FTCN Replay: Collaboration and Dedication as Keys to Advancing the Mission

To celebrate Women's History Month, *From the Crows' Nest* podcast featured Lisa Frugé Cirilli, US DOD Customer Requirements and Advocacy representative for BAE Systems Electronic Systems Division. With decades of experience in civil service, industry and leadership roles within the Association of Old Crows (AOC), Lisa offered valuable insights into the enduring role of Robins Air Force Base, life cycle sustainment and the expanding opportunities for women in Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations (EMSO).

Warner Robins, GA: The Industrial Heart of EW
Located in Middle Georgia, Robins Air Force Base plays a central role in the US defense industrial base. Home to over **22,000 personnel**, the base supports a wide range of mission areas, including Electronic Warfare (EW), C2ISR, aircraft sustainment and test systems. Lisa described Robins AFBas unique among installations due to its strong, rooted workforce and multi-service integration.

> ***"Every day in Middle Georgia is Armed Forces Appreciation Day."***
> *— Lisa Frugé Cirilli*

Unlike transient duty stations, Robins AFB fosters a culture where military personnel often remain in the area after retiring, contributing to a highly experienced civilian and contractor workforce. This dynamic supports a consistent, mission-ready environment where innovation and legacy sustainment converge.

> ***"Robins Air Force Base is where legacy and innovation***

> ***intersect. You're not just keeping old systems running—you're infusing them with next-gen tech to keep our edge sharp."***
> *— Ken Miller, Host*

Dixie Crow Symposium: Collaboration in Action
Cirilli also previewed the **49th Annual Dixie Crow Symposium** taking place March 23-26, a major technical and collaborative event held at Warner Robins. This year's program includes:

- Over **800 attendees**
- **57 vendors** in the exhibit hall
- Classified and unclassified briefings
- Student STEM outreach activities
- The **Robins Requirements Symposium** in partnership with NDIA

> ***"This isn't just a conference. It's where missions meet solutions, where experts learn from one another, and where students glimpse the future of EMSO."***
> *— Lisa Frugé Cirilli*

Despite recent concerns over federal travel guidance, Cirilli confirmed that the event is **fully operational**, dismissing rumors of cancellation. She reiterated the critical role of in-person collaboration in the defense sector.

Modernizing the Mission: Innovation Meets Sustainment
Lisa emphasized the complex balancing act between maintaining existing systems and integrating new technology. From radar warning receivers to advanced electronic warfare suites, Robins supports both US and foreign military partners with agile, integrated sustainment capabilities.

> ***"Our customers should only have to pay for that technology once. So try to figure out how to make that happen."***
> *— Lisa Frugé Cirilli*

As an example, the ongoing modernization of the F-15 with new internal EW suites is being accomplished at Robins, requiring complete disassembly of aircraft as part of the depot maintenance cycle. Despite the complexity, the depot has improved performance metrics and was recently recognized as the **best depot within Air Force Materiel Command for 2024**.

Advancing Women in EMSO
Lisa's career has included service as AOC President and multiple leadership roles at the chapter and national levels. Her non-technical background as a business major shows the accessibility of EMSO-related fields to a wide range of professionals.

> ***"You do not have to be technical to be a member of the Association of Old Crows."***
> *— Lisa Frugé Cirilli*

Lisa encouraged women and young professionals to seek mentorship, build relationships, and engage with organizations like AOC. Opportunities in EMSO are growing, and professionals from diverse backgrounds are critical to future success.

> ***"If you have something to give to this community, give it 110%. You will be recognized for it."***
> *— Lisa Frugé Cirilli*

AOC's Evolution and Future Focus
Reflecting on AOC's evolution, Lisa highlighted the organization's expanding focus beyond electronic warfare to include full-spectrum EMSO, including C2ISR, space and cybersecurity. During her presidency, she emphasized inter-organizational collaboration and STEM education – key priorities that continue today.

> ***"The chapters are the lifeblood of AOC. But we must keep laying the groundwork for the next generation."***

— Lisa Frugé Cirilli

She also stressed the importance of sustained outreach and educational support to ensure future leaders are equipped to tackle the next challenges in EMSO.

Advice to Young Professionals
In response to audience questions, Lisa offered direct guidance for new entrants into the field:

- **Don’t wait for opportunities — create them.**
- **Ask for help and seek mentors.**
- **Understand the mission, even if you’re not a technologist.**
- **Be visible, curious and willing to connect.**

> ***“People are always willing to help — you just need to ask. Don’t be bashful.”***
> *— Lisa Frugé Cirilli*

She also addressed concerns around DEI rollbacks, noting that while challenges remain, opportunities for women continue to expand, particularly for those who are proactive.

Conclusion
Lisa Frugé Cirilli’s leadership, advocacy, and continued mentorship stand as a testament to the strength of the EW and EMSO communities. From Robins AFB to the AOC global network, the emphasis on collaboration, readiness and inclusion is clear. As EMSO becomes more central to national defense, professionals like Lisa are ensuring the workforce and infrastructure are ready for what comes next.

> ***“This is a field that dives into one of the fundamental forces of the universe. There is nothing more exciting than that.”***
> *— Ken Miller*

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- Complete the *From the Crows’ Nest* listener survey for a chance to win a podcast t-shirt (link in show notes).
- Not a member yet? Join AOC or subscribe to the podcast to stay informed on EMSO developments and community events.

Start Listening