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March Luncheon	Region News	Courtland AAF	"Back to Business"
March Luncheon John "Coff" Coffindaffer will	Region News South Central Region leadership	Courtland AAF Learn about this historic	"Back to Business" Find out what's new for our

AFA: WHY AREN'T YOU A MEMBER?

by John Pennell

Our chapter currently has around 550 members on our roster. Membership in the Air Force Association (at the national level) has been declining steadily over the last 20+ years (approximately 99,000), while the membership numbers for the Tennessee Valley Chapter have held steady for the past five years. And therein lies the rub...that word, "steady". Steady is a good thing. It connotes stability, predictability, and safety. Other synonyms may also come to mind—stagnant, stale, dull. Maybe it's time to shake things up a bit, and challenge the status quo.

While the National AFA has tried to boost membership to get back to the 100,000 member threshold, the Tennessee Valley Chapter has been moving along at a snail's pace, with a few new members here and there, and a few lapsed memberships along the way. What can we do?

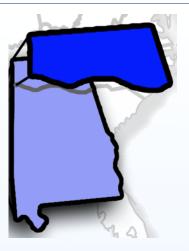
As the membership Vice President, I'm going to throw out a challenge. Five years



ago we pushed to get over 500 members and it happened. I say it's time to shoot for a new benchmark of 650 members in two years. I know, it sounds like a lot, and I've heard all the reasons why it can't be done.

Most of those reasons are myths, so let me try to dispel them.

1) "This is an Army town." Okay, I'll admit there a lot



Call to Action

We have a large and growing Air Force presence in the Tennessee Valley representing an extremely diverse cross section of skills and backgrounds. Take the opportunity to meet some great Americans, send them the links to the chapter's website, and invite them to join one of the best AFA chapters in the nation.

more Army folks in the Huntsville/Madison area, but there are a lot of us too, and more coming every day. As the Department of Defense continues to push into Space and Missiles and other fields that tend to leverage Air Force-heavy expertise, there are untapped potential new members. So, no, it's not an Army town, it's a patriotic, American town with a whole lot of current and former service members living and working here.

2) "It's hard to identify people who are retired or former Air Force members to talk with them about AFA." Two easy myth-busters for this one. First, if you work anywhere in the local area, all you need to do is look around. The folks that served in our great Air Force are proud of their time and often have memorabilia from one



to before. It might be in the parking lot of your workplace, or it might be in the grocery store.

end of their work space to another. Second, have you bought your new Alabama car tag yet? You know, the one with Air Force logo prominently displayed. I don't know about you, but I feel like I've seen more USAF-tagged cars in the past year than ever. Spend a few minutes getting to meet someone you've never talked to before. It might be in the parking lot of your workplace, or it might be in the grocery store. If they're like most Air Force veterans I know, they would love to tell you what they did in uniform, wouldn't you?

3) "I feel funny approaching people about AFA." Spend a little time telling them about the AFA and specifically our chapter. Two websites for reference: <u>http://www.AFA.org</u> and <u>http://afa-huntsville.org/wordpress/</u>. If you haven't visited these websites lately, I'd encourage you to take some time and do a little homework. You might be surprised at what you find.

- 4) When you talk to folks about becoming a member, they'll have excuses:
 - a) "I don't have time." Tell them they can participate as much or as little as they want. No one takes attendance.
 - b) "It costs too much." \$35 per year for AFA dues for an eMembership, and if you are a new member, a special rate of only \$20 for the first year. Nuff said.
 - c) "I was a member a long time ago." A lot has happened since then, I'm sure.

d) "What's in it for me?" This is the big question you'll get asked by a potential new member. Two part answer. First it gives you the opportunity to support the AFA mission to Educate, Advocate, and Support both our current force and the future warriors who will defend our great nation in Air, Space, and Cyberspace. Second, it gives you an opportunity to meet, network, and share the camaraderie of people who share your ideas, your values, and your passions. Another way to look at it is to simply ask yourself, "Why am I a member of the AFA and the Tennessee Valley Chapter?" Answer that question, and it will answer theirs as well.

I am ready and willing to answer any questions those potential new members may have.

John Pennell johnpennelljr@aol.com

Tennessee Valley Air Force Association Luncheon

> Thursday, 14 March 2019 11:15 am – 12:45 pm

Featuring John "Coff" Coffindaffer "That Others May Live" Story Behind Three Rescue Ops



Redstone Federal Credit Union / 220 Wynn Dr. "The Atrium – Discovery Room" RSVP NLT 10 Mar --- Cost is \$15 / Sign-up on the web (https://bit.ly/2X3JCkZ) For information contact Russ Lewey, 256-425-8791 /SouthCentral.President@AFA.Org

Update on our Aircraft Restoration project

By Rick Driesbach, AFA 335 Chapter President

As we have noted in previous editions of the Newsletter, our AFA chapter has been leading an effort to restore the historic USAF F-4 and F-111 aircraft on display at the Aviation Challenge portion of the US Space and Rocket Center (USSRC).

Last November, we successfully negotiated a 50 – 50 split on the cost to execute a near term refurbishment of these two aircraft with the USSRC. The USSRC is currently in the final stage of awarding the restoration work which we all hope will be accomplished this spring in time for the July 50th Anniversary Moon Landing celebrations which will bring many visitors to the Center.

Many thanks to all who have contributed toward this worthy effort! As there will be some supplemental



McDonnell Douglass F-4 Phantom II (Currently on display at Aviation Challenge)

work associated with these restorations (i.e., pouring of concrete wheel pads and some landscaping to ensure aircraft are not damaged by lawn maintenance), if you would still like to donate you can. You can simply write a check made out to AFA Chapter 335, notate that it is for Aircraft Restoration, and mail it to our treasurer (Jack Royster, 1880 Shellbrook Drive, Huntsville AL 35806). Since we are a 501(c)(3) charity, Jack will acknowledge your gift with a receipt for tax purposes. Any funds remaining after completion of the work will be used to support the chapter's Aerospace Education programs here in the Valley.



General Dynamics F-111 Aardvark (Currently on display at Aviation Challenge)

South Central Region is Flying High

By Russ Lewey, South Central Region President

Who says you can't go back home? In early February, a number of us who were USAF pilots got the next best thing as the South Central Region Conference took place in Columbus, Mississippi, home of the 14th Flying Training Wing (FTW) at Columbus AFB. You can't help but be inspired when you see the bevy of activity that takes place at this premier Air Education & Training Command (AETC) unit.

On the 2nd of February, a total of 26 members from across the South Central Region met at the Holiday Inn Express in Columbus, an AFA Community Partner. AFA members from eight chapters and four universities (Arnold Air Society and Silver Wings) met to discuss how we can better meet the mission areas of AFA to "Educate, Advocate, and Support."

Colonel William Denham, 14th FTW Vice Commander, provided a Command Brief but more importantly, discussed important issues such as how the Air Force is looking to handle the pilot shortfall. One-third of the Air Force's pilots gain their silver wings at Columbus. Interestingly, another 35-40 air traffic controllers are being trained at one of the nation's busiest airports (based upon the number of takeoffs and landings). His insight and discussion was invaluable to those cadets in the audience looking to join our Air Force in the coming months and provided the "gray beards" a way to understand how the Air Force is working to remain the world's best Air Force.

With an injection of inspiration from Col Denham, the group sat down to look at ways we can better support programs such as Aerospace Education, Wounded Airman Program, and Professional Development of today's and future Airmen.



Arnold Air Society Cadets and Silver Wings from Area/Region V hear words of encouragement from Col Denham.



Col Bill Denham, 14th FTW Vice Wing Commander, provides insight on Team BLAZE mission and facilities.

Courtland AAF - Nearby Aviation History and Heritage

By Daryl Carpenter and Tim Davis

In response to the US Army's wartime pilot needs and based on Alabama's favorable weather and geography, during a 6month summer and fall construction period in 1942, more than 300 buildings (hangars, medical facilities, barracks, PX, maintenance shops, classrooms, recreation facilities, and more) and 4 runways were built by the Army Corps of Engineers which became the Courtland Army Airfield. The airfield was activated in December 1942.

More than 4,600 cadets, enlisted personnel, NCOs, and Officers began arriving in February 1943. A full community of cooks, medical personnel, flight instructors, aircraft maintenance specialists, clerks, civil engineers, and numerous other specialties grew to become 5 times the size of the nearby city of Courtland.

To minimize congestion at Courtland, 5 auxiliary grass airfields (all within 50 miles) were constructed at Danville, Trinity, Bay, Leighton, and Muscle Shoals. Only Muscle Shoals exists today as a viable municipal airport. The rest, after nearly 80

years, have reverted to their original farmland state with no recognizable traces of the airfields remaining.

Supporting flight training, more than 240 Vultee BT-13 aircraft were eventually assigned to Courtland. The BT-13 was less-than-affectionately nicknamed the Vultee Vibrator because of the noise and vibration produced by the engine. That aircraft was used for all phases of pilot flight training: Basic, Formation, Cross-country, and Night flying.

As the war progressed and Army Air Corps basic pilot training needs were decreasing, the graduate level training needs were growing and evolving. In late 1944, the Courtland mission was changed. Maxwell AAF, which was a graduate level, bomber pilot, training base, was transitioning from B-24 training to B-29 training. Courtland inherited Maxwell's B-24 training mission.



Courtland Army Airfield - circa 1943

The airfield was built on 2,236 acres that had been part of several cotton plantations. The four runways were designed in an interlocking wraparound pattern that allowed uninterrupted day or night flight training. The interlocking runways also minimized flying time lost when wind shifts necessitated active runway changes. The runways were 18 inches of steel reinforced concrete, designed to accept the then heaviest bombers. They were the strongest runways of any of the 35 training airfields in the Army Air Corps Eastern Training Center.

The Basic Flight School was replaced by a Specialized 4-Engine Flight School in August 1944. Establishment of this school involved the transfer of B-24 "Liberator" bombers and personnel from Chanute Field, Illinois. Courtland became home for 62 B-24's. The Maxwell B-29's also occasionally used the field in their training operations.

Also during this period, in addition to the 4-Engine Flight School (B-24s), a transition squadron (AT-17s & AT-10's) was assigned to Courtland. The role of this transition squadron was the retraining and/or reclassification of returning B-24 crews from Europe (crews who had fulfilled their required missions). Many personnel went on to B-29 schools at other locations.

Courtland AAF was officially deactivated on 30 June 1945, and in 1946, the property was declared as excess and turned over to the state of Alabama and the city of Courtland.

Crop dusters and various other users occupied the field's few remaining old and new hangar facilities as nearly everything was torn down or demolished in place. Some subsequent planned major developments for the field (a horse racetrack, a coal gasification plant, and a prison) did not materialize.



BT-13 Vultee Vibrator





On the night of Dec 1, 1943, eight airplanes on a cross-country night training flight crashed, and their student pilots died after becoming disoriented and running out of fuel.

Since 1985, Lawrence county has owned and operated the property as Courtland Airport (9A4). Two of the four runways were inactivated, and one of the remaining runways was shortened. The airfield is very lightly used, with an average of only 33 flight operations a day. Many of these flights are student pilots on cross-country flights or practice instrument approaches. The only aviation-oriented operation still on the field is a small crop dusting company.

In the 90s, several small light industrial businesses occupied a few remote areas of the base and still do, although some have gone out of business. About this time,

Lockheed Martin purchased 663 acres of the former base and established a missile target assembly plant. Lockheed-Martin constructed several new administrative buildings, fabrication buildings (blue roofs in photo), and remote storage facilities (white roofs) adjacent to the inactive runways. The target missiles produced there have been used in the Pacific Test Range for testing the PATRIOT, THAAD, AEGIS, and GMD missile defense systems.

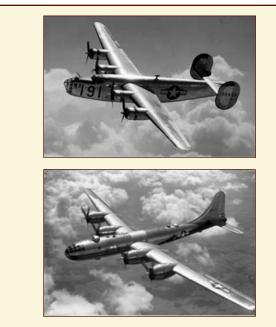
Today, the original active runways are being maintained, though only lightly used by general aviation. The property does get occasional other usage. In 2011, a large, well-attended fly-in was held with aerobatics, ground displays, and flyovers. This April (see flyer on page 9 for





The high pace of flight training in the TB-13s led to frequent and sometimes tragic accidents as seen above.

details), the city of Courtland will host a 2-day WW2 downtown and airfield celebration to honor those that served and to remember and commemorate those local citizens who supported the base and its operations during WW2. Several aviation seminars and a flyover are planned.



B-24 (top) and B-29 aircraft flown at Courtland AAF.



Current photo showing Lockheed Martin facilities, courtesy of D. Carpenter & T. Davis.



"Back to Business" - Follow-up with Greg Ennis, AFA National Teacher of the Year 2016 By Bailey Erickson

In May 2015, Greg Ennis was chosen by the Tennessee Valley Chapter of the Air Force Association as "Teacher of the Year" for work in STEM studies (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math). He was also selected as "Alabama Teacher of the Year." In 2016, he was named as the "AFA National Teacher of the Year."

At James Clemens High School, he taught engineering principles and research & design classes as well as Introduction to Engineering Design. Additionally, he founded, sponsored, and mentored the AFA StellarXplorers team, which qualified for the 2016 national finals. He also guided FIRST and MATE Robotics clubs, Society of Women Engineers (SWE) chapter, as well as its Girls in STEM club which mentors female elementary and middle school students. Greg was also the sponsor/coach of the GreenpowerUSA race car team that was sponsored by Rolls Royce. They even competed at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, with teams from all over the country, resulting in finishing in 2nd place.

Greg was asked about his professional life since his selection as the "AFA National Teacher of the Year." He said he continued teaching at James Clemens for one more year. During that time he did give the SWE, Robotics, and StellarXplorers clubs to other teachers in order to concentrate on the Engineering club and Greenpower race team. He felt good about getting those other teams started but couldn't maintain so many of them and do a good job with them.

Afterward, Greg left James Clemens so that his wife and he could work as house parents at a children's home. However, this past September he took a job at Northrop Grumman (NG) as a Manufacturing Engineer. Greg was hired through a Northrop Grumman Program called iReturn. It is a program for persons who have left the business world to do other things. It is based on a SWE program that helps women and men return to work after taking time off from their professional lives for their families, schools, etc. It is a great program that Greg is thankful to have been a part of.

Greg has volunteered, but has not yet been officially accepted, to be a mentor for Northrop Grumman's High School Internship Program (HIP). He has also attended engineering day at one of the local schools and has started working toward being a regular part of NG's educational outreach. He intends to remain a part of the educational process but from a different perspective.



Greg was asked how he selected his engineering path. He said that 15 years ago, he left the engineering profession to teach. He did it partly out of a dissatisfaction with the profession, but primarily so that he could work with children and give back part of what he'd been blessed with. Greg went to the children's home to have an even greater, more focused, impact on children in desperate need.

When it was obvious that it wasn't something he and his wife were to remain doing, he decided to go back into the engineering profession. The engineering profession is something that he missed, but he also realized that his time in the classroom had passed, at least for a while. Greg does want to remain a part of education, primarily STEM education, and to be able to make a difference in young lives.

Greg was asked about his greatest satisfaction as an educator and as an engineer. He replied, "As an educator it is greatly satisfying to see the

difference I can make in students' lives, whatever that may be. The greatest satisfaction is when a student tells me how much they appreciate what I have done for them or just knowing that I've have made a positive change in their lives."

Greg was also asked what advice he would give engineering students and recent college graduates. He said, "Do what you feel you need to do, not just what the world tells you. Make a difference in the world, not just a paycheck. Don't be afraid to take some chances, but get a firm foundation under you so that you have a platform to do whatever you want. While you are in college, take the extra classes if you can, and expand your knowledge base. Take classes outside your major. Take classes that will stretch your skills and allow you to learn new ones, especially the "soft skills." Take technical classes if you are able; you will learn many more practical skills if you do. Don't quit with just a degree, but you don't have to get a master's degree. There are many ways to learn outside of the traditional university. Never stop learning or giving back."

And this is all why Greg Ennis will always remain at the top of his game, both in the educational and professional engineering worlds.

Greg, thank you for all you have done and continue to do for our children and the engineering field.



USAF History in Alabama

One of our chapter members recently rediscovered this patch in his collection. As it turns out, it was associated with Undergraduate Pilot Training (UPT) conducted out of Craig AFB, Alabama. Located near Selma, AL, Craig AFB hosted UPT squadrons until the base closed in September 1977.

Many flying units create sortie milestone patches. The "200 Sorties" written across the top is most probably associated with the number of flights in the UPT student syllabus at the time. The bridge is symbolic of the Edmund Pettus bridge located on the south side of Selma, although it is doubtful that anyone actually flew under the bridge. The aircraft is the Northrup T-38 Talon, which entered service as a UPT trainer in 1961 and is still in that role today. The "Over The Cahaba" callout is a reference to the Cahaba river which is located west of the airfield.

Given the physical layout of the base, it is likely that the traffic patterns were flown over the river. Lastly, "Mach I Plus" is a reference to the capability of the T-38 to fly at supersonic speeds. If you have any details to add or perhaps if you flew at Craig AFB, please submit your story to <u>afa335.news@gmail.com</u> for inclusion in the next newsletter.

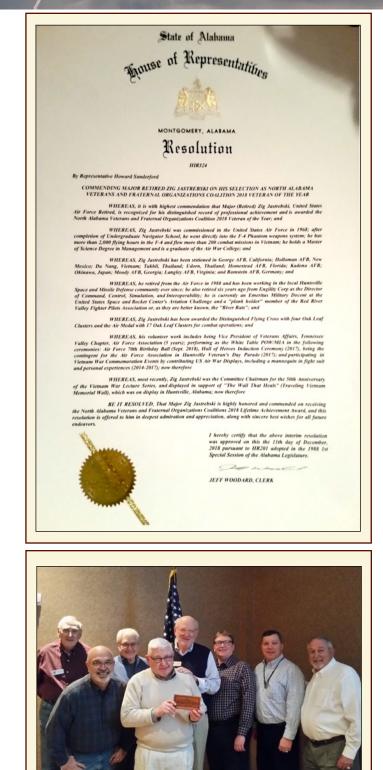
Zig Jastrebski - 2018 Veteran of the Year

As reported last quarter, USAF Major (ret) Zygmund (Zig) Jastrebski was selected as the North Alabama Veterans and Fraternal Organizations Coalition (NAVFOC) Veteran of the Year for 2018. His most recent contribution to NAVFOC's efforts was organizing the Vietnam war history presentation banners and war artifacts displays in the JayCee Building in conjunction with the visit to Huntsville of *The Wall That Heals*.

During the most recent meeting of the Chapter Executive Council, Zig presented the chapter with a small plaque as an expression of thanks for supporting the security efforts during the visit of *The Wall That Heals*. In turn, Zig was presented with a copy of a Resolution from the Alabama House of Representatives honoring his contributions which led to him being named 2018 Veteran of the Year.



Zig Jastrebski (1) accepts the Alabama House of Representatives Resolution from AFA Chapter President, Rick Driesbach.



AFA 335 Chapter Members who supported "The Wall That Heals" visit display an appreciation plaque from the NAVFOC.

COMMUNITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



Integrated Solutions for Systems (IS4S) is a small, 100% employee owned, military defense contractor headquartered in Huntsville, Alabama. The company focuses on creating innovative and cost-effective engineering and management solutions. IS4S was founded in 2007 and has grown on average 30% every year since then. The company has more than 120 employees over 6 locations. Other offices include Opelika, Alabama; Auburn, Alabama; Atlanta, Georgia; Orlando, Florida; and Niceville, Florida. Services include system integration, prototype development, testing, experimentation, software engineering, controls, and program management services.

The company's mission is to solve important problems for our customers in an environment where doing the right thing is more important than profit, and where the company is fully owned and operated by ethical, motivated employees. IS4S believes: their first responsibility is to their customer; their customer's success is the company's success; ethics take priority over profit; team work and communication are the keys to success; every aspect of a program must be balanced and integrated into the whole project; process, innovation, and cost must be balanced; employees are the company's most valuable resource; employees should benefit if the company does well; and those that contribute to success must be rewarded appropriately.

The Huntsville, Alabama, office is ISO 9001:2015 certified and has an emphasis on critical new capabilities to protect personnel, troops, and aircraft interiors from Chemical/Biological Agents; along with robotics for automated material handling. The Huntsville office is also the company office supporting the Army Missile Command and the Combat Capabilities

Development Command (CCDC). This office supports multiple systems critical to our nation's defense (THAAD, PATRIOT, MML, MLRS, IDM).

Other IS4S offices work on novel energetics, pulse power, payload development, weapon systems development, testing, dismount and mounted navigation, advanced navigation receiver concepts, navigation testing systems, assured timing for critical infrastructure, data acquisition/ analysis, component design and fabrication, concept development, next generation attack weapons, aircraft/ weapon integration, warhead research and development, weapon effects simulation, mathematical modeling and simulation, finite element structural and heat transfer analysis, and internal target effects testing.

IS4S believes in offering its employees early autonomy and responsibility. Employees have the opportunity to enjoy company-wide social events and a great working environment. IS4S offers a competitive benefit package and stock options to its eligible employees.

To learn more about IS4S, visit <u>https://is4s.com</u>.



DECONTAMINATION SYSTEMS

Through a multi-year cooperative effort with the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), IS4S has developed the world's first fully autonomous Portable Vehicle Decontamination System (PADS). Two versions have been created, a fixed variant for farms and a portable system for incident response.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS



Chapter President, Rick Driesbach (l), presents the CP renewal medallion to Mr. Dean Hudson at Cubic | GATR Technologies on 16 Dec 18.



Rick Driesbach (l), presents the CP renewal medallion to Mr. Chass Baker at Aleta Technologies on 13 Dec 18.



Mr. Curtis Taylor. President of Linc Research, places their latest Community Partnership button in their Community Partner plaque. This is their fifth year as a Community Partner. Additionally, Linc Research was recently selected to participate in the DoD Mentor-Protege Program, sponsored by the Air Force.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

ACE LEVEL

GATR Technologies

General Atomics Electromagnetic Systems <u>www.ga.com/ems</u> Mary's Wine and Spirits Hwy 431 South, Brownsboro, AL

> MTSI <u>www.mtsi-va.com</u>

Radiance Technologies

Straight To Ale Brewing www.straighttoale.com

Willbrook Solutions, Inc. www.willbrook.net

Wingman Level

Aero Thermo Technology www.aerothermo.com

Conditioned Air Solutions www.conditionedairsolutions.com

Davis Strategic Innovations, Inc. <u>www.davisdsi.com</u> Edward Jones <u>www.edwardjones.com/</u> <u>BrendaArmstrong</u>

Intuitive Research and Technology <u>www.irtc-hq.com</u> Integrated Solutions For Systems, Inc. <u>https://is4s.com/</u>

PeopleTec <u>www.peopletec.com</u>

Basic Level

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PMI North Alabama www.pminorthalabama.com Qualis Corporation www.qualis-corp.com Redstone Federal Credit Union www.redfcu.org Shear Faith https://www.vagaro.com/ shearfaith 1 Southeastern Skin Cancer and Dermatology https://www.southeasternskin.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 <u>george.krym@yahoo.com</u>.

UPCOMING EVENTS

1ST QUARTER 2019

14 Mar:	Quarterly Luncheon
15 Mar:	<i>Teacher of the Year (TOY) Nominations Due to Chapter</i>
16 Mar:	St Patrick's Day Parade
21 Mar:	Executive Council Meeting
30 Mar:	Vietnam Veterans Memorial

2ND QUARTER 2019

- 18 Apr: Executive Council Meeting held in conjunction with the Anniversary of Doolittle Raid – "Raise a Glass" at Straight to Ale
- 16 May: Executive Council Meeting
- TBD: 3x AFJROTC Presentations & 2x TOY Presentations
- 31 May: Memorial Day Ceremony

Chapter 335 Officers

- <u>President</u> Rick Driesbach <u>Rick.driesbach@gmail.com</u>
- <u>Treasurer</u> Jack Royster jroyster@knology.net

• <u>Vice President</u> Guy Broadhurst <u>Broadhurst.guy@gmail.com</u>

• <u>Secretary</u> Eric Jackson <u>eric.jackson1969@gmail.com</u>

Chapter 335 Special VPs

- Aerospace Education: Jay Carlson
- Community Partners: George Krym
- CyberPatriot: Bob Hovde
- Membership: John Pennell
- Public Relations/Newsletter: Lee Alford
- Veteran's Affairs: Zig Jastrebski

About Us

Your AFA Chapter is a 501(c)(3) 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.



Conditioned Air Solutions has a special offer for AFA Chapter members. Just mention that you're a member when calling and receive a \$39 diagnostic service.