



TENN VALLEY FLYER

# Tennessee Valley Flyer 2nd Qtr 2014 (Apr-Jun)

## A Tribute to Harold "Chris" Christiansen

By John Phillip

Our AFA chapter and our nation lost a wonderful airman and veteran of World War II. After a very brief illness, Chris Christiansen died on April 24, 2014. I hope I can adequately portray the extraordinary dedication Chris gave to his country as well as the wonderful life Chris lived.

Chris was born and raised in Rankin, Illinois, just north of Champaign. After graduating from high school, he volunteered for the US Army in October 1942. He was put into a training track to become a B-17 bombardier. After nearly 18 months of training, he was assigned to the 346<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron of the 99<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing at a B-17 air base near Foggia, Italy, in February 1944.

Chris was amazed at the fire power that many very young



Chris during WW II

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Have a  
Safe 4th!



More recent picture of Chris standing proudly by "Old Glory"

men could pack into an armada of nearly 200 bomber aircraft that would form up for an attack into southern France, Austria, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Romania or Germany. Chris played a critical role in each of his bombing missions. First, after reaching altitude, Chris and the radioman had to move to the bomb bay of the aircraft and pull a pin out of every bomb so they could be properly armed. Then, since Chris was the bombardier, he was charged with accurately dropping the bomb load on the intended target using the complicated Norden bombsight.

On one notable mission on April 23, 1944, Chris was part of an attack that crippled Nazi aircraft production at a factory near Vienna, Austria, for which the 99<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing received a Presidential Unit Citation. Chris also participated in six attacks on the critical petroleum refineries at Ploesti, Romania. Although Chris' aircraft always received flak damage, he was amazed that he safely survived each mission.

Continued on Page 7 (Tribute).

**Dr. Richard Hallion (picture at right), former Senior Advisor for Air and Space Issues to SECAF, presented an eye-opening, informative briefing on the rise of China's airpower and aerospace industry during a 30 May 14 luncheon held at community partner, Redstone Federal Credit Union. The chapter conducts several events with guest speakers during the year and was fortunate Dr. Hallion was available.**



**Dr. Hallion is also a former Special Advisor for Aerospace Technology to the USAF Chief Scientist. Several community partners also attended. Special thanks goes to RFCU for hosting the event. (Check the newsletter for future events.)**

# Vice Commander Global Strike Command on the State of Air Force's Nuclear Force

On 8 May, Maj Gen Rob Rego, Vice Commander of Global Strike Command, spoke to the Tennessee Valley AFA Chapter (and guests) on the state of the Air Force's nuclear force. In his discussion he emphasized the importance of the U.S. nuclear strike mission and maintaining the nuclear triad: the flexibility of the bombers, dependability of the ICBMs, and the survivability of submarines. In addition to providing an unclassified "snap shot" of the Air Force's nuclear force structure, perhaps of most interest was his first-hand account of the testing scandal reported earlier this year. He assured the group that there was no evidence of rampant cheating across the nuclear force, and that although approximately 100 people were implicated, there were just a handful of "ring leaders" who were facilitating the cheating. Further, he noted that the Air Force wasn't just focused on punishment, but recognizes that it must also address the environment to tackle career and morale issues in missile operations. The Tennessee Valley was truly fortunate to have one of the Air Force's top leaders speak on the state of nuclear force.



Maj Gen Rob Rego, Vice Commander, AF Global Strike Command, speaks to AFA members and guests about space, cyber, and ICBM concerns

## CyberPatriot News: Bob Hovde, Vice President



CyberPatriot VI Update

### Grissom High School 2nd in the Nation in the Open Division!!

- Team won a trophy and each student received a \$1,500 scholarship.
- School Board Meeting at Grissom HS recognized the team.

CHAPTER 335 OFFICERS	
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<b>Treasurer</b> Jack Royster jroyster@knology	<b>Secretary</b> Ken Philippart kdp520@hotmail.com

**Want to join our chapter?**  
  
**Contact an officer via email provided in box at left.**

Chapter 335 Special Vice Presidents
<b>Aerospace Education:</b> Jay Carlson
<b>Community Partners:</b> George Krym
<b>CyberPatriot:</b> Bob Hovde
<b>Membership:</b> John Pennell
<b>Programs:</b> Brenda Armstrong
<b>Public Relations/Newsletter:</b> Cathy Scott
<b>Veterans Affairs:</b> Daryl Carpenter

## Teacher of the Year Winners!

### Secondary Education: Jim Morse

Col (Ret) Rick Driesbach presented the Tennessee Valley Chapter's Teacher of the Year Award for High School to Mr. James Morse at an awards ceremony on May 19 at **New Century Technology High School**. Mr. Morse teaches computer science and has developed curriculum including courses such as Modeling and Simulation, Cyber Security, Networking, and Internet Programming. Of particular note, he has mentored an Air Force Association CyberPatriot team for four years.

### State and Chapter Elementary Education:

### Bonnie Garrett



At an end-of-year Awards Ceremony at Westlawn Middle School on May 20, Col (Ret) Rick Driesbach presented the Tennessee Valley Chapter's Teacher of the Year Award for Middle School to Ms. Bonnie Garrett. Ms. Garrett has created a culture of STEM at **Westlawn Middle School** over the last 3 years. She implemented the *Project Lead-the-Way Gateway Technology Program* under which she teaches pre-engineering elective courses for 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. The STEM courses she currently teaches include: Energy and the Environment, Design and Modeling, Automation, and Robotics, Science of Technology, and Medical Detectives. She also instituted an annual STEM Fair at Westlawn which had 88 entrees this year. In fact, her qualifications were so strong this year, that she was selected AFA's Alabama Teacher of the Year. That award was presented by Col (Retired) Russ Lewey, the current Alabama AFA State President. School administrators, her students, and her family (who were invited to the ceremony) all were clearly supportive of the awards presented to this outstanding teacher.



## AFJROTC News

### Bob Jones High School



Lt Col (Ret) Brenda Armstrong (left), and Lt Col (Ret) George Krym (right) chapter representative, presented Cadet Carr the AFA award.



Above: Lt Col (Ret) Armstrong and Lt Col (Ret) Krym congratulate Cadet Nguyen for winning the \$750 chapter scholarship.

### Huntsville High School

During the Huntsville High School AFROTC awards ceremony, Cadet Captain Nathaniel Gilbreath won the chapter scholarship and Cadet Major Sarah Stough received the AFA Medal.

Additionally, several chapter members spoke to cadets at Huntsville High School about their experience as active duty members.

### Butler High School



Col (Ret) Jay Carlson (L), VP for Aerospace Education, congratulates Cadet Captain Brandon Crtucher on his AFA Medal.



Col (Ret) Rick Driesbach, Chapter President, speaks highly of Cadet Captain Nathaniel Gilbreath as the Chapter's Huntsville High AFJROTC scholarship recipient.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL AND KEEP UP THE GREAT WORK!

**IT'S BEEN A BUSY QUARTER!**

**Civil Air Patrol (CAP) Awards Ceremony**



Photo at left: Cadet Lt Col Levi Kellum was named CAP Outstanding Cadet of the Year and received a medal from Col (Ret) Rick Driesbach, Chapter President, during a March awards ceremony for the Gadsden Composite Squadron. Col (Ret) Russ Lewey, AFA AL State President, also participated in the presentation. Cadet Kellum is on the 11th grade honor roll, serves as Cadet Commander and Drill / Color Guard Commander, and has received numerous CAP awards.

**Chapter Partners with U.S. Space & Rocket Center**



Chapter's own, and Space Camp Hall of Fame member, Lt Col Burke Hare, provided a presentation during the U.S. Space & Rocket Center's "GPS Adventures" on 14 June. Approximately 100 museum guests heard his presentation on the Air Force's GPS Operations and how the GPS Constellation works. Not pictured, Col Russ Lewey, helped prepare Aviation Challenge counselors for the summer session, providing three classes in aerodynamics and flight operations.

**Provided 10 Judges for Apr 11th Science Fair**

Alabama Council for Technology in Education hosted the NW Regional Technology Fair at Calhoun Community College in Decatur



Get Involved and Join Your Local AFA Chapter Today!  
You'll be Glad you Did!

Make plans to be a judge next year!

## MORE ACTIVITIES!

### Bad weather on 29 Mar didn't dampen everyone's spirits at the Welcome Home Ceremony in honor of Vietnam Veterans 50th Anniversary remembrance.

Ceremony was held at Huntsville **Madison County Veteran's Memorial** (photo right).

Butler High School Honor Guard braved the weather.



## Memorial Day Honors

Members of the AFA Chapter 335, along with North Alabama Veteran and Fraternal Organizations Coalition, the City of Huntsville, the Association of United States, veterans from conflicts since WWII, and guests gathered to honor those who had made the ultimate sacrifice during a special wreath laying memorial service on Memorial Day. The ceremony was held at Maple Hill Cemetery, the oldest cemetery in Huntsville, and included as the keynote speaker, LTG David L. Mann, Commander of the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command and City of Huntsville Mayor Tommy Battle. AFA Chapter 335 members, on behalf of the United States Air Force, along with 20 other organizations, proudly and solemnly laid individual wreaths at the Veterans' Memorial section of the cemetery. This is the third consecutive year that members of the chapter have carried on this Memorial Day tradition. Pictured in the photo is AFA Chapter 335 members Al Kemmet Jr. and Guy Broadhurst.





Russ Lewey presents certificate to 117<sup>th</sup> ARW Command Chief, CMSgt David Bullard.

### Tribute, Continued from Page 1

Additionally, Chris explained how the 99<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing participated in the first “shuttle run” on June 2, 1944, as a unique tactic to confuse and overcome the Germans on the Eastern Front. The planes of the 99<sup>th</sup> took off from their home base in Italy, hit their target but then recovered at a fully stocked B-17 base in Poltava, Ukraine. The Poltava base provided the bombers with an opportunity to replenish the aircraft and strike another German target before finally returning to Italy.

Oddly enough, fifty-two years later, on August 20, 1996, and on behalf of the Russian people, President Boris Yeltsin awarded each member of the 99<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing a special commemorative medal for their courage and personal contribution to the Allied support of Russia during her fight for freedom against Nazi Germany. The Russians felt that the “shuttle run” and Poltava played a significant role in defeating the Germans in Eastern Europe. Chris proudly displayed this award in his home.

Chris safely carried out 51 effective B-17 missions and was recognized “For Valor” by the Commanding General of the Mediterranean Army Air Forces. Chris was credited for having “engaged in air battles of great intensity by gallantly and repeatedly carrying the offensive against heavy opposition to the heart of the enemy and had, by his unfaltering courage, earned the gratitude and praise of his fellow countrymen, as well as his commander.”

After the war, Chris married Sue de Grafferelly in 1946, and graduated from Illinois Wesleyan University in 1949. With his military training

## *Iron City Hosts the Alabama AFA State Convention*

By Russ Lewey, AFA AL State President

Not since the Iron Bowl left Birmingham has there been such excitement in the Iron City. Okay, maybe this is a bit of a stretch but last month (May) Birmingham Chapter 100 hosted the Alabama AFA State Convention. Russ Lewey, State President, led the discussions that, in addition to each of the four Alabama chapters providing an overview of their activities, included a summary of the recently held South-Central AFA Regional meeting and the “State of the State”.

Membership was a key topic during the discussions. AFA National’s recent launch of the E-Membership Program seems to be moving along smartly. This program allows individuals to join for just \$30 a year with all the benefits of a regular membership; the only exception being that they don’t receive the hard copy of the Air Force Magazine. As a result of this new program, web-access of the magazine will be restricted to AFA (E and regular) members. To gain access and to take advantage of other AFA web capabilities, Chapter Presidents were encouraged to have their members establish a new login on the AFA web site. Russ noted that membership is down across the state, and nationally. He encouraged Chapters to focus on recruitment and sustainment efforts over the next year.

The highlight of the convention was a presentation by the 117<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing (ARW) Command Chief, CMSgt David M. Bullard. With nine KC-135Rs, the Airmen of 117<sup>th</sup> are living up to their mantra – The Proven, Enduring, and First Choice. Supported by over 100 active duty airmen, the 117<sup>th</sup> is working along side active, Guard and Reserve personnel both in Birmingham and world-wide. Of note is their active State Partnership Program with Romania. Closer to home, as evident during the blizzard that hit Birmingham this past winter and the tornadoes that devastated surrounding communities – the 117<sup>th</sup> is quick to respond and support the homeland.

On behalf of the entire state, Russ presented Chief Bullard with a certificate honoring him with a commemorative brick paver that was placed in the Enlisted Heritage Plaza at Maxwell AFB-Gunter Annex, Alabama. Both the Chief and Russ pledged to work together to ensure that the 117<sup>th</sup> ARW and the Air Force Association could continue to support one another.

Highly successful, next year’s (2015) State Convention promises to be even more enlightening and entertaining: the exact date to be determined, but likely in mid to late June hosted by the Tennessee Valley Chapter. Russ stated that he hopes to see everyone there.

in photography and a new degree, he started a portrait studio, which he successfully operated for 12 years. He also taught junior high school math in Danville, Illinois, while continuing his Air Force career as an officer in the Air Force Reserve.

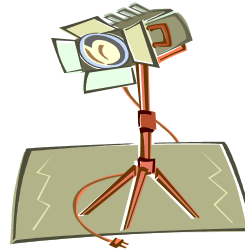
In 1964, a cousin talked Chris into relocating to Huntsville, Alabama, where he transitioned to a career in procurement at Redstone Arsenal. He retired from the arsenal in 1988 and then spent five years working for COLSA Corp. He formally retired in 1993.

Chris was very active in the First Christian Church for over 50 years where he taught Sunday school, was a church board member, and documented church activities with his special photography skills.

Chris’ wife, Sue, predeceased him in June 2013. Chris was always happy to spend time with his three children, nine grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. As a testimony of his love and devotion to his family, they felt the he was the best father, grandfather and great-grandfather anyone could have. Chris was especially proud that he was a supporter and “lifetime member” of the AFA.

# Spotlight — Community Partners

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## Quantech Services, Inc.

Quantech is a professional *consulting* services company focused on delivering end-to-end systems engineering, logistics, cyber security, program management and financial management services that guide complex systems through the acquisition and deployment life-cycle. Quantech provides a wide array of technical and support capabilities to the Department of Defense (DoD) and other Federal Government agencies.

Since 1999, Quantech has been growing rapidly and now has offices located in eight areas of the country. The corporate office is located in Lexington, MA where Quantech provides support to the Electronic Systems Center (ESC) located at Hanscom AFB, MA. The Quantech Huntsville office was established in 2009 and provides comprehensive support to the Missile Defense Agency (MDA).

Quantech solutions encompass everything clients need at local and remote sites throughout the life cycle of their projects. Offering solutions for project management, integrated logistics, information technology, engineering services, budget formulation/execution, accounting, cost estimating & analysis, model development & implementation, earned value management & analysis, schedule management, contract management & reconciliation, closeout,

congressional reporting, acquisition support services, activity based costing/management, client relationship management, international affairs and armaments cooperation support and much more.

Here in Huntsville, Quantech is located in Research Park at 6703 Odyssey Drive, Suite 101. AFA Life Member, Doug Railey (Col USAF, Ret), is the Huntsville Director and employs approximately 118 Quantech and sub contractor personnel. They support MDA operations in AL, CA, CO, VA and MA. For more information check out their web site at: [www.quantechserv.com](http://www.quantechserv.com)



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## Chapter Welcomes People-Tec!

Founded in April 2005, PeopleTec, Inc. is a growth-oriented, woman-owned small business dedicated to cultivating a people-centric workplace while providing technical excellence to the defense community in support of the warfighter. This commitment to customer and employee satisfaction is evidenced by their company tagline which promotes excellence within all facets of the company - People First. Technology Always. PeopleTec was selected as a winner of the Best Places to Work award in Huntsville Alabama in 2011, 2012, and 2013 and with over 200 employees to date, PeopleTec provides innovative engineering, modeling and simulation, cybersecurity, and program support services to the Department of Defense and Civilian Federal sectors. Government customers include the Missile Defense Agency (MDA), U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command (SMDC), U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command (AMCOM), U.S. Navy, and the National Guard Bureau (NGB). PeopleTec is located at 4901-I Corporate Drive NW, Huntsville, AL 35805, and can be reached at 256.319.3800 or [info@peopletec.com](mailto:info@peopletec.com).



## Spotlight — Community Partners

# Aero Thermo Technology, Inc.

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The Jackson Conference Center is located on the Cummings Research Park Biotech Campus, adjacent to the HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology. The 22,000 square foot conference center, with its flexible meeting space, can host meetings and conferences from 5 up to 800 guests. The center boasts state of the art audiovisual equipment and an IT support staff that ensures everything runs smoothly. Experience our personalized and efficient service offered by our hospitality minded staff. Enjoy our fresh energizing meals prepared by our in house culinary team. Jackson Center makes it easy to get down to business, with no distractions.

The Jackson Center's Pub is a unique space, with its 1,600 square feet and is ideal for a "wine" down after a full day's agenda to connect with other attendees. It is also a great setting for hosting an informative fun reception.

Recently, ConventionSouth Magazine, identified the Jackson Center as one of 50, as one of the "coolest" and most meetings friendly conference facilities in the South. Nestled in Research Park makes it convenient across the



**The "Pub" is a great space for the informal aspects of your conference or meeting.**

Tennessee Valley. Drive by the Center and see for yourself at 6001 Moquin Drive, Huntsville or contact the Bob Rogers, Director, at 256-327-7320, who will work personally to make sure your event is a success. For more information on the various spaces and menus that they have you can go to their website: <http://www.jacksoncenter.net>.



Mark your calendar today!

## “ON THE RADAR”

- 17 July (third Thursday of most every month), 5:30 pm—7:00 pm: Tennessee Valley AFA Chapter Executive Council. Anyone who wishes to help with activities and planning for the AFA Chapter are welcome to attend. Meetings typically held at **Chapter’s Community Partner PeopleTec (4901 Corporate Drive, Huntsville)**. Contact Chapter President Rick Driesbach (rick.driesbach@gmail.com) for more information.
- August 11—14: Von Braun Center Space & Missile Defense Symposium Sign up to work Chapter Booth or just stop by.
- August 21, 5:30 pm—7:00 pm: Tennessee Valley AFA Executive Council Place TBD
- September 12—14: AFA National Convention Gaylord National Harbor Convention Center
- September 18: Air Force Birthday Celebration (Details TBD)



**Russ Lewey (L) congratulates Connie Jean of Woody Anderson Ford on their recent Community Partner renewal.**

**George Krym: VP for Community Partners (George.Krym@yahoo.com)**

## **Support Our Community Partners!**

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