IT HAS BEGUN: AIRCRAFT RESTORATION UPDATE

by Rick Driesbach, AFA Chapter 335 President

For many years, our Chapter has talked about restoring the F-4 and the F-111 aircraft being displayed at the US Space & Rocket Center’s (USSRC) Aviation Challenge facility. In November 2017, the chapter decided we could not longer just “talk the talk”, but we had to “walk the walk” or else these two vintage USAF aircraft would rot away before our eyes. A subgroup within the chapter’s Executive Council was formed and began meeting regularly in the offices of Community Partner, Bevilacqua Research Corporation, to get our arms around getting this job done. At first, we were focused on how to raise funds. A key first part of that effort was to invite multiple vendors to inspect the aircraft and provide unofficial rough order magnitude (ROM) estimates of restoration costs. As time went on, we had multiple coordination meetings with leaders at the USSRC to ensure we were in total synch with them as they are responsible for the aircraft which are on loan from the National Museum of the United States Air Force at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio.
As 2018 unfolded, three significant events occurred which provided much needed momentum in support of this restoration effort. First, early in 2018, our AFA chapter received a fairly significant anonymous donation. Although its purpose was not specified by the donor, the chapter’s Executive Council immediately decided to earmark this funding for aircraft restoration at the USSRC. Secondly, we reached an agreement with Ms. Tara Sweeney, a retired USAF officer, Space Camp Hall of Fame inductee, and newly appointed Vice President of Space Camp at the USSRC. Working with Ms. Sweeney and Ed Stewart, Director of Exhibits and Curation at the USSRC, we achieved an agreement to 50-50 split the restoration funding costs. Lastly, in early 2019 the USSRC determined that restoration of their historic vehicles would not require a contractual bid process. The USSRC began immediately working to let a contract with EEC Static Display Aircraft Painting Service (I’ll refer to them as EEC). This company has a very comprehensive past performance history of restoring and painting USAF display aircraft at Air Force Bases across the country including Nellis AFB. Further, their President, Stephen Wagner, had visited the USSRC and provided a very reasonable ROM for the restorations. A contract was awarded to EEC, and the restoration work began on 4 June. The F-4 will be restored and painted first, and the F-111 second. Also of great significance, PPG Industries will donate the paint.

Many thanks go to a host of chapter members who have worked diligently on this effort to include: Lee Smith, the late Nick VanWalkenburgh, Bryan Bennett, Billy Ondrusek, John Phillip, Tim Davis, Andy Bevilacqua, Eric Jackson, Guy Broadhurst, and Russ Lewey. Finally, the USSRC Curator Ed Stewart has devoted many hours of his time coordinating with us on all aspects of this issue and truly has become a great friend and supporter of the Air Force Association.
Chapter Vice President for Aerospace Education, Jay Carlson, and Chapter President, Rick Driesbach, travelled to Vinemont High School early in the AM on Friday, 10 May 2019. Through coordination with Principal Robin Netherton, Jay had arranged for the surprise presentation of our Chapter’s 2019 Grade 9-12 Teacher of the Year (TOY) award to Ms. Shannon Bridges at the beginning of a school-wide awards assembly.

Rick first spoke a few words on the importance of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education to the future success of the United States Air Force in remaining the most powerful Air Force in the world. He then noted how important it was for schools to have teachers who recognized this national need and inspired their students to pursue career paths in STEM. At that point, he asked Ms. Bridges to come on stage and he presented her with the Chapter TOY lapel pin, portfolio, and a check for $250. After much applause, as she started to return to her seat, Rick exclaimed into the mic “but wait there’s more!” Representing the AFA Alabama State President, Ken Philippart, and the Alabama State VP for Aerospace Education, Ms. Susan Mallett, Rick then presented Ms. Bridges with the Alabama State Teacher of the Year Certificate, lapel pin, AFA jacket, and check for $500. It was a great day for Ms. Bridges, and it was a very rewarding experience for Rick and Jay to make such a presentation on behalf of the Air Force Association.
By Russ Lewey, South Central Region President

The Tennessee Valley Chapter is known for its support of education and STEM studies throughout the Tennessee Valley. Just look in this newsletter or any newsletter in the past; there is always at least one article directly linked to this Chapter’s passion for Aerospace Education (AE). For at least ten years, the Chapter has recognized at least one of our community’s teachers for their role in preparing tomorrow’s leaders. Thus, an article on a Teacher of the Year (TOY) in itself is not that unusual. However, “serendipity” is a word that best describes the series of events that took place over the past four months.

One could argue when did the “occurrence and development of events” start, but for the purposes of this article, we’ll start when the Russellville City School District Superintendent, Mr. Heath Grimes, saw a “reminder” email about the Chapter’s Teacher of the Year (TOY) application deadline in March. Now note, the chapter has never had a submission from Russellville or from any of the other schools in Franklin County. Mrs. Chasity Parker’s name came to his mind, for her STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) work at West Elementary (Kindergarten – 2nd Grade), to include the “Tiger Bots” (West Elementary Robotics Teams) having earlier returned from their first competition with two awards, one of which was overall Grand Champion for the 2nd grade team. In addition, she is very active with the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI). Her application package was built, received, reviewed by the Chapter TOY Board, and Mrs. Parker was selected as the winner for the Elementary category (K-8th grade).

Jay Carlson, Vice President for AE, contacted West Elementary Principal, Mrs. Deanna Hollimon, to tell her the good news and to coordinate the presentation of the reward. The two of them decided that a surprise ceremony with the students and staff present would be a great way to honor Mrs. Parker. Jay pitched it to the Executive Council, asking for volunteers to present the award. Who better to make a presentation in Russellville than “Russell” Lewey, South Central Region President, and Rick Driesbach, Chapter President?

Early Monday morning on 20 May, after an hour and half drive, Rick and Russ arrived in Russellville to a huge campus where all four schools (High, Junior, and the two Elementary) are centrally located. There they were met by Mrs. Holliman and briefed on the sequence of events. Mrs. Parker has no idea, other than she had been told to dress up as perhaps one of the local papers wanted an interview on her recent AMSTI program. At 8:30, a room with 700 eager minds (and bodies) was in place, and the principal took the microphone to welcome the students and set the stage. Russ got the students immediately involved
and proceeded to announce that the Teacher of the Year was Mrs. Chasity Parker. A surprised Mrs. Parker came to the stage where Russ expounded upon her outstanding accomplishments. A couple of pictures would be taken for posterity, and we would be done.

However, it is here that serendipity continues. Mrs. Parker goes to the microphone and tells the assembly how grateful she is and how much receiving an award from the AFA meant to her. She goes on to say that her father had served in the Air Force and had passed away several years ago. While Rick and Russ were saying their goodbyes to the superintendent, the principal, and others, Mrs. Parker tracked them down to let them know she had called her mother to tell her the big news, where she learned that her father was a B-52 jet engine mechanic. Of course, those of you who know Russ, the “Buff” is his baby and so how appropriate for this opportunity for him to make the presentation. Never-before TOY application from Russellville, of the only two available to make the presentation, one of them is “Russell” and a B-52 pilot, for a teacher who father’s was a B-52 mechanic – clearly that is serendipity.
Memorial Day 2019
By Rick Driesbach

For many years, our Chapter has presented a Tennessee Valley Chapter wreath at the Huntsville Memorial Day remembrance for the fallen. This year was no different except that the event was not at Maple Hill Cemetery, but instead took place at Huntsville Madison County Veteran’s Memorial in downtown Huntsville.

In the sweltering heat of the afternoon, Chapter Vice President Guy Broadhurst, and long time member of the Chapter’s Executive Council, Retired USAF Colonel Al Kemmet, proudly presented the Chapter’s wreath (which was created and is maintained by Guy’s wife Diane).

This year’s event was sponsored by the City of Huntsville, the North Alabama Veterans and Fraternal Organization’s Coalition (NAVFOC), and the Association of the US Army. Joe Fitzgerald (Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Army) presided, and the guest speaker was General Gus Perna, Commanding General, Army Material Command.

Thirty-one veteran’s and other patriotic organizations presented wreaths to include 82nd AB Division Assoc., American Legion, DAR, 8th Air Force Historical Society, Jewish War Veterans, Knights of Columbus, MOAA, Patriot Guard Riders, Semper Fi Community Task Force, VFW, and the West Point Society. Service songs were played by the Huntsville Concert Band, and Taps was played by WW II Veteran and AFA Life Member Colonel (retired) Mike Vaccaro.

Additionally, Chapter Vice President for Veteran’s Affairs, Zyg Jastrebski, serving in his role as a Board Member of the Huntsville – Madison County Hall of Heroes Commission, presented a wreath on behalf of that organization.
2019 Scholarship Presentations & AFJROTC Awards
By Ed Worley, Bryan Bennett, & JP Pennell

John “JP” Pennell presents the AFA Outstanding Cadet Award to Cadet Alexis Mawhirter, Bob Jones High School Air Force JROTC. The presentation took place 6 May during the AFJROTC awards ceremony at Bob Jones High School.

JP Pennell (r) presents a $1,000 Tennessee Valley Chapter scholarship to Cadet Col. Hannalyn Wilks, Bob Jones High School Air Force JROTC. Also pictured is retired Lt Col Randy Herd (l), Bob Jones High’s senior aerospace science instructor.

Bryan Bennett (l) congratulates Lt Col David Murphy for leading his detachment, Alabama 941, to be selected as an “Outstanding Unit” for five of the last eight years.
2019 Scholarship Presentations & AFJROTC Awards (cont’d)

Bryan Bennett (l) made a $1,000 scholarship presentation from the Tennessee Valley Chapter of the Air Force Association to Cadet Colonel Jacob Guerriero (r) at Huntsville High School on 25 April.

Bryan also presented the Air Force Association Outstanding Leadership Award to Cadet Lieutenant Colonel Morgan Humphrey.
Cadet Lt Col Ayiana McDow was honored at the Mae Jemison HS Senior Class Awards Ceremony on 22 May 2019 as the Best-of-the-Best AFJROTC cadet in north Alabama. She received the Major Howard Christiansen Memorial Scholarship recognizing the top cadet among the three AFJROTC units in the Huntsville/Madison area.

The instructors at the three AFJROTC schools chose their top cadet based on leadership, scholarship, and exceptional support to the school, fellow cadets, and the AFJROTC program. Our chapter formed a team to evaluate the submissions from the three AFJROTC high schools. A summary of Cadet McDow’s amazing achievements is included below.

During her four years of faithful support to the Junior ROTC program, she has held the positions of Flight Sergeant, Special Activities NCOIC, Flight Commander, and Cadet Group Vice Commander.

In the area of extra-curricular activities, she was a member of the school’s volleyball and track teams. She was on the cheerleading team and eventually became a Cheer Captain. Also, she has served as a volunteer for Christmas Charities and the North Alabama Special Olympics.

Scholastically, with a number of advanced placement classes, she has achieved a grade point average of 4.6. To solidify her scholastic standing, she was recently inducted into the National Honor Society.

Some of her more notable achievements are:
- Nominated by the American Legion, Post 237, and attended Alabama Girl’s State.
- Chosen as one of 12 north Alabama JROTC cadets to attend the Army STEM camp in Mobile, AL.
- Honored with the Outstanding Student Award by the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.
- Awarded by the North Alabama Sons of the American Revolution as the Outstanding AFJROTC Cadet for 2017 and the Alabama State Outstanding Cadet in 2018.

These are the major accomplishments of Cadet McDow. She has clearly demonstrated a successful pattern of initiative, self-discipline, scholarship, and leadership. Cadet McDow will attend Millhouse University in Atlanta, GA and major in biochemistry. She also has a goal of becoming an Air Force officer. The Tennessee Valley Chapter of the Air Force Association is honored to support the college education of this very deserving AFJROTC cadet.

Once again, Dick Christiansen, a son of Howard Christiansen, supported the memorial scholarship presentation. Dick has attended the previous four memorial scholarship presentations. He willingly gives a very credible and personal testimony of the sacrifice and patriotism of his father. He created a professional video for the memorial scholarship presentation on the life of his father. The video makes an excellent portrayal of Howard’s World War II valiant service as a B-17 bombardier. Additionally, we wish to gratefully acknowledge that Dick made another generous donation this year to our memorial scholarship in honor of his late father.
Mark Forester Foundation Memorial Walk - “A Great Day for a Little Walk”

By Russ Lewey

In October 2017, the Chapter hosted a luncheon where Thad Forester spoke of his brother, SrA Mark Forester, a Combat Controller, who lost his life during his deployment in September 2010. In honor of his brother, Thad started the Mark Forester Foundation. Each year, around Mark’s birthday (15 May), the Foundation hosts a series of runs and a memorial walk in Haleyville, Alabama (Mark’s hometown).

This year, two Chapter members, Russ Lewey and Community Partner Dr. “Bo” Rivera, were participants in the 28 mile walk. Activities started Friday night with a spaghetti dinner at Haleyville Middle School. That evening, retired Brigadier General Robert Armfield was the guest speaker. Then-Col Armfield was the commander of the 720th Special Tactics Group at Hurlburt Field, Mark’s unit during his deployment to Afghanistan. He spoke of the dedication and commitment to excellence that Mark demonstrated during his tour.

The walkers, which were more than 50, included a number of Special Ops Airmen from Hurlburt, and elsewhere, who traveled to Haleyville to honor their fallen comrade.

On Saturday morning, the group “fell in” at 0600, beginning our day’s activities with Memorial Push-ups; 10, 4-count push-ups and three more, one for “teamwork”, one for fallen comrades, and one for SrA Mark Forester. Doing these push-ups along side the grave of SrA Forester truly brought it all home. With the pushups behind us we set off for the 28-mile walk through the Bankhead National Forest and neighboring counties. Haleyville and neighboring communities all got behind and supported this walk. There were a total of five rest stops, the last one being at Mark Forester parents’ home. Just over 12 hours from our start, around 6:30 pm, approximately 30 walkers were finishing the walk. I’m proud to say both chapter members Russ and Dr. Bo were among the group who walked in to the cheering crowd. Little did I realize, we would end the walk the way we started, with Memorial push-ups, but these seemed to be a little sweeter.

A beautiful morning to start the walk

Russ Lewey (l) and Dr. Bo Rivera (r) are still smiling after 28 miles.
Military Docent Opportunities Expanding – We Need Your Help

By Lee Smith

The Military Docent program at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center is expanding, and that means we need more AFA members and other veterans to meet these increased opportunities. Please say, “Yes, I’d like to Help.”

1. We continue our Friday and Saturday tours of the aircraft and simulators located at the Aviation Challenge area. Each tour day we need one person to lead the one-hour tour while additional volunteers man a table inside the Davidson Center to recruit visitors to include an AC Tour in their visit to the USSRC. The AC Tour is the most visible part of our Military Docent support to USSRC, and we could use the support of any and all AFA members – you are ALL well qualified for this support and OJT is easy and fun. (BTW the tour includes the ongoing F-4 and F-111 restorations we are helping to fund.)

2. Seven days a week at any time we like to have individuals spend a few hours near the awesome A-12 Oxcart / Blackbird handing out information cards and answering visitor questions about this amazing aircraft. Yes, the first question always deals with, “Why isn’t this an SR-71?” Again training is easily available.

3. If you are an engineer or knowledgeable about what makes an airplane fly like lift, drag, thrust etc., we need you. We have been offered the opportunity to help with the instruction of the older AC trainees. I’m sure there are many of you that have the basic knowledge plus the experience to throw in a few “there I was” anecdotes to expand the training experience. We have the slides and script, so no class development necessary – just your time.

4. We have a one-time opportunity for you to be part of a video discussing an aviation related subject. (Note I said Aviation subject, not necessarily Military.) For example, two of our Navy vets are going to be in front of a USSRC film team as they discuss the “Symphony of a Carrier Deck During Flight Operations.” Other sample subjects could be SR-71 operations, Operation Bolo and our F-4C, importance of E & E training, or anything you’d like to talk about. The USSRC staff will film, edit, and archive the videos. They will then be available for “weather days” and other AC training times.

So, we again request any and all support you can provide. Your participation in any of these opportunities is voluntary to the point that you simply volunteer online whenever you are available – no pressure! For more information and to start your OJT, please contact Lee Smith, leemad@knology.net or 256-426-8980.
Singing a Different Song

By Russ “Gray Beard” Lewey

I know that you all have heard the song sung in school about the “wheels on the bus go round and round.” Well, thanks to the generous donation of time and money by the Tennessee Valley AFA Chapter, students at Boaz Intermediate School are singing a different song—“the air molecules go over the wing…”

For the third year in a row, the Chapter, working with its Community Partner, FlyQuest, treated students from Boaz to a day of aviation at Huntsville International Airport. During their visit, they learned about the equipment and training required to be a Public Safety Officer at the airport, Air Traffic Control, basic aerodynamics, and even witnessed meteorology and weather forecasting from the team at WAFF. All this with pizza and cupcakes...what’s not to love?! Special thanks to Bryan Bennett, Daryl Carpenter, Tim Davis, Russ Lewey, and Lee Pugh for volunteering to make it a memorable event for the students.
Third Time Truly Is a Charm

By Russ Lewey

This is the third year that the James Clemens Jets have sent a team to the StellarXplorer’s Finals, and this year they came home with the “National Champions” title! StellarXplorers, a program executed by a team of dedicated AFA volunteers, is in its fifth year. Thanks in part to the generous donations by sponsors such as Harris Foundation, USAF STEM, ULA, Aerojet Rocketdyne, DynCorp Int’l, SpaceX, Educational Alliance of AGI, Space Foundation, and CEI, AFA is inspiring and motivating students to pursue education and careers in STEM fields using space system engineering.

For additional insight into what StellarXplorers is like, one of the team members, Jared Gibson, produced a video of their experiences during last year’s Finals. Here is a link to that video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G1E5O693Q9s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G1E5O693Q9s).

Here in the Tennessee Valley, we were particularly proud that we had not one but two teams in the Finals. The Huntsville HS AFJROTC Detachment also sent a team to the Finals. No other state had two teams, much less two from the same area. Of particular note with Huntsville High’s team is that three of their team members were freshman – look out next year!

Just hum the tune “We Are the Champions” – James Clemens StellarXplorers V National Champions.

Paying attention to every detail, the Jets work through a series of exercises during the eight-hour long Finals competition.
Hildegard’s German Cuisine is an Air Force Association Tennessee Valley Chapter Wingman Community Partner.

The restaurant joined the community partner program at the Wingman tier, making it possible for the Tennessee Valley Chapter to offer more scholarship and incentive funds to area students as well as the chapter’s Teacher of the Year program.

“We proudly support active-duty military and veterans,” said Amy Miller, Hildegard’s owner. We very much support military and vets, including offering a 20 percent discount off meals for those who serve or who did serve. It is a small way we can give back.”

The restaurant has been serving the best German food in Huntsville and Madison for more than 15 years. The restaurant occupies a small, recently remodeled space at the intersection of Whitesburg Dr. and Bob Wallace Ave., which includes a bar and well-shaded patio area in the front.

Miller bought the restaurant in January 2016. She said Hildegard’s continues to improve upon the great food and service the greater Huntsville area has come to expect from this award-winning establishment.

She said every dish is freshly prepared from the highest quality ingredients and served quickly, efficiently, and with a smile. Many of Hildegard’s cooks and servers have been with restaurant for years, which means patrons will always have a team of people who are well versed in the Hildegard’s way of preparing and serving the best German meals in the area.

“We will never let you leave here hungry or disappointed with your experience,” she said.

“Our cooks boil, peel, fry, and mash over 600 pounds of potatoes, and hand-trim almost as many pounds of pork, chicken, and veal every week,” she added. “That noise coming from the kitchen isn’t us doing a little creative construction; it’s your schnitzel being pounded to a thin, tender schnitzel! No other German restaurant in Huntsville prepares its food as authentically as we do. We’re pretty sure you’ll be able to taste the difference.”

Hildegard’s is located at 2357 Whitesburg Drive SE, Huntsville, and is open Tuesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. For more information visit their website at https://www.hildegardsgermancuisine.com/ location.html.
An Air Force Association Community Partner plaque caught Clark Crosson’s eye. After doing some online research, his company, CrossTek Construction, is now an AFA Community Partner.

“I was in a local business and saw their plaque,” Crosson explained. “I looked you up online and said that’s something I can support.”

CrossTek specializes in the three R’s: remodeling, roofing, and realty. The company has an A+ rating from the Better Business Bureau.

“There is no job to big or too small,” Crosson said. “From complete kitchen or bath remodels to landscape updates and roofing, we can handle it all. Need a wall removed to make that open floor plan that you have always dreamed of? We can handle that, too.”

Crosson is an Auburn grad with a degree in building science and minor in business. After graduation he went on to work for a large-production home builder for four years and then worked for a small insurance restoration company for another four years. He started CrossTek Construction in 2015.

Learn more about CrossTek on its website at [https://www.crosstekconstruction.biz/](https://www.crosstekconstruction.biz/) or give them a call at (256) 690-1303.

*Recent Kitchen Remodel - Black stainless steel appliances, quartz countertops, subway tile backsplash*

*Took in 5th bedroom to make large master bath suite, featuring tile shower, double vanity, tub, and large walk-in closet*
Chapter VP for Community Partners, Ed Worley, presents the Community Partner plaque and medallion plaque to Ms. Amy Miller, Owner, Hildegard’s German Cuisine, on 28 May 19.

Ed Worley (r) presented CrossTek Construction’s Community Partner plaque to CrossTek owner Clark Crosson (l) on 28 May 19.
## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

### ACE LEVEL

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

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

Contact Ed Worley at edworleyafa335@gmail.com.
3rd QUARTER 2019

18 Jul: Executive Council Meeting
6-8 Aug: Space & Missile Defense Symposium
15 Aug: Executive Council Meeting
19 Sep: Executive Council Meeting
TBD Sep: USAF Birthday Chapter Social

Chapter 335 Officers
• President
  Rick Driesbach
  Rick.driesbach@gmail.com
• Treasurer
  Jack Royster
  jroyster@knology.net
• Vice President
  Guy Broadhurst
  Broadhurst.guy@gmail.com
• Secretary
  Eric Jackson
  eric.jackson1969@gmail.com

4th QUARTER 2019

17 Oct: Executive Council Meeting
11 Nov: HSV Veterans Day Parade
21 Nov: Executive Council Meeting
19 Dec: Executive Council Meeting
TBD Dec: Galaxy of Lights - HSV Botanical Garden

Chapter 335 Special VPs
• Aerospace Education: Jay Carlson
• Community Partners: Ed Worley
• 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.