

Colonel Tom Lewis Lifetime Achievement Award
Michael Kinchen, Air Force News Agency

Mike Kinchen has been involved in every major decision affecting AFRTS since 1982. His influence is seen around the world daily on radio and television programming and affects every aspect of how we do business today.

He was a military broadcaster from 1962 until he retired in 1985, serving in Korea, Okinawa, Puerto Rico, Alaska and San Antonio. He was drafted to be a member of "Operation Lamplighter", a cadre of hand-picked military broadcasters sent to Thailand to establish the Armed Forces Thailand Network, was TDY to Saigon and won a Thomas Jefferson Award for radio and TV spots while serving at Clark Air Base in the Philippines. As Chief of Broadcasting for the Alaska broadcasting squadron his team inaugurated the "live AFRTS television service" concept, daily delivering an entire programming day, complete with live sports and news programs plus command information, to remote locations in Alaska via the Alaskan Forces Satellite Network (AFSN). That operation and concept was moved to the Broadcast Center in Los Angeles in 1982 as the precursor to today's AFN TV, ten channels beamed around the world around the clock.

He was the first Chief of Operations for the new Air Force AFRTS Directorate at the Air Force Service Information and News Center (then known as AFSINC) in San Antonio, Texas. He established the Air Force Broadcasting Service and served as its first Chief of Broadcasting and authored the first AFBS regulation, guidance for daily broadcast operations at AFBS units.

His unparalleled contributions to building and evolving the AFRTS organizational structure, manpower standards, equipment and configuration standards, product standards, contingency management guidelines, transition to new technology, new delivery systems such as DTH and the consummate desire to serve his customers are the very core of who AFRTS is today. Michael Kinchen's 45 years of unsurpassed dedication, true concern and hard work make him truly deserving of the Colonel Tom Lewis Lifetime Achievement Award.