

Tennessee

Valley

Flyer



2nd

Quarter

2017

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Save the Date!



U.S. AIR FORCE 70TH BIRTHDAY BALL

Friday, September 22, 2017

The Jackson Center

6001 Moquin Drive NW, Huntsville AL 35806

~6:00 Social Hour ~7:00 Dinner ~ 8:00 Music & Dancing

Black Tie, Military Uniform, or Suit and Tie

Corporate Sponsorship - \$600 per table

Reserved Tables, Non-Corporate - \$480 per Table

Individual Tickets - \$60

MENU: Grilled Steak or Chicken Breast

Salad, Potatoes, Asparagus

Choice of Dessert

(Vegetarian/Gluten-Free Meal Upon Request)

Reservation Details Coming Soon!



**Air Force Association
Tennessee Valley Chapter**

Maple Hill Cemetery Memorial Day Observance

By Guy Broadhurst

Each Memorial Day, the Huntsville community comes together to pay homage to the veterans laid to rest at Maple Hill, the Gold Star Families, and all veterans who have given their lives in defense of our country. Since 2011, AFA Tennessee Valley Chapter 335 has participated in the laying of the wreaths and was pleased to continue our participation this year.

This year, AFA 335 TVC presented our wreath with 42 other Military and Fraternal Organizations from the Tennessee Valley. The number of participants has grown each year, and the number of people attending was the largest crowd we can remember.

The participation of TVC 335 goes beyond the laying of the wreath. The ceremonial bugler is also a member of our chapter. Col Mike Vaccaro (ret) is a WWII veteran and member of our chapter. Mike is a key part of the ceremony, and plays the Attention to Colors at the opening and TAPS at the closing of the ceremony.



The wreath presenters for this year were Board Members, Jay Carlson and Guy Broadhurst. Guy has performed this duty from the beginning, usually with Al Kemmet. However, Jay has substituted for Al on two occasions, first when Al was in Afghanistan and now due to a foot surgery. We hope that Al can return to the line up next year to continue the tradition.



Huntsville AFA & AFCEA Chapters Plan to Jointly Sponsor F-35 Classified Symposium

By Gary Connor (Brig Gen, Ret)

Initial planning has begun to conduct a joint AFA-AFCEA symposium (at the classified level). Target date is mid-Sept '17. Aegis Technologies has agreed to host this event. The objective of this Symposium is to provide an opportunity for Huntsville government/industry personnel to learn about F-35 capabilities, to understand the potential implications for future joint/coalition operations, and to address the relevant Huntsville capabilities (labs, modeling & simulation, systems integration) that could be leveraged in support of F-35 joint employment/operations. Gary Connor is the Chapter 335 POC for this event.

Military Emeritus Program—US Space and Rocket Center

By Rob Robertson

We Need Your Help!

The Tennessee Valley Air Force Association Chapter has several members who volunteer on a regular basis supporting the US Space and Rocket Center (USSRC) as Military Emeritus Docents. Docents support three days a week from 11 AM to 3 PM. The typical day entails talking to USSRC guests, obtaining their interest, and then leading them on an Aviation Challenge tour. A Docent or two conduct the tour of the Aviation Challenge campus allowing the guests a “behind the scenes” look at the aircraft, simulators, and centrifuge the students will experience when they attend Aviation Challenge.

Looking ahead, we basically have no tour leaders signed up for two weekends and only one day covered on the 4th of July weekend/ Tuesday schedule. If we don't get some signups soon, we will have to tell the Space & Rocket Center that we can't support the tours. We realize everyone is busy and has travel, kids, grandkids, and other events taking up your time, but we could really use your help!!

We've been so successful in building this program, it'd be a shame to lose that momentum after only three seasons. We're recognized by USSRC leadership for what we've accomplished so far and hope to accomplish in the future. Also on the plus side, we're helping out one of our Community Partners.

So, PLEASE, if you're already a Military Emeritus at the USSRC, help us out! If you aren't, sign up, and help out. I promise you, it'll be time well spent. Volunteers can contact Rob at:

albert.robertson3@mediacombb.net

Major Howard Christiansen Memorial Scholarship

By John Phillip

Cadet Colonel Emmanuel Offei-Dua received the honor of the Major Howard Christiansen Memorial Scholarship as the top cadet among the three AFJROTC units in the Huntsville-Madison area on April 26. Cadet Offei-Dua is a senior at Huntsville High School. Overall, he was chosen as the “best of the best” cadet because of his achievements in leadership, scholarship and his exceptional support to the school’s Junior ROTC program and also to his fellow cadets. Cadet Offei-Dua will receive a \$1,500 scholarship for his college education. He plans to attend the University of Alabama – Huntsville and major in Aerospace Engineering.



Major Howard Christiansen Memorial Scholarship presented to Cadet Colonel Offei-Dua (c) by Dick Christiansen (l) and John Phillip (r).

Again this year, Dick Christiansen, a son of Howard Christiansen, participated in the scholarship award. He produced a fantastic biographical and patriotic video of his father that was shown and highly applauded at the Huntsville High School Award Ceremony. Even more significantly, Dick made another substantial donation toward our memorial scholarship in honor of his father.

Teacher of the Year

By John Phillip



John Phillip presents the AFA Chapter Teacher of the Year Award to Mrs. Angela Graves.

Mrs. Angela Graves was officially honored as the chapter’s Aerospace Education Teacher of the Year on May 24 in Boaz, Alabama. Mrs. Graves has been the “Project Lead the Way” teacher at the Boaz Intermediate School for grades four and five. She was recognized for her vital role in not only designing curriculum activities for her own STEM class but also guiding other teachers to integrate common STEM activities throughout the school. Additionally, she was identified by her principal as a model teacher who exhibits a high level of care and love for her students as she works to bring them to their full potential. Mrs. Graves received an impressive AFA business folio and a lapel pin designating her as an “AFA Chapter Teacher of the Year”. She will also receive a check for \$250.00.

“You Are Go For Launch”

By Russ Lewey

Thanks to the generosity of the AFA organizations across the South Central Region (Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee), this summer, three students are cleared for takeoff at Huntsville’s own U.S. Space & Rocket Center (USSRC). Following the success of last year’s inaugural AFA Space Camp Scholarship, the South Central Region sponsored a scholarship to attend one of the three camps offered by the USSRC (Space Camp, Aviation Challenge, and the Robotics Academy).



Sarah Israel, AFA
South Central Region
Space Camp

The scholarship was open to any Total Force Enlisted Airman (Active Duty, Air National Guard, or Air Force Reservist) dependents, ages 9 – 18 years old. Applications were received from Active Duty, Air Guardsmen, and AF Reservists across the Region.

This year’s South Central Region Scholarship Winner is Sarah Israel. Sarah lives in Central, Louisiana (just outside of Baton Rouge), and her father is a C 130J Loadmaster in the AF Reserves at Keesler AFB, Mississippi. She is active in sports, the International Order of Rainbow Girls, and 4H. She is also her school’s only majorette. Late this June, Sarah will show up in Huntsville to attend Space Camp, where she will experience the full gamut of space related training and activities. AFA is covering both her registration (\$50.00) and tuition (\$949.00). Sarah indicated that she couldn’t wait to learn more about space and the universe and to share the experience with her friends next Fall.

But the South Central Region didn’t stop with just one scholarship. Up in Tennessee, the Dan Callahan (Nashville) and the Bruce Holloway (Knoxville) Chapters stepped up to present an additional scholarship to Jamie Schultz to attend Space Camp. Jamie resides just east of Nashville in Mount Juliet, and both of her parents are assigned to the Air National Guard. She is a junior and is considering the U.S. Air Force Academy. Her interests include biometric engineering as well as aerospace medicine.



Jamie Schultz will
head to Space
Camp thanks to
Tennessee AFA
Chapters



Cooper Browning
(L) receives
congratulations
from Susan Mallett
(R), Ala VP for
Aerospace Ed

Not to be outdone by Tennessee, the Montgomery Chapter stepped in to pay for a scholarship to the top Alabama applicant, Cooper Browning. He’ll be attending Aviation Challenge in mid-June. He is the son of SMSgt Gabriel Browning who is assigned to Maxwell-Gunter AFB. A straight-A student, he is the Chaplain in the Jr. BETA Club and has received the Governor’s Physical Fitness award for the second year in a row. There is no doubt that Aviation Challenge will go a long way to putting Cooper on his way to becoming an AF pilot.



Bob Jones HS JROTC Awards

By JP Pennell

Each year, the Bob Jones High School (BJHS) AF JROTC unit recognizes the achievements of the cadets with an end-of-year awards ceremony. This year, Lt Col Randy Herd and representatives from a number of Veteran's Organizations presented awards to the cadets. The Tennessee Valley Chapter of the Air Force Association was privileged to present the two most prestigious awards. Lt Col (ret) John Pennell had the honor of presenting these awards at the 2016-2017 awards ceremony. The Air Force Association medal was presented to Cadet Major Hannah Gulley, a rising senior at Bob Jones High School. While Lt Col Herd said they do not assign leadership positions until just prior to the school year, he expects Cadet Gulley to occupy a highly visible position because of her strong leadership and academic excellence. Lt Col Pennell then presented the final award of a \$1000 college scholarship to Cadet Lt Colonel Rachel Toler. Lt Col Toler served in a number of leadership positions throughout her time at Bob Jones, and is planning to become a nurse after college. At the end of the formal ceremony, the cadets, their parents, and the guests were treated to a rousing rendition of the Air Force Song and refreshments. Lt Col Pennell spoke to a number of the cadets after the ceremony and found every one of them to be well spoken, dedicated, and driven to succeed. The BJHS AFJROTC unit is exceptional and doesn't show any signs of slowing down.



AFA Chapter 335 VP, John Pennell, presents the AFA medal to Cadet Major Hannah Gulley.



John Pennell presents a scholarship valued at \$1000 to Cadet Lt Col Rachel Toler.



Bob Jones HS JROTC cadets celebrate the end of the school year after a spirited version of the Air Force Song.

Boaz Students Ace Airport Field Trip

By Russ Lewey

For years, the Tennessee Valley AFA Chapter has been a strong supporter of Civil Air Patrol (CAP) Aerospace Connection in Education (ACE) Program. It is a given that CAP and AFA would be working together, given our common goal of stimulating STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) and aerospace interest. Thanks to several organizations, on 30 March at Huntsville International Airport, students from Boaz Intermediate School experienced first-hand the joy that aviation can bring.

This year's AFA Chapter Teacher of the Year, Mrs. Angie Graves, along with Mrs. Lynn Kohler (AFA Chapter and Alabama Teacher of the Year in 2013), reached out to FlyQuest, a Community Partner, about conducting a one-



Students scan across the Tennessee Valley in the Huntsville International Airport Control Tower.



Russ Lewey demonstrates the Bernoulli Principle.

day aviation field trip. For the semester, 19 Boaz students had been engaged in a months-long series of aviation sessions as part of the ACE Program. Both teachers thought it would be an excellent way for the students to experience aviation and not just read about it. This is exactly the type of activities that FlyQuest supports. The Tennessee Valley AFA Chapter stepped up, providing \$300 to help cover the expenses for the day-long visit. Plus, five chapter members (Daryl Carpenter, Tim Davis, Russ Lewey, John Phillip, and Lee Pugh) assisted FlyQuest in executing the day's activities.

The students gained insight into aerodynamics and aircraft components, visited the control tower, planned a flight, and flew in a 6-degree of motion visual simulator. Thanks in part to Huntsville Signature Flight Support, the students got an added treat with a chance to hear from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA) hurricane hunting team. The team was in town conducting storm and tornado research. The students heard what it is like to fly into a hurricane and then see NOAA's P-3 aircraft.

It was a great opportunity and we're told the school is already planning to do it again next year.



Boaz class in front of NOAA's Hurricane Hunter



Huntsville AFA Members Support the Local State Veteran's Home

By Scott Patton

The Tennessee Valley Chapter of the Air Force Association (AFA) joined with other local service organizations such as the Sergeants Major Association (SGMA), Warrant Officers Association (WOA), Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), Association of the United States Army (AUSA), and the National Association "Screaming Eagles" Chapter (NASEC) to once again provide and serve an annual southern BBQ at the Floyd E. "Tut" Fann State Veterans Home in Huntsville on Saturday, 10 June 2017. Many boxes of candy bars have also been donated as prizes for the home's weekly bingo events. The AFA continues to provide support for the 150 veterans at the home and assists the VA mission to remember and respect our Veterans.



AFA Chapter 335 Treasurer, Jack Royster, trades stories with one of the residents at Tut Fann Veterans Home.

The Origins of the MOAB

By Carl Penaranda

In the early 60s, I was assigned to the C-130B, "Hercules", equipped 463rd Troop Carrier Wing, 774th Troop Carrier Squadron, in Squadron Operations, at Langley AFB, VA. At the time, we were part of the now inactivated, Tactical Air Command, whose CONUS based C-130 units, in addition to training, humanitarian, and contingency taskings, performed rotational temporary duty in support of USAFE, SOUTHCOM, and PACAF. This all came to a halt in 1965 when the 463rd TCW with its original three Troop Carrier Squadrons, 772nd, 773rd, and 774th, plus the newly acquired 29th TCS from Forbes AFB, KS, was ordered to the Philippines in a Permanent Change of Station status in support of PACAF.

It was during this time that 463rd C-130s became BC-130s. The Army was interested in instant landing zones for its helicopters in Vietnam. That is when the bombing mission referred to as "Commando Vault" began. From what I've been told, at our 463rd Tactical Airlift Association's reunions, someone remembered there were 5,000lb and 10,000lb (M-121) bombs in storage that were suitable for the new mission. These bombs were originally meant to be carried by the predecessor to the B-52, the B-36, "Peacemaker." Since the B-36 was no longer in the active inventory, there was no aircraft capable of carrying these bombs. Therefore, the C-130 was chosen for the mission. Drops began in early 1969. As the supply of these bombs decreased, a 15,000lb bomb (BLU 82) was developed and referred to as a "daisy cutter."

The April 2016 edition of the Air Force Association's magazine has an article by Sam McGowan, who as a loadmaster from the inception of "Commando Vault", dropped these bombs. Our C-130 loadmasters had the distinction of being the only enlisted personnel to drop aerial weapons.

The Massive Ordnance Air Blast Bomb (MOAB), GBU-43, 21,000lb, was developed after I left the 463rd. A model of the MOAB is on display at the USAF Armament Museum, Eglin AFB, FL

AFA Members Attend AIAA Presentation on the Tuskegee Airmen

By Ken Philippart

Tennessee Valley Chapter members were invited to attend the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) Greater Huntsville Section's monthly luncheon presentation, "The Tuskegee Airmen and Me: Their Impact on My Life", by NASA Marshall Space Flight Center engineer Mr. Don Harris. The February presentation was part of AIAA's commemoration of Black History Month. Mr. Harris' talk provided a history of the Tuskegee Airmen program and outlined the challenges these pioneering Airmen faced both at home and abroad.



Don Harris speaks on the Tuskegee Airmen.

The heart of Don's talk, however, was his relationships with several of the Airmen at pivotal points in his life that influenced his career decisions. Don grew up in Detroit where Tuskegee Airman Second Lieutenant Coleman A. Young, a bombardier in the 477th Medium Bomber Group, was mayor, and First Lieutenant Henry Peoples, a pilot from the 301st Fighter Squadron, was City of Detroit Director of Engineering and mentor to young Don Harris. Don attended Cass Technical High School where Tuskegee Airmen Captain Walter Downs, a pilot in the 301st, taught avionics and Civilian Pilot Training Program instructor pilot Gilbert Cargill was on the faculty. Don ultimately attended Tuskegee University where he was mentored by Lieutenant Colonel Herbert Carter, a 99th Fighter Squadron pilot and Tuskegee University Associate Dean of Student Services and Administration and C. Alfred Anderson, Chief Civilian Flight Instructor at Kennedy and Moton Fields, key Tuskegee training fields. Throughout his career, Don has been guided and mentored by these American heroes. Their advice and inspirational achievements directly led Don to pursue a career in engineering and his subsequent position as a loads engineer at the NASA Marshall Space Flight Center working on America's next great ship, the Space Launch System. The Tuskegee Airmen inspired Don and are, indeed, an inspiration to all Americans.

Twenty-five people, including three AFA members, attended this riveting presentation. Mr. Harris' presentation was so well-received, he was subsequently asked to speak at the Marshall Space Flight Center and to a group of Boeing veterans. Thank you to AIAA for inviting the Air Force Association to participate in this informative and inspiring event.



AFA Chapter 335 will be hosting a booth at the annual Space & Missile Defense Symposium scheduled for 8-10 Aug 2017 at the Von Braun Center in Huntsville. We'll be putting out a call for volunteers to support the booth later in July. Please mark your calendars and help out, if you can.



CyberPatriot

By Bob Hovde

North Alabama continues to dominate both the State and Southeast Region in the CyberPatriot competition. There were 4040 teams in this year's competition, with just 28 going to the National Finals.

In the Alabama State competition, the Platinum Level (Highest Level) results were: Open Division - First, Grissom High (Team Buffer); Second, New Century Technology High (Team Ford 2); Third, James Clemens High. All Service Division - First, New Century Technology/Lee High (Team - Bravo); Second, Grissom High (Team - V-JROTC); Third, New Century Technology/Lee (Team - Charlie). Middle School Division - First, Challenger Middle School (Team - Cyber Intelligence Agency (CIA)); Second, Hampton Cove Middle School (Team - Team 3); Third, Liberty Middle School.

In the Southeast Region competition the results were: Open Division - First, New Century Technology High (Team Ford 2); Third, Grissom High (Team - Buffer). The Ford 2 team was 14th best in the Nation this year. They missed the Nationals by a couple of points. All Services Division - First, Grissom High (Team - V-JROTC). The V-JROTC team went to Nationals and placed as first of all Army JROTC teams.

Of special note is the fact that Madison schools joined with Huntsville schools in this year's winners.

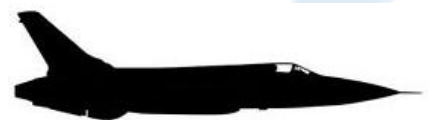
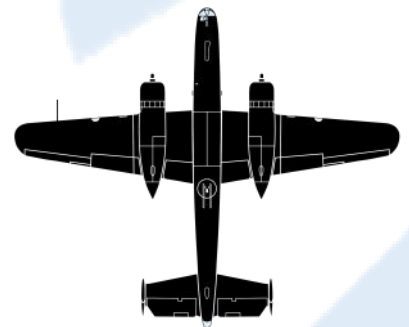


VIS – RECCE

Last quarter's featured warbird was the North American B-25 Mitchell. Over 9,800 were produced in multiple variants with a typical internal bomb load of 3,000 lbs.

Congratulations to Dr. Michael Kinney, who correctly identified the aircraft and its most famous mission, the Doolittle Raid on Tokyo, 18 April 1942.

This quarter's featured aircraft is the Republic F-105, in honor of Col Leo K. Thorsness. On [page 16](#), we remember his life and courage.



JROTC Aviation Challenge

By Melissa Lacey

I am proud to share with you that JROTC Aviation Challenge was once again a soaring success! Zig Jastrebski did an OUTSTANDING job with the cadets, as always. They were very engaged and asked really good questions.

I cannot thank you enough for your financial support and encouragement in making this Aviation camp for our cadets possible. The cadets had the opportunity to fly in the Mach I and Mach II simulators, take a spin in the centrifuge, and even got a chance to experience the 'spinning chair' to explore the physical conception of absolute space and motion.

I would love to have a greater AFA presence next summer. We will begin planning in the fall – so more to come.



Chapter member Zig Jastrebski provides insights to the cadets on his USAF career.



Zig explains roles and missions of the aircraft on static display at the Aviation Challenge facility

Community Partner Spotlight

"Ace" Community Partner



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(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.

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Community Partner Spotlight



Mr. Scott McWhirter, General Manager for General Atomics Electromagnetic Systems (GA-EMS) in Huntsville receives the "Ace" plaque and Gold renewal medallion from Chapter member and VP for the Chapter's Community Partner program George Krym (l).



Daniel LaBoudiere (r), Director of The Jackson Center, receiving his 2017 renewal medallion and "Thank You" letter from George Krym.



Victoria Erickson, Customer Service Manager with Conditioned Air Solutions, receiving their 2017 Wingman renewal medallion.

COMMUNITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

COMMUNITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

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Remembering A Hero

Col Leo K. Thorsness
(1932-2017)



Colonel Leo K. Thorsness, USAF (ret), passed away on 2 May 2017, after a fight with leukemia.¹ He lived in Madison, AL since 2008², but had recently been living in St Augustine, FL, near the Mayo Clinic.¹

Col Thorsness went to Vietnam in 1966 as part of a squadron flying the F-105. The “Wild Weasel” was a specially modified two-seat F-105 and had the job of finding and destroying surface-to-air missile (SAM) sites. The Weasels were capable of lingering in target areas longer than other fighters, and as a result suffered a high loss ratio; not many Weasel pilots completed their hundred-mission tours.³

On April 19, 1967, Thorsness was on a mission deep in North Vietnam. He and his wingman took out an enemy SAM site with missiles, and then destroyed a second site with bombs. In the second attack, the wingman radioed that his plane, hit by intense antiaircraft fire, was going down. “Turn toward the mountains and I’ll keep you in sight,” Thorsness told him. As the pilot and his backseater ejected from the damaged aircraft, Thorsness circled above to keep them in sight. Suddenly, he saw an enemy MiG-17 fighter setting up a gunnery pass on the parachutes. Although the Weasel was not designed for dogfights, Thorsness attacked the MiG and destroyed it with bursts from his gatling gun.³

(Continued on page 17)

¹ [NY Times](#)

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leo_K._Thorsness

³ <http://medalofhonorspeakout.org/bio/leo-thorsness>

(Continued from page 16)

Dangerously low on fuel, Thorsness quickly air-refueled from a tanker and returned to the MiG-infested area to protect the downed crew from North Vietnamese soldiers. When his rear-seat weapons officer spotted four more MiGs in the area, he turned back through a barrage of North Vietnamese SAMs to engage them. He hit another one (although he never got credit for the kill because his gun camera had run out of film) and drove the remaining enemy planes away.³

Heading for Udorn Royal Thai Air Base, the closest U.S. airfield, Thorsness climbed to thirty-five thousand feet. Seventy miles from base, with his fuel tanks on empty, he pulled the throttle to idle, knowing he could glide two miles for each thousand feet he fell. Just as he was landing, the F-105's engine ran out of fuel and shut down.³

Two weeks later, he was shot down over North Vietnam on his ninety-third mission. He bailed out and was captured, and wound up a prisoner of war in the "Hanoi Hilton," where he ran into the two F-105 crew members he had tried to rescue. After two years of unremitting torture, he learned, through a secret "tap code" among the prisoners, that his name had been submitted for the Medal of Honor. (The officer in charge of writing Thorsness' citation had been shot down himself and brought to the same prison.)³

When the war ended in 1973, Thorsness was released and sent home. He had knee injuries, sustained when he had bailed out of his plane at six hundred knots, and back injuries as a result of torture. He received the Medal of Honor on October 15, 1973, from President Richard Nixon. "We've been waiting for you for six years," Nixon told him. "Welcome home."³

After retiring from the Air Force as a colonel, Thorsness was an executive with Litton Industries and later served the people of Washington as a state senator. In 2002, he started speaking on his personal mantra, "Do what's right—help others."³





Upcoming Events

20 Jul —Executive Council Meeting

8-10 Aug—Space & Missile Defense Symposium

17 Aug—Executive Council Meeting

16-17 Sep—AFA National Convention

21 Sep—Executive Council Meeting

22 Sep— USAF 70th Birthday Ball

Chapter 335 Officers

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Aerospace Education: Jay Carlson

Community Partners: George Krym

CyberPatriot: Bob Hovde

Membership: John Pennell

Programs: Brenda Armstrong

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.