



Centerline

Quarterly Newsletter

July - August - September

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AFA Websites

National

www.AFA.org



Thunderbird Chapter

www.AFALasVegas.org

AIR & SPACE FORCES MAGAZINE
www.AirandSpaceForces.com

Upcoming Events

October 4th - Silver State Warfighter Symposium (Secret)

October 22nd - Member Meet & Greet - Robin's Roost @ Nellis Club

December - Operation Warm Heart Adopt a Family

Apr 5-6, 2025 - Nellis Aviation Nation

Apr 14, 2025 - Annual AFA Golf Tournament

Note: All events at Nellis AFB, unless otherwise noted.

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Newsletter

Mike Morgan

President's Remarks

As we enter the final quarter of 2024, I want to take a moment to reflect on the incredible progress we've made together as a Chapter. It has been a year since I was elected as your President, and it has been an absolute honor to serve in this role. The hard work and dedication of our team have been instrumental in driving our Chapter forward, and I couldn't be more proud of what we've accomplished so far.

Over the past year, we've seen the rebirth of our quarterly newsletter (a special thanks to Mike for his efforts), hosted a very successful golf tournament (thanks to Jimmy and our team of volunteers), and secured a strong financial position that allows us to better support airmen, guardians, and their families. We've also grown our Community Partners, begun active communication and engagement with our members, and expanded our leadership team, creating a solid foundation for continued growth.

Recently, I had the awesome opportunity to attend the 2024 Air, Space & Cyber Conference (ASC), which was a true highlight of the year for me. It gave me the chance to advance my knowledge about AFA's many initiatives, including its excellent STEM programs. The discussions at ASC showcased AFA's commitment to driving innovation and inspiring the next generation of aerospace and STEM professionals.

I'm also pleased to announce that the two key AFA STEM programs are now open for applications: the AFA CyberPatriot program (Deadline: Oct 2nd), which focuses on promoting cybersecurity education, and the AFA StellarXplorers program, which introduces students to space system engineering. These programs offer invaluable opportunities for students and educators to engage in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. For more information, visit our STEM page. We're also excited to offer the AFA Educator Grants, designed to support innovative teaching in STEM. K-12 Educators can apply here.

As we move forward, I'm particularly excited for our first in-person member meet & greet since COVID, scheduled for October 22, 2024. This event will be an important moment for us to reconnect, share updates on our initiatives, and discuss the future of our Chapter. Click here to RSVP for the event. I look forward to seeing many of you there.

Finally, looking back on the progress we've made, I hope to continue this strong growth trajectory. If I am re-elected as your AFA Thunderbird Chapter President, I am committed to ensuring that we continue to build on this foundation and achieve even greater success together.

In service to the future,
REZA





2024 Silver State Warfighter Industry Day

Each year, the Air and Space Forces Association's (AFA) Thunderbird Chapter sponsors the Silver State Warfighter Industry Day (SSWID) at Nellis AFB. This year's event will be held on 4 October 2024 in the Air National Guard Conference Rm, 6155 McGough St, Bldg 877, Nellis AFB 89191.

The purpose of SSWID is to align the mutual interests and needs of the USAFWC and its industry partners to ensure critical capabilities are available to meet future requirements. SSWID provides chapter members with a great venue to receive updates on where Nellis and Creech AFBs are currently focused and where they are headed in the future. This all-day forum is designed to help Industry understand "what the warfighter is doing, and what the warfighter needs." It includes briefings and discussions up to the SECRET level from key leaders and decision-makers across Nellis and Creech, as well as interactive Q&A sessions. Attendees benefit from a single event where they can make new contacts and schedule follow-on collaboration.

Draft Silver State Warfighter Industry Day Agenda

4 October 2024

ANG Conference Center, Nellis AFB

0700-0800	Registration/Coffee/Refreshments	AFA/Security
0800-0805	Welcome and Admin	AFA – Bear MacNeill
0805-0830	USAF Warfare Center CC Vector	USAFWC/CC
0830-0915	Worldwide Intel Update	547 IS
0915-0945	JITTC-N	31 CTS/CC
0945-1000	Break	
1000-1045	Shadow Operations Center - Nellis	805 CTS/CC
1045-1130	432 WG Operations (Creech AFB)	432 WG/CC
1130-1300	Lunch: Box Lunch in Conference Room	
1300-1345	57 th Operations Group Update	57 OG/CC
1345-1415	Red Flag Update	414 CTS/CC
1415-1445	Break	
1445-1530	Black Flag, Grey Flag, OT Update	53 TEG/CC
1530-1630	Weapons School Integration Phase	USAFWS Commandant
1630-1700	57 WG Future and Wrap-Up	57 WG/CC
1700-1800	No Host Social at Robin's Roost (Nellis Club)	Attendees

We look forward to seeing you at the next Silver State Warfighter Industry Day!

For questions, please contact the AFA Project Officer, Barry "Bear" MacNeill, 702-595-0151 or his assistant, Jared "Jabba" Hutchinson, 702-406-0257.

Note: This is not an AFA fundraiser, all costs are to support the event itself.



AFA THUNDERBIRD CHAPTER MEET & GREET

Date: October 22, 2024

Time: 3:30 PM - 5:30 PM

Location: Robin's Roost, Nellis Club, Las Vegas NV

Join us for an afternoon of connection—meet our board, chat with other members, and share your thoughts on what you'd like to see from future events. We'll have some tasty hors d'oeuvres, iced tea and water, and plenty of good conversation, as we look ahead to exciting new opportunities together.

AFA Officer Elections

In addition, we are now accepting candidates for the positions of our four elected officers:

President
Vice President
Treasurer
Secretary

Mark your calendar, and let's make this a memorable event.

Scan QR Code to RSVP



Your AFA In Action



August and September were particularly busy! To kick off the month, Bobi Oates participated in the AFA Southwest Region conference in Tucson, reps from Tucson chapter and New Mexico were there, Fri we visited Davis Monthan. The week after, Reza and Bobi split forces to attend both the NTTR's 2nd quarter awards ceremony and the Weapons Load closing ceremony. This was the first Sin City Showdown, units from 8 bases competed in the quarter Load Competition and units from Red Flag participated for the first time.

8 Aug: presented SrA Benjamini Kincaid, 432 AMXS the ALS (Airman Leadership School) 24-D Levitow award and attended The 432nd 2 Quarter awards ceremony. 13 Aug was Creech's CCAF [Community College of the AF] graduation, presented SSgt Tristan DeGroat with the Pitsenbarger scholarship worth \$750.00. 16 Aug Bobi attend Creech's SSgt release party.

On 21 Aug The chapter recognized the 2023 Honor Guard members of the year with lunch from Raising Canes. The Chapter has been sponsoring the Annual Honor the Honor Guard awards and lunch for over 30 years. Congrats to the Airman of the Year, SrA Alexander Horst, 757 AMXS; Member of the Year SSgt Nikole Velasquez, 99 FSS; Rookie of the year, SrA Jordan Rodas, 99 LRS, currently deployed; and Trainer of the Year, Sgt Phillips Stinson, 99 DS.

The chapter helped sponsor Nellis' Airman appreciation event held at the Golf Course the evening of 23 Aug, about 100 airman attended. 29 Aug Bobi attend the Creech SrNCO induction ceremony at the Santa Fe, The Nellis SrNCO induction was held 13 Sept at the Santa Fe as well. On the 6th of September Bobi presented SSgt Timothy Martin, 58th RS with the ALS 24-F Levitow award at his duty section.

Coming up...

- Silver State Warfighter Industry Day - 4 October - ANG Conference Center
- Nevada Veterans Foundation Charity Golf Tourney (Fisher House) - 12 Oct
- AFA Thunderbird Chapter Meet and Greet - 22 October - Nellis Club
- Thunderbird Chapter Elections - TBD

It's nearing the holiday season - look out for Operation Warm Heart and Adopt-A-Family announcements in a few months!



What happens at National Harbor...

doesn't stay at National Harbor!

Mid-September brought several of our Chapter leaders to Maryland to participate as delegates to the Air and Space Forces Association National Conference. The event lasted two days (14 and 15 Sep) and over 1000 members strong. It was capped off by the Air, Space, and Cyber Conference - lasting an additional three days at the Gaylord National Resort. More than 20,000 Department of the Air Force, civilians, and defense contractors participated!

The National Convention brought workshops, official business (elections, by-laws, financial update, etc), and recognition. The Thunderbird Chapter was recognized for Special Recognition for both State Growth and Membership Growth - thank you to our members and community partners for being part of this dual accomplishment!

Several offices were up for election - congrats to these volunteer leaders at National level:

Vice Chair of Board, Education: Gary Copsey - Fair Oaks, TX

National Secretary: Paul Hendricks - Spicewood, TX

National Treasurer: Chuck Martin - Fort Mill, SC

National Director, West Area: drum roll, please... our very own Bobi Oates!

National Directors at Large: Dan Ohnesorge and Doug Slocum



Meet a Member! Member Spotlight:

SMSgt (Ret) Roberta 'Bobi' Pike Oates



"It's all about taking care of people." -Bobi

I joined the AFA a long time ago, but really became active with the Thunderbird Chapter in 2009, I went to a meeting to brief about the Women Veterans Advisory Committee and continued to attend, next thing I was vice president, till a Feb meeting and the President said it would be his last meeting, so I stepped up at President, then it became time for Nevada to have the Southwest Region President slot again, so I was doing both jobs. 3 years ago I was elected National Director for the West Area, and running for that position for another 3 years, but still chapter Treasurer.

Before all of this, I had a 23 year career in aircraft maintenance and retired in 1999 as a Senior Master Sergeant. I was one of four individuals to stand up the Air Force's first Remote Piloted Aircraft (RPA) MQ-1 'Predator' Squadron at Indian Springs Auxiliary Field (now called Creech AFB). Like many of you, I've deployed all over the world in support of contingency operations and been stationed all over. After retiring from the Air Force, I was a Branch Manager for Armed Forces Bank at Nellis AFB for 9 years. I've lived in Nevada for 30 years!

I volunteer because I'm not one to not keep busy, I was raised on a farm so there was always something that needed to be done, my folks instilled a great work ethic in me.

I finally figured out what I wanted to do about 5 years ago and that's to take care of Airman, Guardians, Veterans and their families. There is so much more available for folks getting out of the service now in the local area then when I retired, so I want the military members to know what's out there.

I really enjoy working with the First Sgts, The coin they gave me means the most, to be a part of their group, means a lot. I also like to read when I have time...

If you see me around I'm always ready to help! Introduce yourself! My credo really is "it's all about taking care of people."

(from the editor - because of her humility I've taken the liberty of outlining the below - Bobi is a treasure!)

Today, Bobi serves as a National Director for the Air & Space Forces Association and our Thunderbird Chapter Treasurer. She has served on the Nevada Governor's Women Veterans Advisory Committee, is currently the Women Veterans of Nevada Ceremonial team lead (she leads funeral services on Thursdays at the Southern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery for the unaccompanied Veterans). She's also a Charter Member of the Women in Military Service for America and Nevada Ambassador

Bobi is a prior awardee of the State of Nevada's "Veteran of the Month." She was awarded the Department of Nevada, VFW Women Veteran of the Year 2016-2017, recognized by Senator Heller in the Congressional Record Friday April 7, 2017 and awarded the Air & Space Forces Association Chairman's Citation, 2021 and the AFA's Member of the Year 2023!



AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION'S MITCHELL INSTITUTE

AFA's Mitchell Institute releases "On U.S. Nuclear Deterrence"



Arlington, VA | September 11, 2024 — The Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies is pleased to announce a new entry in its Policy Paper series, On U.S. Nuclear Deterrence by Gen Kevin P. Chilton, USAF (ret.), Explorer Chair at the Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies Spacepower Advantage Center of Excellence (MI-SPACE).

"I originally wrote this primer on U.S. nuclear deterrence nearly seven years ago as a means to educate the public on the importance of this enterprise, which is critical to our existential interests. While much has changed in the global landscape over that time, one thing, unfortunately, has not: U.S. nuclear forces have not been fully reconstituted and remain unmodernized. Some steps toward progress have been made, namely the amazing progress on the B-21 Raider program and the LGM-35A Sentinel ICBM Ground Based Strategic Deterrent program. It is imperative now these programs receive the support and resources they require to succeed, as they cannot falter—this is a no-fail mission. It is my hope that this primer, with a few updates, continues to help educate on the importance of nuclear deterrence, as it underpins not only our national security, but global security for all nations."

Gen Kevin P. Chilton, USAF (Ret.), 2024

The full paper (many pages of great info) can be found here:

https://mitchellaerospacepower.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/On_Deterrence_Policy_Paper_54-FINAL.pdf



Air & Space Forces Association

FY 2025 NDAA Legislative Priorities



Increasing the Personnel Strength of the Space Force

Original (2018) U.S. Space Force manning levels are not sufficient to combat today's challenging mission.. *The Air & Space Forces Association ("AFA") respectfully requests that the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Space Operations shall submit to the congressional defense committees a plan to increase the size of the United States Space Force ("USSF") to meet emerging threats.*

Aircraft recapitalization of Air Force, Reserve and National Guard

Demand by our nation's combatant commanders exceeds current aircraft availability. Planned retirement of over 600 tactical aircraft in the next five years reduces the total combat aircraft inventory by almost 350. To reduce and reverse this decline at a time of unprecedented near-peer competition, *the Air & Space Forces Association ("AFA") respectfully requests that the defense committees maximize the number of F-35As and increase the number of F-15EXs to be procured in the FY'25 NDAA.*

Flexible Software Funding

Weapons systems software is crucial to performance and requires continuous development and frequent upgrades. A single, flexible software funding mechanism combining development and sustainment dollars is the most efficient vehicle. Based on successful trials in other program areas, *the Air & Space Forces Association ("AFA") respectfully requests the Congress further grant the military services the ability to utilize colorless software funding structures and authorize its use on the Joint All Domain Command and Control ("JADC2") program.*

Child Care

Quality, flexible and affordable childcare must be available for all service members and their families to ensure readiness. *The Air and Space Forces Association ("AFA") respectfully requests the Secretary of Air Force publish a follow-on report to the 2023 Child Care Strategic Plan which articulates the costs required to implement the CSP's proposed solutions and identifies the most effective funding mechanisms to achieve those objectives. This follow-on report should also contain timelines for achieving the CSP's objectives based upon the proposed funding levels, which must be additive in nature and not supplant other needed Quality-of-Life services*

Exploiting Commercial Space

Obtaining available commercial space services, where available, grows Space Force capabilities and stretches limited resources. *The Air & Space Forces Association ("AFA") respectfully requests the Congress to further increase funding for the purchase of available commercial space services to support Space Domain Awareness (SDA), Space Mobility & Logistics (SML), and for Tactical Surveillance, Reconnaissance & Tracking (TSRT) products and services to encourage private investment in these areas of the space warfighting domain.*

Pass-Through

The 20 percent pass-through contained in the Air Force Budget does not allow for budget transparency with respect to true funding levels. *The Air & Space Forces Association ("AFA") respectfully requests the congressional defense committees direct the Secretary of Defense and the Director of National Intelligence to commission an independent research organization to perform an analysis of the positive and negative effects that "Pass-Through" has on the Department of the Air Force's budget.*