbon with Gold Border with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster, Air and Space Longevity Service Award with 5 Oak Leaf Clusters, USAF NCO PME Graduate Ribbon, Air and Space Training Ribbon with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster, NATO Medal.



43rd Aeromedical
Evacuation Squadron Patch.

MHS Class of 2001

Nicole Lauth wanted adventure and travel when she enlisted in the United States Air Force at age 18. The educational benefits were a close second. She had just graduated from Memorial High School when she and a friend boarded their first flight ever without parents, bound for San Antonio and Basic Training. For the next 24 years, Nicole experienced the adventure she sought – that and much more! Eight ground, air, and combat deployments across the world, a high risk, elite, respected position as an Aeromedical Evacuation Clinical Nurse Specialist and Flight Commander, bachelor's and master's degrees in nursing, rising in rank from an Airman Basic to a commission as an officer and a promotion to Major, and a family – with her husband, Bill, and their three children – Evey, Nolan, and Wexford. To cap it off, Nicole was inducted into the St. Marys Memorial High School Alumni Foundation Hall of Fame for Military Service to Country in 2026, becoming the first woman inducted in this category. Nicole's story is one of dedication, hard work, determination, courage, caring, achievement, and success. She is truly a role model.

Nicole was born in St. Marys on February 12, 1983, to Daryl and Stephanie Lauth. She played volleyball, joined the newly formed Rider swim team, and pitched & played first base for the Rider girls' softball team, coached by her aunt, Sue Lauth Grothouse. She debated going to college for Early Childhood Education to be a schoolteacher and

Nicole Lauth
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Nicole arriving at Basic Training and early days at Lackland Air Force Base.

playing softball at the University of Findlay, but two days after she turned 18, she and a high school classmate/best friend, Rachel Sullivan, decided to enlist in the United States Air Force. Nicole was inspired to join by Chief Master Sergeant (CMSgt) Pam Keith, the aunt of her friend Kellie Sweigart. Because CMSgt Keith served in the Air Force, Nicole and Rachel decided to follow in her footsteps. Nicole enlisted under a six-year contract and hoped to receive a free education using the benefits provided to service members.



Nicole's Recruit portrait.

Nicole graduated from St. Marys Memorial High School in 2001. She was processed at the Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) in Columbus, sworn in on June 25, 2001, and left the following day for Basic Training at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas. She had flown only twice before and had never traveled anywhere without her parents, so traveling over 1,000 miles to Texas was both scary and exciting at the same time. Upon arriving, they were bused to Lackland AFB, where she remained until she graduated. She credits her recruiter in Lima, Staff Sergeant (SSgt) Jason Jones, for preparing her properly for Basic Training, since one of the first things recruits were instructed to do was to hold their luggage up

with one arm extended horizontally. The recruiter had warned Nicole and Rachel to pack lightly. They did, but they noticed other girls with heavy luggage struggling and were grateful for the recruiter's advice.

Nicole and 61 girls in her flight completed Basic Training that summer. Nicole enjoyed this time but missed home, especially after her friend Rachel fell ill and had to leave. Her recruiter had suggested that Nicole might like to try Imagery Reconnaissance or Air Traffic Control (ATC) school.

Nicole attended ATC training at Kessler AFB in Biloxi, Mississippi, but after completing the tower portion, she discovered that Radar Approach Control (RAPCON) ATC was not for her. She was given a book/list of jobs that was over a foot high and told to list six other jobs she was interested in. She was surprised to see that all of them were in the medi-



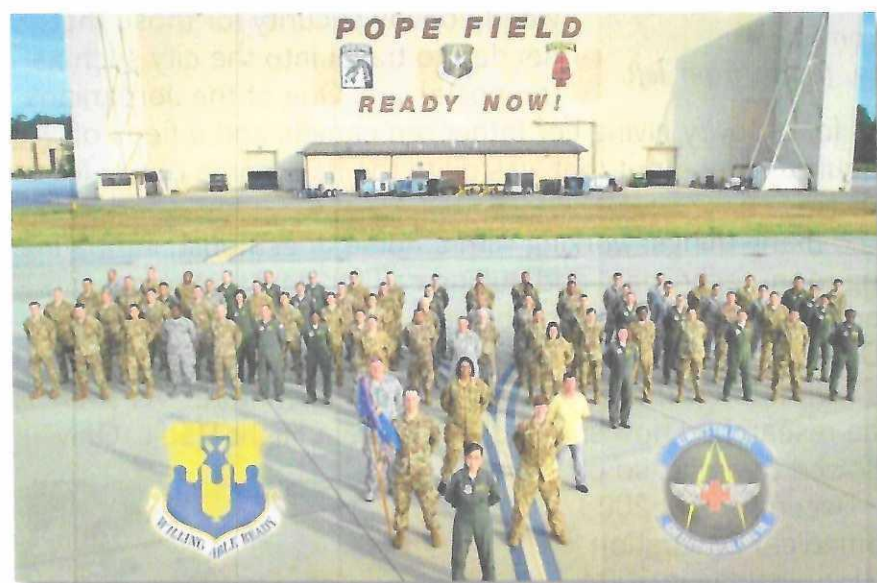
Graduates of the Medical Service Apprentice Course at Sheppard AFB. Nicole is back row, second from left.

cal field. In fact, her number one choice was to become a medic/ EMT, and she was selected for training. She went to Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, Texas, where she was in the Medical Service Apprentice Course, Class # 01116. She completed her Phase 1 and 2 clinicals working in the hospital there. She was promoted to Airman First Class (A1C) on August 10, 2001.

In May 2002, she received her first duty station assignment



A C-130 Hercules goes airborne. It's a four-engine turboprop military transport aircraft produced in many variants.



The 43rd Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron at Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina.



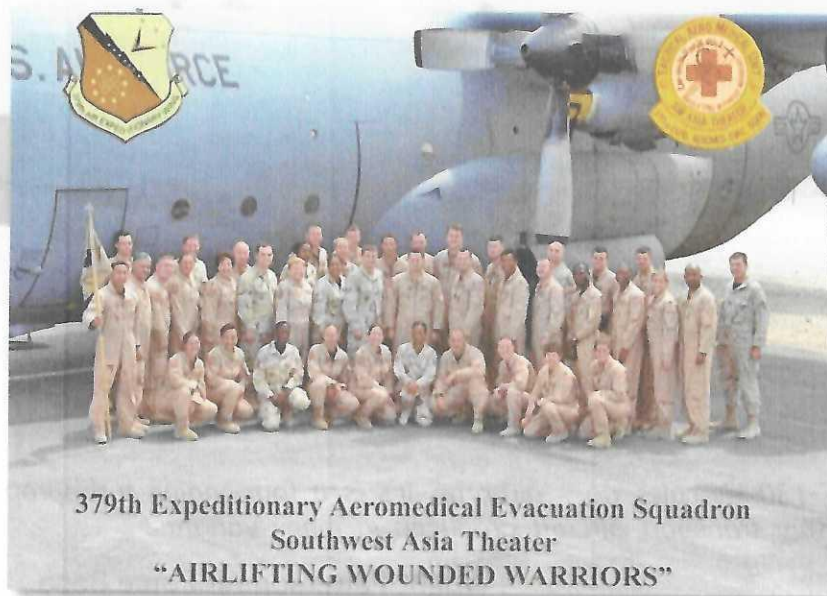
Nicole (sitting, middle) with crew members.

– Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. There, she worked in the Red Team Primary Care Clinic for two years, from 2002 to 2004. During this time, she was selected to serve a six-month stint on the Honor Guard detail, where she served as a base ceremonial guard, trained in specialized teams such as color guards, body bearers, and firing parties, supporting regional veteran funerals and local base ceremonies across five states. Nicole said, “That was quite the humbling experience, and I still cry sometimes thinking about services especially when Taps is played.... I learned a lot and it made me see

and respect things just a little bit differently. It was an honor.” Her main duty during funerals was to fold the flag. She didn’t present the flag to the family because she was often emotionally overcome and didn’t want to make the service about her.

During her two-year duty station in Dayton, A1C Lauth received orders for her first deployment in January 2003. She didn’t know where she was going plus, she wasn’t allowed to tell anyone anyway. She found out the destination when they were packed and loaded on the C-17 aircraft. They were headed to Al-Jafr, Jordan, as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. When the 444th Expeditionary Medical Squadron arrived at King Feisal Air Force Base, A1C Lauth and a team of 82 others built the hospital from the ground up – tents, equip-

**Nicole Lauth
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Members of the 379th Expeditionary Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron. Nicole is front row, fourth from left.

asked for her hand in marriage in return for a dowry giving her father ten camels and a flock of sheep. Nicole found this humorous but quickly found out that was quite the handsome dowry for a wife; she politely declined.

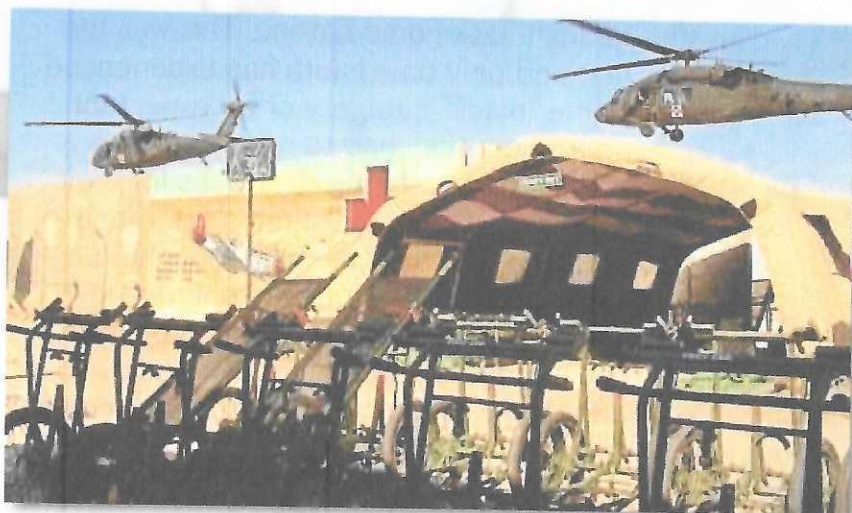
This was her first experience with so many things: working with a nurse anesthetist, intubating her first patient, working as an operating room technician, and pulling call for dental emergencies. She was able to assist in procedures for the Jordanians but the biggest imprint on her was on the operational side where she saw Flight Doctors, Flight Nurses and Respiratory Therapists in action and thought, "What job are they doing? I want to do that too! I wanted more adventure!" As soon as she returned to Wright-Patterson, she researched how she could become a Flight Medic. Only Senior Airmen (SrA) and above were allowed to apply, so on the very day she was pinned as a SrA – December 10, 2003 – she applied to become a part of Aeromedical Evacuation (AE). She began training just after her 21st birthday in 2004 and completed a six-week Flight Nurse/Aeromedical Evacuation Technician (FN/AET) course at Brooks AFB in Texas. From there, she completed water survival training and SERE (Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape) school, then was assigned to the 43rd Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron (AES) at Pope Air Force Base (AFB) in North Carolina. This would be her home duty station for the next four years.

At Pope AFB, SrA Lauth worked several jobs – one as a "Logi," aka in Logistics, where she was responsible for the squadron's annual funds, accounting, government purchase card, along with issuing mobility gear for training and real-world deployments, and purchasing readiness items like flak vests, rucksacks, and gear. This was all in addition to her job as a Flight Medic (interchangeable with AET), where she completed training flights twice a week and went out in the field quarterly with Special Forces training on dirt runways at Camp McCall. At first, the Air Force did not have universal qualifications for Flight Medics on

ment, chow hall, supplies, operating rooms, showers, etc. She was glad to find a friend from her days in ATC school who was from Piqua, Ohio, and had been deployed to Jordan as well. Nicole's job as a Medic was to support the Australians, British, fighter pilots, Delta Force (it was allowed to be discussed at the time), and others in Jordan. During this deployment, she had the opportunity to be a Security Forces Augmentee and went through a brief training while there. She was a "military cop" working at the gates, pulling perimeter patrols, and provided convoy security for those that needed to travel into the city such as the postal van. One of the Jordanians



Nicole with daughter Evey and adopted dog, Hurricane.



Above: Welcome sign at Balad. Left: The covered canopy called Hero's Highway. Connecting the helipad to the ER, the interior was covered with American flags to reassure the wounded they were in friendly hands.



The solemn transfer ceremony during the Balad deployment for the fallen was very emotional for Nicole.

with Marines and Pararescue. Here is where she first shot a 50-cal gun and, from the air, was instructed to hit anything but people and camels in the desert; no worries, though—she didn't shoot anyone, just sand. A third deployment in 2005 to Louisiana provided humanitarian relief after Hurricane Katrina. The Air Force mobilized Active Duty, Reserve, and National Guard units as part of Joint Task Force Katrina. They provided life-saving assistance to patients stuck in hospitals with no electricity, working equipment, or running water; they set up a triage area to decide who to treat and when, then coordinated patient transport. They established a Mobile Air Staging Facility at the Delta Concourse at the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport. They slept on cots with no potable water for days, helped set up tents, procured luggage tug carts to transport patients to aircraft, and assisted families with evacuation before the 82nd Airborne arrived as part

the different aircraft. Personnel had to train and qualify on each aircraft individually. Nicole trained mainly on the C-130 Hercules and C-141 Starlifter at Pope AFB and the C-9 Nightingale at Scott AFB in St. Louis. The C-9 Nightingale was an aircraft that was specifically dedicated and outfitted for medical evacuations. The C-141 and C-9 have since been retired and are on display at the Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio. Eventually, the Air Force adopted universal training and qualifications for AE.

In 2005, SrA Lauth received orders for her second deployment. She spent five months at Al-Udeid AB, Qatar (Operation Iraqi Freedom), supporting operations this time as a Flight Medic. That deployment included being forward deployed to Djibouti in the Horn of Africa (Operation Enduring Freedom), where she flew on MH-53 helicopters

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FN-AET Course Class 2010 Echo USAF School of Aerospace Medicine grads. Nicole was an Instructor and seated third from right.

Katrina; he became the squadron's unofficial mascot. For this deployment, Lauth was awarded the Humanitarian Service Medal.

Somewhere in 2005, Nicole managed to complete Airman Leadership School and became a squadron flight instructor. Nicole met one of her best friends, Kelly Dean Sampson, during Hurricane Katrina; they were also placed in the same Airman Leadership course together. Kelly is one of those lifelong friends who connected through a trauma bond; Kelly was also commissioned, retired two years before Nicole did, and was the presiding officer who retired Nicole from the Air Force.

Nicole's next deployment in 2006 came about unexpectedly, but she always had her bags packed and ready to leave on 24 hours' notice. Her Chief, or CMSgt, called and asked her what she was doing the next couple of months. Nicole had been promoted to SSgt on March 1, 2006, and wasn't scheduled to deploy. She knew, though, that Kelly was in Balad, Iraq, and immediately learned she had arrived in theater pregnant even though she and her husband were not expecting. This meant that Kelly had to return to the United States. So, Nicole found herself deployed to Balad five days later, where she flew missions throughout Iraq to Tikrit, Mosul, Baghdad, and other places to pick up injured service members and medevac them to the

of Joint Task Force Katrina. This was the first and only time Lauth has experienced a true "black" category or an expectant area where they had to ration supplies and make moral and ethical choices for their patients. They also created a pet triage area and cared for animals brought in. She adopted a German Shepherd-Chow mix puppy that slept under her cot while she was there and named him Hurricane after her experience with Joint Task Force



Promotion to 2nd Lieutenant with husband Bill, Nolan, Evey and MSG Craig Cooker, her first salute.



2nd Lt. Lauth Keating pictured with her family, earned her degree in Nursing in 2012.

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Brooks City AFB when Nicole was a school house Instructor, 2008-2010. It was where she was selected for the NECP and met her husband. Her Chief Nurse/Commander is kneeling 2nd from the left. She helped Nicole through the program and later passed away from breast cancer. She holds a special place in Nicole's heart. Nicole's best friend, Angi, is in the center with her. They were the last group of instructors to work at Brooks City AFB. The base was closed and operations were moved to Wright Patterson AFB.

and time was essential.

She returned to Pope AFB and resumed her duties as a Flight Medic Instructor in the Aircrew Training office. Shortly thereafter, she received orders to deploy again in August 2006 – this time to Bagram, Afghanistan. She lived in metal huts with blankets as walls and worked as a flight medic on a 3-person crew.

On a C-130 mission in September 2006, her crew flew into Kandahar Airfield; they were pulled from their flight duties to respond to a casualty event (MASCAL) with the Emergency room staff from Kandahar Airfield Hospital (KAH). NATO and Canadian-led forces were engaged in Operation Medusa, a major offensive against Taliban insurgents in the Panjwayi district approximately 30 kilometers west of Kandahar City — at the time, the most significant land battle ever undertaken by NATO. The intense fighting produced heavy casualties among coalition forces, the Afghan

main hospital. She accrued combat hours during this tour, flying into dangerous situations and treating serious injuries under stressful conditions. Some of the medevac missions included being part of dignified transfers of soldiers killed in action. She recalled one occasion where an Air Force Security Forces Humvee had been hit by an IED in Talil. She was part of a Medevac team flying survivors to Balad and then on to Germany. The injured service members were loaded first, then another team loaded the human remains in a proper, dignified transfer ceremony. It was a humbling experience, one that brought tears to Nicole's eyes, as she silently witnessed those killed in action being brought onboard. It is no longer common to perform a dignified transfer on the same aircraft as survivors/patients, but aircraft were limited,

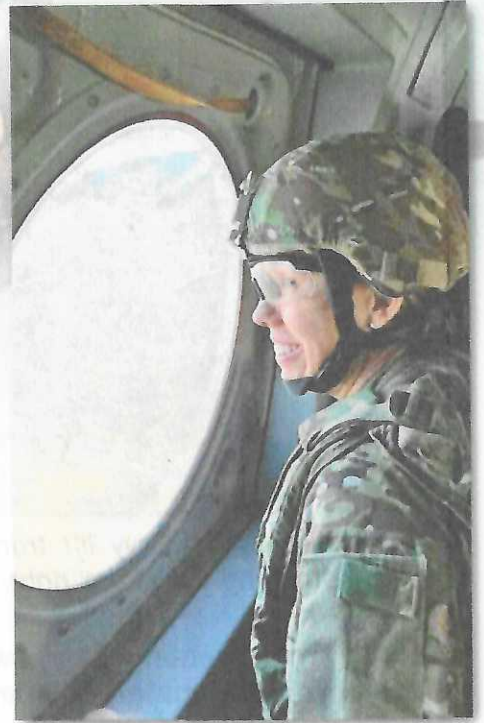


Class 17F, Squadron Officer School. Nicole is pictured in the back row, second from right.

National Army, and insurgents alike, triggering a MASCAL surge at the KAH. Run primarily by the Canadian Armed Forces, the KAH was one of the busiest trauma centers in the world, and the rapid influx of wounded soldiers and civilians required medical staff to perform life-saving interventions under extreme combat conditions. NATO declared Operation Medusa concluded on September 17, 2006, announcing the Taliban force massing near Kandahar had been destroyed and driven

Nicole Lauth
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served as the Flight Nurse in charge of a 5-person crew and the Medical Crew Director. The medevac crew flew on C-130s and C-17s, with a few Classified (now unclassified) missions on Chinook helicopters and MC-130 Special Operations aircraft supporting the point of injury pickup and transport of injured service members out of smaller airfields, where they would be transferred to larger aircraft to get them back to a forward operating base (FOB) and eventually back to Craig Hospital in Bagram to be stabilized. If they needed further treatment, they would be transported by large-body aircraft with another AE Crew to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center (LRMC) in Germany. These special operations missions provided medical support for Army Quick Reaction Forces (QRFs), Rangers, and others who were activated and knew casualties were possible. Onboard the C-130 Hercules, Nicole triaged patients at the tail of the aircraft, managed patient loads, calculated required amounts of oxygen, medication, electrical amperage for all equipment, and supplies for the aircraft and an operating room on the Chinooks to perform immediate life-saving surgeries. The aircraft would then fly to smaller "hubs" or FOBs such as Harat, Kandahar, Kabul, and more, or, depending on the severity, provide life-sustaining treatment en route to Craig Joint Theater Hospital in Bagram. "Our job as a crew was to create a load plan based on the Patient Movement Requests (PMRs). Before our flights, we go into a pre-brief/crew brief, and we go through diagnoses, injuries, medications" They planned where



Lauth Keating, now a Major, on one of her many missions.



Building the hospital in Jordan January, 2003.

patients would be placed on the aircraft based on their injuries. "We essentially bring our hospital with us in backpacks and on litters. When the mission ends, we break it down after all the patients are off-loaded." During this same deployment, Capt Keating was selected to lead an AE Liaison team (AELT), taking them to Kandahar, Afghanistan, where they trained Navy, Army, and Polish doctors, paramedics, and medical staff on how to conduct AE operations or "call on us" when needed. That deployment ended in February 2018.

Keating was deployed one last time to Ramstein Air Base (AB), Germany, at the

end of 2018 supporting CENTCOM. She lived in military dorms in Germany and sometimes flew "long hauls" to Al Udeid, Qatar, taking patients to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center and then from Germany to Andrews AFB in Maryland. From there, patients would be transported by bus to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) or flown further to Brooke Army Medical Center to receive treatment for severe burns. That deployment ended in February 2019. Capt Keating applied to the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT) to further her education to become an Adult-Gerontology Clinical Nurse Specialist (AG CNS). The Air Force sent her to the University of Colorado Denver - Anschutz Medical Campus in August 2019, attached to Buckley AFB, for two years of full-time civilian school. She and her family fell in love with Colorado. She completed her Master of Science degree in August 2021. Over the July 4th weekend in 2021, when her

**Nicole Lauth
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Tight Quarters & Aeromedical Life



Practice evacuation.



Tight quarters jammed with personnel, equipment and patients.



Loading aircraft and posing with crew in 2017.



A critical care patient is pictured with all of their medical equipment secured to a litter on a C-17.



Inside Nicole's tent while in Jordan, 2003.



Unloading a patient with their required medical gear from an Ambus. Nicole is fourth from left. Right: View from inside an Australian Chinook. Crew would sit on the tail and were tethered in as they flew through Jordan.



Nicole Lauth
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sisters and their families were visiting them in CO before they moved to Germany, she received a call from her Commander saying she had been selected for promotion to Major. She was honored and grateful her family could be there to celebrate with her.

Major Keating's last duty station was with the 86th AES at Ramstein AB, Germany, where she and her family remained until her retirement in 2025. Her Air Force duty title or designation was AE Clinical Nurse Specialist (AE CNS) once she became board-certified on November 11, 2021. For the first year at Ramstein AB, she was the only Aeromedical Evacuation Clinical Nurse Specialist (AE CNS) and developed the job description for herself and future personnel. One of the responsibilities was to translate evidence-based research into nursing practice, develop training plans for the squadron, and draft protocols for the use of medications and treatments in flight. Due to her vast AE experience as both a prior enlisted member and an officer, she was selected by her command and once again

found herself in the Aircrew Training Office, but this time as the Training Flight Commander. One year after leading her team to multiple Air Mobility Command (AMC) annual awards, she was promoted to Chief of Standards and Evaluations, where she provided clinical oversight, flight evaluations, and consultation for the entire squadron of 103 personnel. She also served as a consultant for evidence-based practice, process improvement initiatives, and clinically focused professional development programs. In this role, she served as Interim Chief Nurse, overseeing career plans and mentoring all medics and nurses. She also conducted research and data collection on missions from Germany to Andrews AFB in MD and then bused to WRNMMC for the 711th Human Performance Wing, based at Wright-Patterson AFB, OH, on how certain medications affect patients' oxygen levels in flight at different altitudes and cabin pressurization.

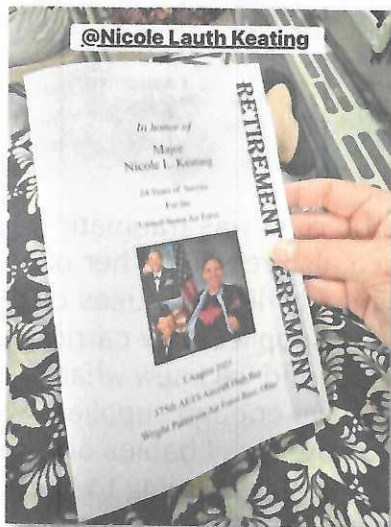
The Air Force is the Department of Defense's single manager for global Aeromedical Evacuation. All branches use cargo planes to move patients, but the Air Force provides dedicated medical crews and specialized equipment that turn heavy-lift cargo planes into flying intensive care units, and it is the only service with a Clinical Nurse Specialist on evacuation missions. Major Keating was tasked with developing and training the other branches on the unique dangers and challenges of treating injured patients during evacuation. The body reacts differently in flight at high altitudes, and Major Keating had significant experience and training that others could learn from. Major Keating created a new curriculum with staff members from the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS), located in Bethesda, Maryland, and attached to WRNMMC, which is still taught at the school and in Europe today. She is also adjunct faculty at Uniformed Services University (USUHS), where she teaches this

Nicole Lauth
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Much deserved family time in 2018.

Major Lauth Keating's Retirement



subject to new
Clinical Nurse

Specialist students from the Air Force, Army, and Navy.

While Nicole was in Germany in 2021, service members at Ramstein AB built a tent city on the flight line next to her squadron. The tents housed thousands of refugees from Afghanistan, reminding her of the tent city from her time in Iraq and Hurricane Katrina. "It was like a mini- Hurricane Katrina combined with Bagram, Afghanistan." She recalled the day in 2021 when she was at Andrews AFB trying to get a return flight to Ramstein AFB. That's when "everything exploded at Ramstein while we were away..." because of the agreement the U.S. entered into (Operation Allies Refuge) that provided removal of Afghan interpreters and select Afghan citizens. The withdrawal from Afghanistan began on May 1, 2021. All U.S. troops were required to leave Afghanistan by September 11, 2021. Nicole recalled the general "unpre-

Nicole Lauth
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Major Lauth Keating's Career In Pictures



Nicole Lauth
Keating

paredness” and chaos of the moment as they tried their best to “load and go.” It was traumatic to see families split up during the rush and chaos of the evacuation, which also reminded her of her experience following Hurricane Katrina. The Air Force loaded approximately 400 evacuees on a C-17 as quickly as they could with only one Flight Medic or Nurse and the supplies they carried in their backpack to care for them during flight. “We knew what we could do, and we knew what we should do, but we had to pick and choose because we didn’t have enough supplies, food, or water.” There was no food, no water, and no air conditioning. Small babies and others were passing out from overheating; basic life support was provided, trying to keep as many people alive as possible. She also describes how traumatic it was to see those left behind, running after the aircraft, trying to hang onto it as it took off. “As many people as possible were loaded onto the aircraft. It was heartbreaking to see all those people running and hanging on the aircraft. It was just mind-blowing and devastating to have to leave people behind that helped the U.S. over the years.” She was awarded a Service Star to her Humanitarian Service Medal for Operation Allies Refuge (Afghanistan). “Humanitarian missions ended up being one of our main focuses in Germany.”

Shortly after the Afghanistan troop withdrawal, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine began. Her squadron members flew all over Europe – but never into Ukraine. Major Keating and the AE teams picked up and transported injured and ill U.S. service

Nicole Lauth Keating



One of the many achievements by Major Lauth Keating was her completion of Chemotherapy after battling breast cancer.

excitement and had become a bit of an adrenaline junkie, but the constant state of being on alert was beginning to wear on her. She was having difficulty sleeping and was hardly ever home. She started to have frequent nocturnal panic attacks from years of taking care of others and the trauma she had seen over the years. As an advanced practice nurse, she recognized the signs of PTSD, and she saw the effect that constantly being gone was having on her and her family. She thought, "I still love it, but I'm done. It's time for my family to be the only thing I spend my energy taking care of."

Then one day, she did it. After more than two decades in the Air Force, she "clicked the button" on the computer stating her intention to retire. A week later, she was diagnosed with breast cancer, and retirement was put on hold. She went through MRIs, biopsies, surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation, and finally got the report she hoped for – no evidence of disease. Going through all the ups and downs with the diagnosis, she recognized something that was missing but very needed – a Breast Cancer Support group for all military-affiliated personnel over in Europe. With the guidance of her aunt, Traci Lauth, and another best friend, Michelle Gonzalez, she created the Support Group and still helps run it to this day. She had a retirement ceremony on August 1, 2025, to celebrate with her extended military and Lauth family on a mock-up C-17 at Wright-Patter-

members and family members from those surrounding countries to Germany for further treatment. Her squadron members rarely saw each other as they made 4-5 aeromedical evacuation missions each week throughout Europe, not including training missions. They were usually on Bravo alert. Bravo alert meant that they were on alert for 48 hours and if they received a call during that time, they had three hours from the time of the call to pack, set up the hospital onboard the aircraft, and take off. She and another coworker trained Poland's Aeromedical Evacuation team for 2 years. They helped Poland outfit train cars as hospital rooms to transport patients out of Ukraine, since flying in Ukrainian airspace was too dangerous. They found their way to include Poland and AE in Army training exercises to help NATO countries with their evacuation plans, including one of the largest exercises that takes place yearly in Romania and surrounding countries. She led a team of Air Force subject-matter experts over two years and, at one point, briefed the Polish Prime Minister.

She and another coworker/friend, TSgt Tiandra Reid Robinson, were tasked as exercise planners for the Air Force side of African Lion. This involved a year of working with and training Moroccan medical staff on the patient evacuation process.

Nicole acknowledges that she has always loved



Nicole (right) with her sisters.

**Nicole Lauth
Keating**



Nolan, Nicole, Wexford James, Bill and Evey pose for a family picture on November 28, 2020.

Force and her country. She is credited with 891 flight hours and 275 combat hours. She earned her Senior Flight Nurse and Senior Enlisted Aircrew Badges flying on C-130E/H/J, MC-130 HJ, C-141B, C-17A, KC-135R/T, and C-21A. She earned numerous awards (see the Medals listed at the beginning of this story). In addition, Major Lauth Keating's achievements include co-authoring publications on "Enhanced Emergency Preparedness Training for Clinical Nurse Specialist Students," Clinical Nurse Specialist, The International Journal of Advanced Nursing Practice, March 2025; "A CNS-led Collaboration to Enhanced Operational Training: A Transitions of Care Course for Military APRN Students," poster presentation, Nursing Practice Oversight Court; and "Care of

son AFB in Dayton. Start and end, full circle. Her official retirement date was August 31, 2025.

Nicole and her family now live in Littleton, Colorado, where she is pursuing her Doctor of Nursing Practice degree with a focus on Veteran and Military Healthcare Leadership. She hopes to complete the doctorate in December 2027. She is also completing her post-graduate education certification to be a Professor. One of her goals is to teach the courses she helped develop in the Air Force. She will start her Doctoral Student Teaching Fellowship in the fall of 2026.

Nicole dedicated 24 years, 2 months, and 4 days to the Air

Critically Injured Patients with Epidural Pain Management," in the Journal of Peri-Anesthesia Nursing (2021).



Amid Nicole's final ribbon rack and medals at retirement, she points to her banner on Spring Street.



**Nicole Lauth
Keating**

WEATHER
Clearing And Much Colder Tonight
Friday Fair And Very Cold
VOL. 52, NO. 156

THE EVENING LEADER

ST. MARYS, OHIO, THURSDAY, DEC. 21, 1944

ONLY NEWSPAPER
COMPLETELY COVERING WAR-
REN AUGLAIR COUNTY
Single 40 C. Year \$1.75

SHOWDOWN BATTLE RAGING IN BELGIUM

Leyte Campaign Nears End

**ONLY MILE GAP
REMAINS BETWEEN
CONVERGING YANK
FORCES AT ORMOC**

**Enemy "Cohesion is Com-
pletely Broken"**

BATTLE TWO MONTHS

Hard fighting dominated Leyte campaign from the time of the first landing on the island of Leyte, when the U.S. Navy landed on the beach at Ormoc.

WAR BRIEFS

London, Dec. 21.—The German drive in the Belgian city of Liege has been halted, the Allies announced today.

At the same time, German broadcasts said that they were attacking the city of Liege, but that they were being repulsed.

TODAY IS FINAL DAY FOR "A-13" GASOLINE COUPONS: 14 GOOD DEC. 22

Today is the last day for the use of "A-13" gasoline coupons. After today, the coupons will no longer be valid.

The coupons will be valid until December 22, 1944.

J. WILLIARD COIL AND EVELYN MILLER OF PHOENIX, ARIZ., MARRIED DEC. 20

The wedding ceremony was held at the Phoenix Hotel in Phoenix, Arizona, on December 20, 1944.

ST. MARYS TO PLAY SIDNEY TONIGHT IN BASKETBALL GAMES AT MEMORIAL

The St. Marys basketball team will play two games at the Memorial Gymnasium tonight.

Wife of Comedian Joe Penner Relieved Of \$20,000 in Jewels

Paterson, N. J., Dec. 21.—The wife of comedian Joe Penner, who was relieved of \$20,000 worth of jewelry, was today reported to be in good health.

MAGIC NUTCRACKER, AN OPERETTA, IS TO BE PRESENTED AT NEW BREMEN

The Magic Nutcracker, an operetta, is to be presented at the New Bremen Theatre on December 22, 1944.

FIRST ARMY MAKING DESPERATE STAND HURLING WEAPONS AND STRENGTH AGAINST NAZIS IN "WINNER TAKE ALL" BATTLE

Gen. Eisenhower Still Maintaining Padlocked Secrecy on Course of Developments With Both Enemy and Allied Broadcasts Contradicting One Another in Every Respect

MAY BE DECIDING BATTLE OF WAR

Gen. Eisenhower's command, "Win or Die," has been interpreted by the enemy and the Allies in contradictory ways.

Gen. Eisenhower Still Maintaining Padlocked Secrecy on Course of Developments With Both Enemy and Allied Broadcasts Contradicting One Another in Every Respect

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ASHLAND MECHANIC FOUND GUILTY OF 1ST DEGREE MURDER IN DROWNING SON

Cleveland, O., Dec. 21.—A jury of eight men and four women today found Warren Patterson, 31, guilty of first degree murder in the death of his 15-month-old son.

EMIL LIETZ DIES IN CALIFORNIA; WAS BORN IN '79 IN NEW BREMEN

Emil Lietz, born in New Bremen, Ohio, in 1879, died in California on December 20, 1944.

THREE WOMEN WAR WORKERS KILLED WHEN HIT BY AUTO IN SAFETY ZONE

Three women war workers were killed today when an automobile, while passing through a safety zone in Hartford, Connecticut, was struck by a truck.

RALPH SCHNEIDER TO SPEND THIRD CHRISTMAS IN THE COUNTY JAIL

Ralph Schneider, a local resident, is to spend his third Christmas in the county jail.

THREE ARE CAUGHT

Three men were caught today by the police in a burglary.

B-29 SUPER SUPERFORTRESSES CONTINUE CAMPAIGN AGAINST JAP WAR PRODUCTION

The B-29 Super Superfortresses continue their campaign against Japanese war production.

AMERICAN STAFF OFFICER DECLARES WORST HAS PASSED IN NAZI OFFENSIVE

An American staff officer declared today that the worst of the Nazi offensive has passed.

120 JEWS LEADS BELIEVED IN DISTRICT

It is believed that 120 Jews were killed in the district.

THREE ARE CAUGHT

Three men were caught today by the police in a burglary.

ZOOM INTO BELGIUM TOWNS UNDER GUEISE IN BLACKOUT AREA BEHIND YANK LINES

Towns in Belgium are under a blackout as the Germans move into the area behind the American lines.

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