

AFA 335

TENNESSEE VALLEY FLYER

A great lunch!	Crew Dog Memories	AirVentures at Oshkosh!	Community Partner Spotlight: IS4S
<i>Page 1</i>	<i>Page 2</i>	<i>Page 4</i>	<i>Page 6</i>

2022 Armed Forces Celebration Luncheon

by Ken Philippart; Images by CoC and Lisa Philippart

The Tennessee Valley Chapter participated in the 2022 Armed Forces Celebration Luncheon at the Von Braun Center on June 29. The luncheon was part of the Huntsville community’s week-long commemoration of Armed Forces Week in June. More than 800 people attended the luncheon, hosted annually by the Huntsville-Madison County Chamber of Commerce (CoC). Mr. Greg Brown, CoC Chair, emceed the event. Dignitaries included Mayors Tommy Battle and Paul Findlay, Alabama congressional representatives, Marshall Space Flight Director Jodie Singer and General Edward M. Daly, Commanding General of US Army Materiel Command (AMC) and keynote speaker. The chapter was represented by Lt Col (retired) David Murphy, Lt Col (retired) Ken Philippart and Mrs. Lisa Philippart.



Ken & Lisa Philippart and David Murphy

Active duty military members and veterans were asked to stand and be recognized. They received an ovation for their service.

General Daly gave the keynote address. He recognized the community contributions of several departed Team Redstone civilian and military members and talked in detail about their achievements. General Daily also thanked the Huntsville-Madison community for being such strong supporters of the military and Redstone Arsenal and for making north Alabama such a great place to be stationed.

The Tennessee Valley Chapter salutes our active and retired military members and their families!



General Daly giving the keynote address.

AFA 335

Memories of a Past Crew Dog

A Heritage Article by a Former AWACS Weapons Director

I feel fortunate to have been a “crew dog” in the E-3 AWACS in the 90’s. Those years formed some very solid friendships, taught me many life lessons, and served as a source for many stories—some of them even true! The pending USAF transition from the good-old E-3 to the smaller and sexier E7A Wedgetail has awakened several old memories; some bad, some good, some hard to believe. I offer a few below.

The main aspect that seemed “bad” was the extended time away from family and loved ones. The long TDYs and countless holidays spent away from home were hard on everyone. Many relationships ended due to too much time apart; most “crew dogs” were single for a reason. Spending two Christmases away from home was memorable, too. However, after watching what the next generation endured during the War on Terror and the impact that had on personal lives and family, our “bad times” hardly appear bad at all. In fact, I wonder how many out there have been blessed to celebrate Christmas on top of a villa in Saudi Arabia while singing carols punctuated by the Muslim evening call-to-prayer? And who can claim a richer world-perspective earned from deploying to/ living in local cultures varying from Iceland to the Arab world? Finally, when else does one look forward to claiming your baggage after a 40-hour “rotator” flight from the U.S., if only to see if Saudi Customs once again “appropriated” the female crew members underwear! As in all things, what’s “bad” is really just a matter of perspective.



On the flip side, us Crew Dogs knew we were doing things that were important for our country. I get a chuckle that as a 26-year-old captain I was entrusted with billions of dollars of aircraft, many people’s lives, and empowered to make decisions that had international implications. Conversely, today, I can’t share a PowerPoint slide without three levels of review and approvals. Back then our activities were being followed and reported to very high levels, and could even be seen on CNN when we landed. I could recount multiple bombing missions, many Search and Rescue (SAR) and Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) efforts, and even one air-to-air shutdown supported, but in all of my memories of AWACS, however, it’s much more satisfying to relay the goofy—and some say humorous— things we did.

Many of those instances would simply not pass with today’s media access. Today, we could never watch as our “cousins” in the Royal Air Force (RAF) almost destroyed a Canadian O-Club, burned the Canadians’ piano while playing “House of the Rising Sun” on it, and attempted to steal the responding Canadian fire truck. Then, the next morning, as the Canadian senior-officer was chewing out the entire exercise contingent and demanding several thousand dollars in compensation prior to anyone “stepping” to an airplane that day, we watched the RAF “Wing Commander” stand, flip out a checkbook, and coolly respond, “Sir, would you prefer U.S. dollars or Canadian?” By the way, during that instance, then-Major Lori Robinson was standing beside me and laughing at the whole show along with the rest of us. Speaking of Lori, she seemed “special” then and it was not surprising years later to see her become the first female USAF 4-Star General. The RAF weren’t the only ones with a sense of humor. Once our squadron welcomed the Navy E-8s to Tinker AFB by “redecorating” the anchor in front of their hanger. My squadron mates thought the Navy would feel more at home with a pink anchor festooned with streamers vs. the plain old gray one they brought with them. In a stroke of genius, they also plastered our squadron “zappers” all over the freshly pink painted anchor. When the Security Police (SP) woke our squadron commander in the wee hours, he replied, “Couldn’t be my squadron! What dumbass would put THEIR OWN STICKERS on it after painting it?” and he sent the SPs off on a fruitless search for the perpetrators. I do think there were some very “focused conversations” once the commander found out – or at least suspected -- who actually did the deed, but that’s the way things should be handled – in the family with a sense of humor!

AFA 335

Speaking of a sense of humor, I fondly remember the callsigns. Since those days I have worked in some good organizations, but never again have I worked with “Shyster,” “Piggy,” “The Shrew,” “Smurf,” “The Warden,” etc. There are many other callsigns that I would be reluctant to speak in today’s environment as any overt reference to “The Boat Whore,” “Skin,” or “Merkin” would likely generate an HR complaint! I guess we were less sensitive then. Speaking of callsigns, one could not play “Crud” without one. Where else but the military could a bunch of 20-year-olds take a pool table and two balls and turn it into a combination of handball and hockey! I’ve suffered many the sprain and bruise, spilled many a beer (and lost a “life” as a result), and broken my share of O-Club furniture across the CONUS in heated Crud matches!

I’m still amazed at the creative ways our younger selves found amusement on often long and boring sorties. Who knew one could find such enjoyment from sucking flight lunch boiled eggs out of the sextant port? Or, how many hours could be spent building a virtual course and playing trac-ball golf across several airplanes and thousands of miles via TADIL-A data links? But the best and most creative way to kill time was to pull the old “dome pilot” show on first-time “guests” on the airplane. There were several variations, but the basic gig was to have a short, junior, crewmember don emergency-gear and visibly descend into the lower lobe where the electronics were housed. Then, a series of very official sounding communications were executed over the net among various crewmembers, and at the specified time, the flight deck would violently jar the airframe. Simultaneously, someone would initiate a simulated training track representing the “dome flying away from the aircraft” on a “remote sensor mission”. Meanwhile, the rest of us would do our best to hide all of this from the guest which simply increased their curiosity and ultimately generated a great deal of questions which we initially evaded and then “reluctantly” shared that the guest has just witnessed a very secret E-3 capability to deploy the radome remotely. Sometime later the sequence would be reversed with more comms, more shaking of the airframe and the “dome pilot” emerging from the lobe following “re-connect”. Some crews even went as far as having the “dome pilot” work up a good sweat prior to returning as there was obviously no room for air conditioning in the dome! One might even have the “guest” sign papers promising to never disclose that the E-3s dome could separate in flight and perform “remote sensor” operations, but that only worked on those with little knowledge of real security protocols.

Finally, I recall the special camaraderie in the squadrons. Where else, but in a squadron of crew-served aircraft can one roll off a 4am drinking binge, call his squadron mate to tell him, “we’ll be over for breakfast”, and arrive later – don’t ask how we got there -- to find a full breakfast ready to fortify one for the day ahead without any sleep from the night’s shenanigans. And that camaraderie extended beyond the squadron. My widowed mother lived just north of Montgomery. First, a few friends went to SOS and she gladly hosted them for a weekend of home cooked meals with the only proviso being they had to attend church with her on Sunday. Then the word spread thru the squadron and later the wing and pretty soon my “lonely” widowed mother found herself with hungry O-3s at her house every weekend! I still maintain friendships with many of those folks and feel that even today, I could call them with a problem and they would exert all efforts to help regardless of time or impact to their own lives.

In the end, it was all about the PEOPLE. We did some important things; we did a lot of crazy things and even some stupid (in retrospect) things. But I’ve never worked with or for such a great bunch of folks as I recall from my squadron days. I may be biased, but the circus we called life in a crew-served aircraft was all about the special relationships we shared. Those active-duty days created many great memories which are what we all happily recall and still cherish.

Author was a Weapons Director (WD, now known as an Air Battle Manager (ABM)), Senior Director (SD), and Instructor (ISD) in the 963rd AWACS (the (in)famous Blue Knights!), the 966th Airborne Air Control Training Squadron (AACTS) and the 960th Airborne Air Control Squadron (AACS) (USAFR)



AFA 335

AFA at AirVenture 2022

Article By Ken Philippart; Images by Lisa and Ken Philippart

Members of the AFA Alabama wing attended the world's largest aviation gathering, the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) AirVenture in Oshkosh, Wisconsin from July 25 - 30. Alabama State President Ken Philippart put out a call to Alabama chapter members who would be attending AirVenture to get together for a group photo at the iconic brown arch.

Over 10,000 aircraft ranging from operational military aircraft, home-builts, vintage warbirds, antique general aviation aircraft, ultralights, unmanned aerial vehicles, sea planes and powered parachutes converged on Whitman Field for the annual celebration of all things aviation. Daily airshows included military flybys, aerobatics, vintage warbird formations, World War II reenactments, parachuting teams and commemoration of events such as the 75th Anniversary of the US Air Force. Two evening airshows capped the performances with aircraft equipped with LEDs and fireworks dispensers followed by a fireworks show culminating in AirVenture's signature Wall of Fire fireball display.



(L to R) Susan Mallett and, Ken & Lisa at AirVenture's iconic Brown Arch.



Aviation legends such as World War II triple Ace Col Bud Anderson, spoke about their experiences, helping aviation history come alive for AirVenture attendees. Numerous presentations were given throughout the week including presentations on World War I aerial combat and the history of X-Planes.

AFA State members Lisa Philippart and Susan Mallett also participated in WomenVenture, the 15th annual celebration of female aviators and aviation enthusiasts at AirVenture. The luncheon this year featured Col Eileen Collins, a NASA astronaut who was the first woman to pilot the Space Shuttle and to command a Space Shuttle mission. Col Collins shared her career story and spoke on the importance of teamwork and inspiring others to succeed. The traditional WomenVenture group photo on Boeing Plaza returned this year after being digital-only last year due to Covid restrictions.

AFA 335

To commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the US Air Force’s founding, a panel event was held on Saturday evening. The panel was headed by General Charles ‘CQ’ Brown, US Air Force Chief of Staff, who spoke about the need to accelerate technological change to keep pace with US adversaries.

There is an abundance of activities at AirVenture, but AFA members still found time to meet for dinner and socialize with other aviation enthusiasts. The stories and passion for flight shared by this group made for an enjoyable evening befitting AirVenture’s moniker as an “aviation family reunion.”

State AFA members are already making plans to return next year. See you in Oshkosh!



C-47s at the daily air show



At the seaplane base on Lake Winnebago



US Air Force Chief of Staff at Airventure





IS4S was founded by experienced engineers and managers who realize the need to ensure that our government, military, and commercial customers have an alternative to the defense contractor “status quo.” The IS4S approach to systems integration and development is based on a time-proven premise: “Giving the customer the best value solution is always the right answer.” We believe that there is no better way to build our business than to build our customer’s business with high value, technically innovative solutions, and services. The services include Systems Integration, Prototype Development, Testing and Experimentation, Software Engineering, Controls (Hardware/Software Integration), and Program Management

AT IS4S, WE BELIEVE THAT:

- * Our first responsibility is to our customer
- * Our customer’s success is our success
- * Ethics take priority over Profit
- * Teamwork and communications 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
- * Those that contribute to success must be rewarded appropriately

IS4S Community Partner Spotlight!

Integrated Solutions for Systems, Inc. (IS4S) (<https://is4s.com/home>) is a small business that provides a wide range of engineering and management solutions to government, military, and commercial customers. Founded in 2008, IS4S specializes in Position, Navigation, Timing (PNT), missile system engineering, energetic research and development, vehicle electronics, additive manufacturing, and other innovative technologies. IS4S is headquartered in Huntsville, Alabama with office locations in Auburn and Opelika, Alabama; Orlando, Niceville, and Fort Walton Beach, Florida; Atlanta and Warner Robins, Georgia; Dayton, Ohio; Slidell, Louisiana; and Aberdeen, Maryland.

IS4S’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 our company is fully owned and operated by ethical, motivated employees.



IS4S has been one our Chapter “Wingman” Community Partners for the past 3 years!

www.IS4S.com



Community Partners - ACE

Lamar Advertising



Jeff Handley, General Manager of LAMAR Advertising of North Alabama, proudly accepts congratulations on renewal of LAMAR's Community Partnership with the Tennessee Valley Chapter, from former chapter President Rick Driesbach. Many thanks! <https://www.lamar.com/NorthAlabama>

Community Partners - ACE

CUBIC - GATR Technologies



Michael Blalock, Site Manager for Cubic – GATR, proudly accepts ACE Community Partner renewal medallion from chapter member and former GATR employee Rick Driesbach. A massive thank you to Cubic – GATR for supporting aerospace education at the highest level! [https://](https://www.mc2.cubic.com/)

www.mc2.cubic.com/

Community Partners - Basic



US Space & Rocket Center

Chapter President John Pennell (left) and former Chapter President Rick Driesbach (right) met with the Chief Executive Officer of the US Space and Rocket Center, Dr. Kim Robinson (center left) and Vice President, Space Camp, Ms. Robin Soprano, on 23 August to discuss all aspects of the AFA – USSRC partnership.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

ACE LEVEL

CUBIC-GATR Technologies
www.cubic.com

Mary's Wine & Spirits
Hwy 431 South,
Brownsboro, AL

PeopleTec, Inc.
www.peopletec.com

Straight to Ale Brewing
www.straighttoale.com

General Atomics Electromagnetic Systems
www.ga.com/ems

Willbrook Solutions, Inc.
www.willbrook.net

Modern Technology Solutions, Inc.
www.mtsi-va.com

Radiance Technologies
www.radiancetech.com

Whitespace Innovations, Inc.
whitespaceinnovations.com

Lamar Advertising
<https://www.lamar.com/NorthAlabama>

Wingman Level

Aero Thermo Technology
www.aerothermo.com

CrossTek Construction
www.crosstekconstruction.biz

Intuitive Research and Technology
www.irtc-hq.com

Aleta Technologies
www.aletatechnologies.com

Davis Strategic Innovations, Inc.
www.davidsi.com

Linc Research Inc.
www.lincresearchinc.com

Conditioned Air Solutions
www.conditionedairsolutions.com

Edward Jones
www.edwardjones.com/BrendaArmstrong

Qualis Corporation
www.qualis-corp.com

Integrated Solutions for Systems, Inc.
www.is4s.com

Basic Level

Bevilacqua Research Corp
www.brc2.com

Lisa Philippart, LPC
<https://urlifematters.net>

Shear Faith
www.vagaro.com/shearfaith1

Delta Research, Inc.
www.dr-inc.com

NeXolve
www.nexolvematerials.com

Southeastern Skin Cancer & Dermatology
<https://southeasternskin.com/>

Linda Morgan - Legend Realty
www.legend-realty.com/linda-morgan/

Redstone Federal Credit Union
www.redfcu.org

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 Oct: Executive Council Meeting

11 Nov: Veteran's Day Parade

17 Nov: Executive Council Meeting and Chapter Elections

15 Dec: Executive Council Meeting

Chapter 335 Officers

• **President**

John Pennell

johnpennelljr@aol.com

• **Treasurer**

Jack Royster

jroyster@knology.net

• **Vice President**

Guy Broadhurst

Broadhurst.guy@gmail.com

• **Secretary**

Eric Jackson

eric.jackson1969@gmail.com

Chapter 335 Special VPs

• **Aerospace Education:** Bob Hovde

• **Community Partners:** George Krym

• **CyberPatriot:** Bob Hovde

• **Webmaster:** Eric Silkowski

• **Newsletter:** Kathleen Mason

• **Veteran's Affairs:** Zig Jastrebski

• **Communications:** Rick Driesbach



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.