

Tennessee Valley Flyer



In This Issue

St Patrick's Day Parade	2
70 for 70	3
AFJROTC Summer Encampment	4
Galaxy of Lights	5
Air Force Ball	5
StellarXplorers	6
Quarterly Luncheon	7
Candy Bomber	8
Community Partners	9
Upcoming Events	12

1st Quarter 2017

Promoting our Air Force Heritage with those of an Irish Heritage

By John Phillip

A loyal cadre of chapter members proudly displayed our “Blue” colors among many variations of “Green” colors in Huntsville’s St. Patrick’s Day Parade on Saturday, March 11. Overall, this was another very colorful parade event.

We formed up at the Bob Hovde “Center of Excellence for AFA Logistics”, where Bob had allowed us to assemble another wonderful entry in the parade. Our vehicles were provided by Bob Hovde, Burke Hare, and Ed Worley. Ed Worley coordinated and Lockheed Martin provided that classy and attention-grabbing F-35 model. Catherine Hare, our audio specialist, brought everyone to attention along the parade route with our Air Force Song, and she also generated many cheers and clapping with our Irish Jig. Russ Lewey kept his head warm with some kind of special head-gear but his arm became very sore from waving at about every parade-watcher.

The number of parade-watchers was low because of the cold; however, the spirits were very high – especially among those who had access to some green liquid spirits.

The parade was a wonderful, heritage experience for supporters of both “Blue” and “Green”!



Ed Worley (l) and Burke Hare (c) put the final touches on Burke’s Titan, which carried our colorful AFA banners and a shamrock flag. Rick Driesbach (r) gives his OK for “Float Ready”.



Our AFA group posed for a photo around Ed Worley’s Ford with the F-35 model as we waited for the parade to begin.

Front row (l to r): Russ Lewey, John Phillip, Carl Penaranda and Ed Worley. Back row (l to r): Bob Hovde, Harold Lewey, our eye-catching F-35 model, Burke Hare, Rick Driesbach, and Catherine Hare, Burke’s daughter. (Not shown are our photographer, Betsy Worley, and Scott Patton, who joined us later during the parade)



Russ (l) and Harold Lewey disassemble our AFA banners from the vehicle display frames.



70 For 70

By Russ Lewey

Seventy years ago, the United States Air Force was officially established. Over the course of this year we will see numerous opportunities to celebrate the Air Force's 70th birthday; in fact, your chapter is looking to hold a formal Air Force Ball later this year (but that is for another issue).

Earlier this year, Larry Spencer, the President of AFA, issued a challenge to chapters in marking the 70th Birthday, with a push for AFA membership and support to the Air Force. He encouraged chapters to consider recruiting 70 new members over the course of this year. To help stimulate this initiative, AFA is offering a 50% reduction in all one-year "E Memberships." That means an AFA membership costs only \$15 – a savings of \$15. For those not familiar, an E-Membership provides all of the benefits of a regular member, except you don't get a published copy of the Air Force Magazine in the mail (you can access via the web).

A major focus of AFA is to advocate and educate the nation, and leadership, for aerospace power and to promote a dominant U.S. Air Force and national defense. Numbers matter; it is recognized that to have a major voice in "Washington", and elsewhere, an organization needs at least 100,000 members. For years, AFA has been well over the 100,000 goal; today we have just over 92,000. There are approximately 200 AFA chapters; 70 new members from most of our chapters would put us well over the bar.

Given that the Tennessee Valley Chapter has over 500 members, I have to believe that we are a chapter that can accept Larry Spencer's challenge and knock it out of the park! I'm sure there are a number of you who know someone (a grandchild, neighbor, or a friend) who has an AF connection or supports our Air Force -- \$15 (4 cents a day) would be a great gift. Oh, did I mention that for every new member a chapter recruits, the chapter receives \$15? That is over \$1,000 that the chapter can use to for activities here in the Tennessee Valley.

It is easy to gift a membership or for someone to sign up:

1. Go to the AFA web site (AFA.org).
2. Click on the "Join" tab along the top of the page
3. Click on the "Join" in the Membership and eMember (the left of the page)
4. Membership Information
 - a. Click on New Member
 - b. Source "AFA Chapter"
 - c. Chapter: 335
 - d. Recruited by: (Your name)
 - e. Option: \$30 1 year E-member
 - f. Promotion Code: "70for70"
5. Complete the rest of the form

JROTC Aviation Challenge - Year 2

By Melissa Lacey

Last year's inaugural JROTC Aviation Challenge (JAC) was such a soaring success at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, AL, that this year's summer leadership and STEM encampment for JROTC cadets has been expanded to accommodate 300 cadets. Air Force JROTC Senior Aerospace Science Instructor at Mae Jemison High School, Maj (ret) Melissa Lacey, is once again at the helm soliciting sponsorship for the 120 Air Force JROTC cadets who plan to attend.



JROTC Aviation Challenge has grown from 120 cadets overall last year, to 300 cadets this year – from all 4 branches of the Service. The Army Cadet Command for JROTC graciously provides funding for 150 Army JROTC cadets to attend the 6-day encampment, which costs \$370 per cadet. HQ AFJROTC attempts to offset the cost per Air Force JROTC cadet by providing limited funding for lodging and food, but this only pays for a limited portion of the total cost to attend.



During the encampment, cadets will participate in navigation training, learn about flight physiology, fundamentals of flight and aerodynamics, and participate in simulated realistic combat scenarios. According to Major Lacey, "Our long term goal is to expose and engage a unique population of students in STEM content, skills, and fields of study – especially as applied in aviation, space, and government support programs." With the JAC being spearheaded by Air Force JROTC, Maj Lacey would like to see more Air Force JROTC cadets participating in this unique opportunity.

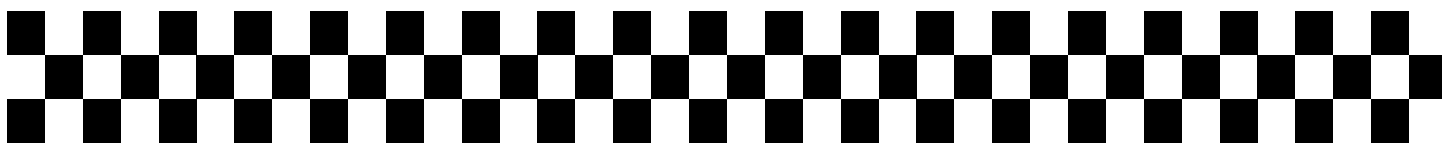
Our AFA chapter will be seeking donations (big or small) from members in April. More to follow on how you can support. In the meantime, if so inclined, you may contact Maj (ret) Melissa Lacey at melissa.lacey@hsv-k12.org to donate or to offer support in any other form.



Galaxy of Lights 2016

By Rick Driesbach

Four days before Christmas 2016, 28 chapter members, spouses, and teenage children supported the Botanic Garden in its annual fundraiser – the regionally famous Galaxy of Lights. For four hours that evening, 28 AFA volunteers performed traffic control and collected entry fees. We divided into 3 teams – one team remained indoors and counted and processed the funds. The other two teams alternated in 30-minute shifts directing traffic, collecting money, processing credit cards, and providing Christmas greetings to the public. We had great weather for our night, and we processed over 1,000 carloads of happy “Light Lookers”. Everyone brought a dish to share, and teams not “at the front” were able to enjoy good food and camaraderie. Many thanks to a great group of volunteers – Jay, Ted, John P., Bryan, Russ & Diane, Ed & Betsy, Kenan & Valerie, Daryl & Barb, Ken & Lisa, Tim & Laurel, JP, Guy, Rod, Eric & Natalie, Bailey & Justin & Alexis, Melissa & Marcus & Marissa, and Rick.



****Save the Date – Friday, 22 September 2017****

To celebrate the Air Force’s 70th Birthday this year, your AFA Tennessee Valley Chapter will be hosting an Air Force Ball on Friday, 22 September 2017, at the Jackson Center in Huntsville. Please mark your calendars! Additional details will be forthcoming.



Tomorrow's Space Nerds

By Russ Lewey

Last month we saw SpaceX launch the Falcon 9 from Launch Pad 39A at Cape Kennedy. Next month, 10 high school teams will compete in Colorado Springs for the honor of being recognized as StellarXplorers Champions. There is no doubt that many of these young “space nerds” will be helping future rockets and astronauts into space.

There were two teams from the Tennessee Valley competing in this year's StellarXplorers: Huntsville High AFJROTC, and James Clemens High. Huntsville High successfully completed the Semi-finals; we wait to see if they will move on to the Prestige Round, and hopefully, on to Colorado for the finals in early April.



Huntsville StellarXplorers Team works solutions as they compete in the Semi-Finals.

Click on this link to view a video on the StellarXplorers Program :
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w1oktTFx3k>)

Did you know...

...that as an AFA member, you have access to a wealth of benefits? These include travel, health, financial, legal, and many more. For a listing of all these benefits, visit AFA's benefits site at:

<https://www.afa.org/memberbenefits>

AFA Chapter 335 1st Quarter Luncheon

By Jay Carlson

On February 23rd, the Tennessee Valley Chapter held its first quarterly luncheon of 2017 at Redstone Federal Credit Union, a local Community Partner. We were honored to have Ms. Kim Niemeier as our guest speaker. Ms. Niemeier is a local Huntsville author and provided a personal and heartfelt look into her Daddy, Fred Moretto's, life and experiences before, during, and after WWII. Kim's book, *In the Hands of Strangers*, provides a look into the life of a common man, who like many of his generation, did not consider themselves a hero, served honorably and valiantly, and accomplished the extraordinary when presented with extraordinary circumstances. It's a story about relationships, trust, and courage. In telling his story, Kim and her researcher Darlene Perry-Smith spent many months pouring through the National Archives and retracing her Daddy's steps in England and France. Although her Dad could not bring himself to talk about his war experiences until almost a half century after the event, in 1993, Kim was able to reunite Fred with the families that risked much to hide him.



A shadow box recognizing Fred Moretto's achievements and sacrifices during WWII.



Ms. Niemeier shows a model P-47, like the one her father flew, to Chapter President, Rick Driesbach (l) and Vice President for Aerospace Education, Jay Carlson (r).

The immigrant son of Italy volunteered after Pearl Harbor to serve his country in the Army. He was eventually selected for the aviation cadet program, received a commission, and found himself in England flying the P-47 in the 353rd Fighter Group as part of the Mighty Eighth Air Force in the spring of 1944. On D-Day +6 his squadron was jumped by an overwhelming number of ME-109s. Her father tried to out maneuver the ME-109s in the ensuing dog fight, but was eventually shot down over occupied France. After falling from the sky and being severely burned, Fred was rescued and hidden by villagers at great personal risk to their lives. His ordeal and theirs in the evasion of Nazi troops and his eventual escape to Allied lines reminds us how often our fates are in the hands of strangers.

At the conclusion of the luncheon, Kim was presented a Certificate of Gratitude from the Chapter and a donation in the amount of \$50 which will be made to the Wounded Airmen fund in her name. Kim was greatly touched by the donation and the fund selected, given her Daddy's experiences. Kim also donated a hard-back copy of her book for a raffle which raised \$55 dollars towards the 2017 JROTC summer encampment.

The Candy Bomber Heads to Gadsden

By Russ Lewey

Two years ago, the Chapter provided a lesson on airplanes and a “taste of AF heritage” to approximately 500 young people across Madison County. Earlier this month, children of Gadsden received a similar opportunity. This time, there were actually two programs that were executed. The first was at Gadsden Public Library to 10 Pre-K students; here, Russ Lewey, (aka “Gray Beard”) and Diane, his wife (aka “Gopher”), talked about how flying has taken them all over the world. The children even experienced how a wing flies. But without a doubt, the biggest hit was the story of the Candy Bomber. Flying and candy, it doesn’t get any better than that!

Later that afternoon, they upped their game at Mitchell Elementary with a group of thirty, 4th and 5th graders, providing a lesson on aerodynamics and aircraft components. During this session, in addition to telling the story of the Candy Bomber, Russ talked to the students about an Etowah County hero, Maj Jeff Ausborn. This program was in concert with AFA’s partnership with the Civil Air Patrol and the Aerospace Connection in Education (ACE).

ACE is a program developed by CAP for K – 6th grade teachers, which provides a series of grade-specific lesson plans on various aerospace topics. Following the completion of at least 10 of the 20 lessons, the students receive an ACE t-shirt and a certificate. It is a great program for the teachers as the lesson plans are time-tested and FREE. Students are exposed to a number of STEM ideas in a fun setting with a wide variety of activities.



Pre-K students in Gadsden are treated to a program on airplanes and the Candy Bomber.



“Gray Beard” with help from Gadsden CAP Cadet Dickinson demonstrate the Bernoulli Principle to students at Mitchell Elementary.

There is no doubt, Gadsden has a few more pilots in the making as the result of this program. Special thanks to Jill Reeves at Gadsden Public Library for giving us the opportunity to come to Etowah County and for all she is doing to help inspire our future leaders.

Community Partner Spotlight



COMMUNITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

COMMUNITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Sigmattech, Inc. is a Huntsville-based, small business founded in 1986 by Gurmej S. Sandhu, Ph.D., with a focus on providing systems engineering and technical assistance to the U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Research, Development and Engineering Center at Redstone Arsenal. Over the past 30 years, Sigmattech has expanded core competencies to include program management, system engineering, resource management, foreign military sales, E-learning, training, and lifecycle management. Sigmattech is an ISO 9001:2008 certified company serving customers in the major commands from the Army and Air Force, Office of Personnel Management, Marshall Space Flight Center, Missile Defense Agency, and other Federal Organizations. Our employees support this customer base in over 20 locations worldwide.



Community Partner Spotlight



Chapter members Brian Pletcher and Eric Silkowski present Ace and Community partner plaques at MTSI.

(L-R) Brian Pletcher, MTSI Senior Analyst; Leslie Pensa, MTSI Huntsville Charitable Giving Committee Lead; Tim King, Vice President, MTSI Army and Missile Defense Division; Dr. Eric Silkowski, MTSI Senior Analyst.



Maj Gen Larry Northington (ret.), owner of Northington Consulting, proudly displays his 2016-2017 Community Partner renewal medallion.

Tennessee Valley AFA Chapter 335 is proud of its Community Partners:



ACE Level



GATR Technologies

www.gatr.com

General Atomics

www.ga.com/ems

MTSI

www.mtsi-va.com/

Radiance Technologies

www.radiancetek.com/

R-Squared Consulting, LLC

www.rsquaredconsulting.com



Wingman Level



Aero Thermo Technology

www.aerothermo.com

Conditioned Air Solutions

www.conditionedairsolutions.com

Davis Strategic Innovations, Inc.

www.davisdsi.com

Edward Jones

www.edwardjones.com/

[BrendaArmstrong](#)

**Intuitive Research and
Technology**

www.irtc-hq.com/

Mary's Grocery:

Hwy 431 South, Brownsboro, AL

PeopleTec

www.peopletec.com

W.W. Supplies

<https://www.facebook.com/>

www.supplieshuntsville/

Basic Level

Aleta Technologies

www.aletatechnologies.com

Bevilacqua Research Corp

www.brc2.com

Delta Research, Inc.

www.dr-inc.com

Dentistry Downtown with

Dr. Rebecca Howell

www.rebeccahowelldmd.com

FlyQuest

www.FlyQuest.net

**Irrigation Maintenance
Services, Inc.**

256-755-1524

Jackson Center

www.jacksoncenter.net/

Lamar Advertising

www.lamar.com/huntsville

Landers McLarty Nissan

[www.landermclartynissanhuntsv
ille.com](http://www.landermclartynissanhuntsville.com)

Linc Research Inc.

www.lincresearchinc.com

Linda Morgan - Rise Real Estate

[http://
lindamorgan3.homesandland.com/](http://lindamorgan3.homesandland.com/)

NeXolve-ManTech

www.nexolvematerials.com

Northington Consulting

www.northconllc.com

Parsons

www.parsons.com

Qualis Corporation

www.qualis-corp.com

Quantech Services

www.quantechserv.com

**Redstone Federal Credit
Union**

www.redfcu.org

Sigmattech

www.sigmattech.com

The Lodge at Johns Road

www.thelodgeatjohnsroad.com

U.S. Space & Rocket Center

www.rocketcenter.com

Annual Giving Levels: Ace: \$500, Wingman: \$250, Basic: \$90

Want to become a Community Partner at the Ace, Wingman, or Basic level?

Contact George Krym at george.krym@yahoo.com.



Upcoming Events

20 Apr—Executive Council Meeting

18 May—Executive Council Meeting

29 May—Memorial Day Events

5-10 Jun— JROTC Aviation Challenge Encampment

15 Jun—Executive Council Meeting

VIS – RECCE

The first individual to correctly identify the WWII warbird highlighted in this issue will be recognized in the 2nd Quarter Tennessee Valley Flyer. Send your guesses to lewalford@gmail.com. (Bonus points if you also identify the famous mission in which it was flown.)

CHAPTER 335 OFFICERS		Chapter 335 Special Vice Presidents	
<u>President</u>	<u>Vice President</u>	Aerospace Education: Jay Carlson	
Rick Driesbach	John Pennell	Community Partners: George Krym	
Rick.driesbach@gmail.com	johnpennelljr@aol.com	CyberPatriot: Bob Hovde	
<u>Treasurer</u>	<u>Secretary</u>	Membership: John Pennell	
Jack Royster	Ken Philippart	Programs: Brenda Armstrong	
jroyster@knology	kdp520@hotmail.com	Public Relations/Newsletter: Lee Alford	
		Veteran's Affairs: Zig Jastrebski	

Your AFA chapter is a 501-3C organization, and is always receptive of donations to further chapter Aerospace Education objectives. If you would like to donate to this worthy cause, please mail a check (made out to AFA Chapter 335) to Jack Royster, 1880 Shellbrook Drive, Huntsville AL 35806.