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TENNESSEE VALLEY FLYER

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Swords - A
Heritage Piece!**

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**Happy Birthday Air
Force!**

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Veterans Day Parade

The Tennessee Valley Chapter of the Air and Space Force Association participated once again in the Huntsville Veterans Day Parade.

Participating for the chapter were left to right: Bob Hovde, Rick Driesbach, Eric Jackson, Don Ralston, Lisa Philippart, Ken Philippart, Tom Armstrong, John Pennell, Burke Hare, Brenda Armstrong, Annalinda Viola (12th Grade Exchange Student from Italy staying with Beth Stanley), Claudia Grumbach (11th Grade Exchange Student from Australia staying with Beth Stanley), and Beth Stanley.



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Bamboo Viper - The Morning Light Sabers Might Have Been Invented

A Heritage Article by Tim Davis, Lt Col USAF (Ret)

During the Vietnam War, the Air Force maintained a radar site on the island of Hon Tre, RVN, roughly 6 miles offshore from Nha Trang Air Base. I was stationed there from November 1969 to November 1970.

First some background on life on Hon Tre: Hon Tre was a big island, with no fresh water, and more than 500 United States Air Force personnel, another 200 US Army communicators, and a 25 man detachment of Republic of Korea Marine communicators. My unit was Detachment 11 of the 619th Tactical Control Squadron.



Detachment 11 of the 619th Tactical Control Squadron



Landing Craft Utility Boat with a Water Truck Unloading

Det 11 operated a small airbase, without the runway and necessary airplanes though, with two sites. The first was the cantonment site (at the base of the mountain) where we lived, ate, etc. We had our own motor pool, chow hall, BX, medical clinic, security police, power generation, water utilities, et al. We also had a water delivery service, an Army Landing Craft Utility (LCU) that made 5 trips a day (only two on Sundays) to bring us water and all else we needed to run our operations and feed the troops. On top of the mountain (at about 1,300 feet elevation) was the technical site with our long range radar, height finder radar, radar operations, power generation, long haul comms, and security force. Both sites were surrounded by low lying jungle vegetation, and we frequently had several varieties of snakes, rats, and the little (50 to 70 lbs.) Vietnamese deer wandering through.



The Living Quarters

As a matter of fact, we kept several cages of Boa Constrictors as pets. For entertainment, we would buy ducks and rats in the market at Nha Trang and bring them to the island to watch the snakes make a meal of them. Once we caught a Malaysian Crate, first cousin to a cobra. It was too much of a threat to keep around. We were able to get it to a serpentarium in Saigon where they milked the venom to make anti-venom.

The buildings we lived in were clap board, wire screened, and corrugated tin roof hootches, like the Hon Tre Hilton. We had a shower building at the end of the hootch, where this story takes place.

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The shower building was a single walled building, i.e., no inside walls, the studs and stringers showed through. One morning, as I walked into the shower building I saw my buddy Frank already in the shower. Behind him, on one of the stringers was a little green snake --- about butt level. Frank was the kind of guy who never took anyone's word for anything. So, when I told him to step away, there was a snake behind him, instead he stepped back and looked at his feet. The snake, a Bamboo Viper, and quite venomous, was getting defensive and kept leaning forward, towards Frank's pearly white back-end. But because the stringer was too narrow, the snake would over balance and then pull back to keep from falling off the stringer. I took Frank by the hand and pulled him away from the threat. Once he saw the snake, he went nuts --- dancing, cussing, and shouting; it was very entertaining – naked GI doing the jig at 6 AM!

Hon Tre
"Hilton"



The Shower Building

Mama-San, who did our washing and cleaned our rooms, kept her cleaning tools in the shower building. I found a mop handle and whacked the snake several times and killed it. We found a tin bowl and scooped the snake into it to later bury it where it could do no harm.

A minute or so later, my roommate, Jim, came walking up the sidewalk to the shower. He was only dressed in his towel, holding his flashlight in one hand and his shaving kit in the other. Frank called out to Jim: "Jim, there is a deadly snake out there. Be Careful." You may have noticed; Frank did not say anything about the snake being dead!

At that moment, Jim invented the light saber in his mind, at least 20 years before Spielberg and Star Wars ever imagined it. He was dancing in his shower flip flops and stabbing the air, ground, and all areas in between trying to kill an already dead snake with his imagined laser sword. Unfortunately, his flashlight/saber did not emit a buzzing sound or cut up anything it came in contact with.

Come to think of it, Jim and Frank may have also invented break dancing that morning!

Such was life on a desert island off the coast of Vietnam.



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Alabama AFA at AirVenture 2023

by Ken Philippart; Images by Lisa and Ken Philippart

Members of Air & Space Forces Association (AFA) Alabama attended the world's largest aviation gathering, the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) AirVenture in Oshkosh, Wisconsin from July 24 - 30. This year set a new attendance record with 670,000 people attending throughout the week-long event.

For the second year in a row, AFA Alabama State President Ken Philippart put out a call to Alabama AFA members who would be attending AirVenture to get together for a group photo at the iconic brown arch. Seven Alabama AFA members participated in the group photo, including three Tennessee Valley Chapter members. AFA members Matt Feltman, Chay Derbigny, Earle Thompson, Don Ralston, Susan Mallett, and Lisa and Ken Philippart gathered for the group picture. This marked a significant increase over the inaugural State photo in 2022.



Members of AFA Alabama at the 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 the highlighting of capabilities of the Air Force Mobility Command. The only flying P-47D Thunderbolt razorback and Gen Douglas McArthur's C-121 Back to Bataan were the kinds of unique aircraft only seen at Oshkosh. Two evening airshows capped the event with aircraft equipped with LEDs and firework dispensers followed by a fireworks show culminating in AirVenture's signature Wall of Fire fireball display.



P-47D Thunderbolt Razorback

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C-121 Constellation Back to Bataan flew into AirVenture

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 talks were given throughout the week including presentations on the Bell X-1 and flying the Russian MiG-21 and MiG-23.

AFA State members Lisa Philippart and Susan Mallett also participated in WomenVenture, the 16th annual celebration of female aviators and aviation enthusiasts at AirVenture. The luncheon this year commemorated 30 years of women flying combat aircraft in the US military. The featured speaker was former Captain Michelle "Mace" Curran, a U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds pilot. The traditional WomenVenture group photo on Boeing Plaza was also taken. An evening presentation with pioneering women military pilots Jeannie Leavitt, Sharon Preszler, and Martha McSally discussed the contributions of women aviators to the defense of our nation.

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. If you are one of them, please join us for the next AFA group picture. See you in Oshkosh!

A USAF B-52 performs a fly-by for the crowd



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Stemming the North Vietnamese Invasion - Spring 1972

A Heritage Article by Zyg Jastrebski, Major USAF (Ret)

In early 1972 the United State's participation in the Vietnam War was winding down. President Nixon's policy of Vietnamization or the turning over the ground war to the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) was in full force. Nearly all US Army and Marine Corps ground combat troops had been withdrawn. The residual US forces in South Vietnam included Logistic support, advisors, Army Aviation, and the Air Forces Tactical Air Control System. Only one wing of fighter aircraft, the 366th Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW) "Gunfighters", at Da Nang, was left in country. When I got to Da Nang in January 1972, my new assignment at the 421st Tactical Fighter Squadron (TFS) greeted me with "You need to figure out a way to stay in South Vietnam for at least 181 days so you can get credit for a Combat Tour because the 366 TFW is packing up to go home".

Everything changed on March 30th when the North Vietnamese invaded South Vietnam with 14 regular Army Divisions which included tanks, Surface to Air Missile (SAM) systems, and a lot of field and Anti-Aircraft Artillery (AAA). The guerilla war had changed into a conventional land war of large ground combat units and the US had only support forces and the regular South Vietnamese army to oppose the North Vietnamese. Two Hundred and fifteen combat missions later I got to come home in January 1973. This is a description of one of those missions that stopped the North Vietnamese invasion.

On 6 May 1972, Dave Grant, my regular front seat pilot, and I were tasked to lead a three ship of F-4Ds configured with high drag snake eye MK-82 500 pound bombs and napalm for Troops in Contact (TIC) support of the Army of the Republic of Viet Nam (ARVN). Quang Tri had fallen to the North Vietnamese Army, and they were making a run to the South to capture Hue the regional capital. We were launched out of Da Nang and were directed to contact and rendezvous with a Covey Forward Air Controller (FAC) north of Hue. The Covey FAC (an OV-10) was working a TIC with the ARVN opposing the North Vietnamese forces. The rendezvous was feet wet (off the coast) east of the wooden rail bridge on the My Chanh River, which the ARVN had set on fire to stop the North Vietnamese. It burned for days and provided a very visible landmark.

The Covey was talking to an ARVN ground commander who was claiming he had tanks in a tree line in front of his positions. Covey could not see anything since he was orbiting above 15,000 feet to stay out of SA-7 SAM range.

In front of us also supporting the Covey FAC was a flight of two F-4s from Ubon, Thailand. Covey directed them to drop their MK-82 low drags on the tree line as requested by the ground commander. The Ubon F-4s were using the standard dive bomb tactic; roll in from around 15,000 feet into a 45-degree dive angle and pickle (release) the bombs at 7,000 feet above ground level (AGL).

After the Ubon bombs struck the trees, the ground commander said he could hear the tanks starting up and it appeared that they were moving. Again, Covey said he could not see anything but told us "Gunfighters" we were cleared to bomb the tree line.

Now snake eyes and napalm are low altitude weapons. The basic tactic was a low altitude wheel at around 4,500 feet with individual F-4s attacking in a 10 to 15-degree dive angle from different directions and pickling at around 1,000 feet. The idea is to get close to your target. Many times, the bombs are released substantially below 1,000 feet. The upside of this tactic is accuracy in support of friendly forces. The downside is that it puts you in the heart of enemy AAA, SAM (such as the SA-7), and small arms (14.5mm machine guns and AK-47s) range.

We pushed it up (speed 500 knots +) and took spacing (three F-4s in trail) and descended into the target area. Passing through about 7,000 feet I hear Dave up front say "Oh Shit". A whole group of about 8 or 10 North Vietnamese PT-76 tanks had come out of the tree line to get away from the fires started by the Ubon F-4s. We went into our wheel and began individual attacks from different directions, dropping pairs of napalm and Snake Eyes. "One's in". "Two's in". "One's off left". "Three's in". "Two's off left". "One's in". The rotation of F-4s on and off the target put continuous pressure on the North Vietnamese who responded with 23mm AAA, SA-7s, small arms and probably the kitchen sink.

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Below a thousand feet you see a lot more than what you see at 7,000 or 15,000 feet. The best way I could describe it is seeing some of the World War II gun camera films of fighters strafing in France. I remember one of our wingmen putting two snake eyes into the side of a PT-76 and the gun turret goes flying through the air. On another pass a tank crewman bailed out and ran. A good idea but, he ran right into our line of attack. Two snake eyes, one on the tank and one on him.

After going “Winchester” (out of ammunition) during our multiple passes, we came out hot (very fast), going feet wet to rejoin, with no battle damage. Covey was still above 15,000 feet trying to figure out what happened, and the ground commander was a very happy camper. Ground commander’s BDA (Bomb Damage Assessment) was four tanks destroyed and two more damaged. With the amount of AAA we saw that day, we were lucky we did not have F-4Es which were equipped with an internal 20mm gatling gun, because we would have stayed in the battle and strafed. Not the smartest thing to do with all that AAA.

With United States air support, the ARVN held the line on the My Chanh River, and stemmed the North Vietnamese run for Hue. In September the ARVN moved north and recaptured Quang Tri.



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United States Air Force Birthday 2023

It was raining like hell, and Yellowhammer brewery was celebrating Oktoberfest making parking near impossible at the 805 Campus Saturday night, but about 30 fearless Air Force veterans and spouses braved the weather, somehow found a place to park, and celebrated the 76th Anniversary of the birth of the United States Air Force at Straight to Ale!

After the Pledge of Allegiance, each veteran took a few minutes to describe what he or she did in our wonderful US Air Force. There were F-105, C-130, and C-124 pilots; F-4 and F-15 Back-Seaters; Minuteman ICBM and Space Launch Officers; AWACS and ground-based C&C officers; Communications, Avionics, Logistics, and Intelligence Specialists; and several more career specialties I'm surely forgetting.

Once the buffet dinner was over, and the standard toasting was complete, it was time to determine the airman who entered the Air Force the earliest and the airman who entered the Air Force most recently to cut the cake. It was easily determined that long-time chapter member "Skeet" Vaughn was the oldest airman present - having entered the US Air Force in 1951 - some 72 years ago!!! It took some time, however, to determine which airman had entered the Air Force most recently, and much to everyone's surprise there was an unexpected twist to the plot! As former Chapter President Rick Driesbach kept incrementally asking the crowd "who entered the Air Force in 1985, in 1987, in 1989...multiple hands continued to be raised INCLUDING the Straight-to-Ale bar tender - Chelsea Anderson! Finally, it was determined that we would recognize Ismael Rill who entered the US Air Force in 1993, and our bar tender who had entered the Alabama Air National Guard in 2013! So...Skeet, Chelsea, and Ismael all shared in the ceremonial cutting of Air Force birthday cake.

In one final act to end the evening, the group sang the first verse of the Air Force song with great gusto...and then the cake was sliced into pieces, passed out, and enjoyed by all.

The Chapter would like to thank Straight to Ale for hosting this event, and special thanks to Zyg Jastrebski once again for preparing a historical collage of Air Force related photos shown in a continuously running slideshow presentation throughout the evening.

Skeet, Chelsea, and Ismael Raise the Sword Before Cutting the Cake!



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Community Partners - ACE

Whitespace Innovations



Chapter President John Pennell presents Austin Boyd (right) and Joe Green (left) of Whitespace Innovations their “Ace” plaque. Thanks for your outstanding support of AFA and aerospace education!

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

Community Partners - ACE

General Atomics Electromagnetic Systems



Chapter President John Pennell presents an Ace medallion and the new Air and Space Forces Association plaque to Scott McWhirter of General Atomics. Thanks for supporting aerospace education in the Tennessee Valley at the highest level!

<https://www.ga.com/about/ems>

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Community Partners - ACE Radiance Technologies



Bill Bailey, Chief Executive Officer of Radiance Technologies and former USAF airman and officer, proudly accepts Community Partner Renewal Medallion for 2023 / 2024. Radiance has supported the Chapter's Aerospace Education Program for 8 years at the ACE level!!

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

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Community Partners - ACE

Lamar Advertising



Ms. Angie Ginn, Senior Illustrator, accepts 2023 / 2024 ACE-level Community Partner Renewal Medallion in honor of the 11-years of electronic bulletin board support provided to the chapter by LAMAR Advertising Co. Thanks for your unwavering support!

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

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Community Partners - Wingman

Aero Thermo Technology, Inc.



Air Force Veteran, Retired Lt Col LeRoy Huntington, accepts the Wingman Renewal Medallion for the 11th year of support by AeroThermo Technology, Inc. to the chapter's Aerospace Education Program. Note the new plaque reflecting AFA's new logo and new name – Air and Space Forces Association! A huge thank you!

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

Integrated Solutions for Systems (IS4S)

Vice President for Systems Integration of IS4S, Bob Henderson, proudly accepts Community Partner 2023/24 Wingman Renewal Medallion from former Chapter President Rick Driesbach. A great thanks to IS4S for supporting AFA's education programs!

<https://is4s.com//>



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Community Partners - Wingman

Intuitive Research & Technology



Arlee Holmes, Director of Engagement and Communications, and Celia Lee, Communications Officer, accept the 2023/24 Community Partner Wingman Renewal Medallion honoring Intuitive's continuing support to the Chapter. Many thanks to Intuitive!

<https://irtc-hq.com/>

Conditioned Air Solutions

Victoria Erickson, Director of Customer Relations, accepts the Wingman Community Partner Renewal Medallion commemorating Conditioned Air Solutions' 8 years of support to the Chapter!

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



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Community Partners - Wingman

Davis Strategic Innovations, Inc.



Chapter President John Pennell presents DSI President Andrew Davis a Wingman Renewal Medallion for his Community Partner Plaque. A huge thanks for fourteen years of solid support!

<https://davisdsi.com/>

CrossTek Construction

Clark Crosson, owner of CrossTek Construction shows off his Community Partner Renewal Medallion #5! Thanks for your continued support for aerospace education in the Tennessee Valley!

<https://www.crosstekconstruction.biz/>



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Community Partners - Basic



U. S. Space & Rocket Center

The US Space and Rocket Center CEO Dr Kim Robinson and Space Camp VP Robin Soprano proudly accepted the 2023 / 2024 Community Partner renewal medallion for their continuing support of chapter aerospace education objectives. We are grateful for our enduring partnership for aerospace education!



Bevilacqua Research Corporation

Former Chapter President Rick Driesbach presents 2023/24 Community Partner Renewal Medallion to Dr. Robert Pilgrim, Chief Technical Officer of Bevilacqua Research Corporation, and thanked him for 13 years of support to the Chapter's Aerospace Education program. Thanks for your steadfast support of aerospace education!



Southeastern Skin Cancer & Dermatology

Former Chapter President Rick Driebach presents Community Partner 2023/24 renewal medallion to Office Coordinator, Amanda Hampel, in front of a memorial picture to SRA Mark Forester, a US Air Force Combat Controller Killed in Action in Afghanistan on September 29, 2010. Dr Bo Rivera, the owner of SE Skin Cancer and Dermatology, and Mark Forester were childhood friends and the picture of SRA Forester hangs prominently in the lobby of Dr. Rivera's practice as a reminder of the price of freedom. Many thanks to SE Skin Cancer and Dermatology for supporting AFA!



NeXolve

Former Chapter President Rick Driesbach presents Community Partner 2023/24 renewal medallion to NeXolve President Jim Moore and thanked him for 13 years of continuous service to the Chapter's Aerospace Education Program. Over Rick's shoulder, one can see an artist's concept of NeXolve's premier technological achievement — fabrication of the sun shields now in orbit protecting the James Webb Space Telescope. A huge thanks to NeXolve!

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

ACE LEVEL

CUBIC-GATR Technologies
www.cubic.com

Marys Wine & Spirits
 Hwy 431 South,
 Brownsboro, AL

Straight to Ale Brewing
www.straighttoale.com

**General Atomics
 Electromagnetic Systems**
www.ga.com/ems

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

Whitespace Innovations, Inc.
www.whitespaceinnovations.com

Lamar Advertising
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PeopleTec, Inc.
www.peopletec.com

Willbrook Solutions, Inc.
www.willbrook.net

Radiance Technologies
www.radiancetech.com

Wingman Level

Aero Thermo Technology
www.aerothermo.com

CrossTek Construction
www.facebook.com/crosstekconstruction

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

Aleta Technologies
www.aletatechnologies.com

Davis Strategic Innovations, Inc.
www.davisdsi.com

Intuitive Research and Technology
www.irtc-hq.com

Conditioned Air Solutions
www.conditionedairsolutions.com

Edward Jones
<https://www.edwardjones.com/us-en/financial-advisor/brenda-armstrong>

Linc Research Inc.
www.lincresearchinc.com

Basic Level

Bevilacqua Research Corp
www.brc2.com

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

Shear Faith
www.vagaro.com/shearfaith1

Delta Research, Inc.
<https://www.dr-inc.com>

NeXolve
www.nexolvematerials.com

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

Legend Realty - Linda Morgan
<http://www.legend-realty.com/linda-morgan>

Qualis Corporation
www.qualis-corp.com

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.*

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UPCOMING EVENTS

- 14 Jan 2024: Suspense for Submission of Application for US Space & Rocket Center Scholarship
- 18 Jan 2024: Executive Council Meeting / Chapter Officer Elections
- 15 Feb 2024: 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.