



Centerline

Quarterly Newsletter

January - February - March

VOLUME 38, ISSUE 1, 2024

AFA Websites

National

www.AFA.org



Thunderbird Chapter

www.AFALasVegas.org

AIR & SPACE FORCES MAGAZINE

www.AirandSpaceForces.com

Upcoming Events

**Apr 15 @ 0730 - Annual AFA
Golf Tournament**

Sept 2024 - Air Force Ball

Dec 2024 - Operation Warm
Heart Adopt a Family

Apr 5-6, 2025 - Nellis Aviation
Nation

Note: All events Nellis AFB unless otherwise noted.

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Newsletter
Mike Morgan

President's Remarks

The journey to my role as President of the AFA Thunderbird Chapter has been fueled by an unwavering dedication to the next generation's potential. I firmly believe that education is the bedrock of our Nation's future prosperity and security.

From pioneering STEM after-school programs to starting and leading the Aviation Club at Sunrise Mountain High School—just a stone's throw from Nellis AFB—to a 2014 Aviation Design National STEM Championship and guiding the Keller Middle School VEX Robotics team to the World Championships over the past two years, my path has been guided by the desire to unlock the incredible promise within each young mind.

Serving as the Director of STEM Education for the National Championship Air Races has been extraordinarily rewarding. Over the past several years, we've introduced over 50,000 youths to flight simulation, 3D printing, and the immersive worlds of AR and VR at our STEM Discovery Zone, besides awarding dozens of scholarships, each worth \$10,000, to aspiring young pilots. Witnessing these students achieve their dreams of flight has been a profound joy.

The AFA Thunderbird Chapter is uniquely positioned to amplify this impact across Nevada. Through initiatives like CyberPatriot and StellarXplorers, we're not just kindling an interest in aerospace and STEM but also equipping our youth to excel in a globally competitive landscape. My experiences have reinforced my belief in the transformative potential of aerospace and STEM education to cultivate future Air and Space Force leaders. In today's world, where technological superiority is paramount, innovations like AI are critical to maintaining our edge, especially against emerging threats.

My dedication extends beyond words to actionable outcomes. A prime example is leading Keller Middle School to secure a \$599 AFA grant to fund flight simulators and drones, highlighting the tangible support AFA offers. There's a wealth of similar opportunities for scholarships and grants through AFA that can significantly benefit our community's educators and schools. Embracing these opportunities is a responsibility I take seriously. The time for action is now. With a 'no excuses, just getting it done' ethos, we can fulfill our mission.

Throughout my journey, I have faced pushback and naysayers, challenges that are perhaps inevitable when one strives to initiate change or set ambitious goals. Yet, my focus has remained deep, and my commitment to our mission is unwavering. I am resolute in my dedication to doing what is right for America, driven by a belief in the importance of our collective efforts to advance national security and educational excellence. This determination stems not from a place of stubbornness but from a deep-seated conviction in the value of our work and the critical role it plays in preparing our Nation for the future.

The challenges we face today as a Nation are daunting, and the path ahead is not without its obstacles. However, I stand firm in my resolve, buoyed by the knowledge that what we are doing is not just important—it is essential.

The stakes are too high and the urgency is too great to be deterred by opposition or skepticism.

Our Nation, our children, and the very fabric of our future depend on our courage to push forward, to innovate, and to lead with integrity and vision. I will not quit, and I welcome all who are willing to join me in this noble endeavor.

With the support and vitality of our chapter members and leader, we're set to transform our chapter into a cornerstone of education and inspiration, nurturing a workforce that's not only technically superior but also deeply patriotic.

This is our collective duty and promise to the Nation.

I urge you to join me in this mission. Let us advance with urgency and purpose, united in our commitment to no excuses, just getting it done—for our community, our youth, and our Nation's security and prosperity.

In steadfast commitment to our future,

REZA



Reza & Kari Voliva, AFA VP of Member & Field Relations, at Wounded Warrior AF Trials

Recognition

AFA Field & Aerospace Education Award 2023 Member of the Year



Our current Southwest Region President and Chapter Treasurer, Bobi Oates, was recognized nationally by the Air & Space Force Association as our Member of the Year, 2023! Highlights from the narrative are below - needless to say we are fortunate to have her in our fold. *On behalf of the Thunderbird Chapter we all wish her an excited and hearty "Congratulations - very deserved praise!"*

Bobi Oates currently serves on AFA's Board of Directors as the National Director West Area and has spent decades supporting and holding Field Leadership positions in Nevada and the Southwest for the Air & Space Forces Association. In addition to serving on the Board of Directors, she continues to be a member of the Field Council and ExCom Committee and also tirelessly supports AFA's Wounded Airmen & Guardians program annually at the Air Force Trials.

A true philanthropist, Bobi has given her time and treasure to several organizations supporting the military and veterans. She is a member of the American Legion; Life Member of VFW & DAV, AFSA; Charter Member and Ambassador for the Women in Military Service for America Memorial and was Vice Chair of the Nevada Women Veterans advisory committee until she retired in December 2021.

AFA is honored to award the 2023 Member of the Year to Roberta "Bobi" Oates.

Your Chapter at Work Today

The Thunderbird Chapter has a rich history supporting Airmen and Guardians across the Las Vegas valley. Today, personnel from Nellis, Creech, and Range complex benefit from financial, education, and advocacy outreach from the Chapter.

Your membership not only provides a great magazine to peruse each month but the opportunity to participate in other ways - be it by volunteering your time, your financial resources, or even your ambassadorial spirit! It truly does take all kinds to support an all volunteer chapter like our own. We have a variety of neat opportunities if you'd like to be a part. Contact any chapter office for more information.

A common question we field is where do donations go? New membership funds are split between National and Local operations. Donations are used in the local area only. We provide award hardware, funds for active duty and veterans outreach, and charitable donations to service members in need around the holidays.

Next month we'll once again host our Annual Chapter Golf Tournament - a cornerstone fund raising activity for the Chapter. Just coming out and golfing provides outstanding support - get involved!

AFA Thunderbird Chapter Annual Golf Tournament



Our Mission

Advocate, Educate, Support

To promote dominant U.S. Air & Space Forces as the foundation of a strong National Defense; to honor and support our Airmen, Guardians, and their Families; and to remember and respect our enduring Heritage.

We utilize the proceeds from our golf tournaments to support the Airmen, Guardians and their families stationed at Creech and Nellis Air Force Bases, and across the State of Nevada

Some of AFA Thunderbird Chapter's Annual Support Initiatives:

- AF Wounded Warrior Program
- ROTC Scholarships
- Honor the Honor Guard Luncheon
- Pittsenger Scholarships
- Cyber Patriot National Youth Cyber Education Program
- Wright Flyer Aircraft Displays
- Teacher of the Year
- Base Awards programs for Airmen & Guardians
- "Adopt a Family" Holiday Support

Get ready to swing into action with the AFA Thunderbird Chapter at our exciting Annual Golf Fundraiser!

Experience a unique "Shamble" format where teamwork shines! Everyone tees off, selects the best drive, and then plays their own ball from there.

Register for \$160 to enjoy a full package: greens, cart, range balls, on-course events, tee gifts, and a delightful lunch post-game.

Compete for fabulous team and individual prizes, including long drive and closest to pin. Don't miss our thrilling raffle and silent auction! Join solo or assemble your dream team.

Breakfast will be available for purchase at the Club.

Sponsorship Opportunities

Platinum - \$3000

Includes up to 8 player spots, hole sponsorship with logo, lunch sponsorship, 2024 AFA Community Partner dues, website recognition and opportunity to place a table at the event.

Gold - \$1500

Includes 4 player spots, hole sponsorship with logo, advertising recognition, and 2024 AFA Community Partner dues.

AFA Thunderbird Chapter

PO Box 9749, Nellis AFB, NV 89191

www.AFALasVegas.org | secretary@afalasvegas.org | Tax ID #88-6006890

AFA Thunderbird Chapter Annual Golf Tournament



Event Registration Deadline: 31 March 2024

Register by email: secretary@AFALasVegas.org

Register by phone: Jimmy Clark - 702-610-1482

Register by Mail:

Name: _____ Organization: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Registration Options:

Platinum Sponsor \$3,000

Gold Sponsor \$1,500

Team (4) Registration \$625

Individual Registration \$160

Golfer Names

Make Checks Payable to: AFA Thunderbird Chapter

Mail checks to: Jimmy Clark, 2292 Rosendale Village Avenue, Henderson, NV 89052

Your AFA In Action



Reza Karamooz & Bobi Oates present an Adopt-A-Family check to MSgt Dugan, 757 AMXS, & SMSgt Laplante, 99SFS.



Bobi Oates presents Maj Gen Cunningham, USAFWC Commander, the Gen Ira Eaker Historical Fellowship

AFA's Thunderbird Chapter in Nevada was busy in December, hosting three events that supported relationships between the Air Force, industry, and the community.

In early December, National Director Bobi Oates presented Maj. Gen. Case Cunningham, Commander of the U.S. Air Force Warfare Center, with a Gen. Ira Eaker Historical Fellowship. For the past decade, the Warfare Center and the AFA Thunderbird Chapter have worked hand-in-hand to bring together leaders from industry leaders and Nellis and Creech Air Force Bases during the annual Silver State Warfighter Industry Day.

Attendees receive updates on current activities and a future forecast for the units at both bases. The annual event includes both classified briefings and networking opportunities and is usually held the day before the Nellis/Creech Air Force Ball in September. "We continue to value the Thunderbird AFA chapter's support of Team Nellis," Cunningham said.

On December 14, Oates and Thunderbird Chapter President Reza Karamooz presented the Nellis/Creech First Sergeants with a \$4,000 check for the annual Operation Warmheart/Adopt-a-Family event at the quarterly Community/Military Committee luncheon. This support resulted in the adoption of 347 Airman and Families and gifts for 627 children.

The Chapter also donated \$2,000 to the 926th Reserve Wing for their holiday support. Finally, on December 20, Oates helped celebrate the Space Force's fourth birthday by delivering a birthday cake to the 328th Weapons Squadron at Nellis AFB. Lt. Col. Derek Haun, the Director of Operations, as well as instructors and their families were on hand to enjoy cake and celebrate. The 328th is the United States Space Force's weapons school and is assigned to Space Training and Readiness Command's Space Delta 1.

The AFA Thunderbird Chapter's organization of each event serves to illustrate the impact AFA Chapters can have at the local level to support our Airmen, Guardians, and their Families.

2024 Air Force Wounded Warrior Trials

The Chapter once again supported the Air Force & Marine Corps Trials at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, with the Opening Ceremony kicking off competition on Friday 8 March. The trials are a Paralympic-style competitive event featuring sports adapted to the individual capabilities of the wounded warrior athletes. Each athlete competed to earn one of 40 Primary slots on their service team to go on and represent their individual branches at the 2024 Department of Defense Warrior Games. Chapter volunteers supported the athletes and organizers with manpower, encouragement, and bottled water. Kudos to all the warriors!



Wheel Chair Rugby



Reza and Jared Hutchinson lend support



USAF & USMC Competitors



Swim Meet



AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION'S MITCHELL INSTITUTE

AFA's Mitchell Institute
Releases new Policy
Paper:
"The Need for
Collaborative Combat
Aircraft for Disruptive Air
Warfare"



Arlington, VA | February 6, 2024 — The Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies is pleased to announce a new entry in its Research Studies series, *The Need for Collaborative Combat Aircraft for Disruptive Air Warfare* by Col Mark Gunzinger, USAF (Ret.), Director of Future Concepts and Capability Assessments, with Maj Gen Lawrence A. Stutzriem, USAF (Ret.), Director of Research, and Bill Sweetman.

Projecting decisive military power to distant theaters has long relied on the Air Force's ability to achieve air superiority by conducting offensive and defensive counterair missions to defeat an adversary's fighters, surface-to-air missiles, battle managers, and other air defense threats. Today and in the future, an effective air superiority force is an essential baseline requirement for any joint operation to defeat China's aggression in the Pacific, the pacing challenge for sizing and shaping the U.S. military. The Air Force's ability to provide this core warfighting requirement is now at risk. This report assesses the potential for a family of uncrewed collaborative combat aircraft (CCA) to reduce this risk by increasing the lethality, survivability, and capacity of the Air Force's air superiority operations in highly contested environments.

The prescription for preventing this failure is not a secret—the DOD and Congress must provide the Air Force with additional resources to properly size and shape its air superiority forces for peer conflicts. Advances in autonomy and other uncrewed systems technologies have created a unique opportunity to combine the lethality of 5th and 6th generation fighters with CCA that are designed to disrupt and defeat China's counterair operations. The Air Force could begin to acquire CCA at scale to reduce risk and deter China this decade. This stands in contrast to other, more exquisite solutions that are necessary to keep pace with China but may not be available in numbers for years.

The Mitchell Institute's Research Studies serve as an authoritative avenue for innovative, in-depth, insightful, and effective ideas and solutions for strengthening America's aerospace power.

<https://mitchellaerospacepower.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/The-Need-For-CCAs-for-Disruptive-Air-Warfare-FULL-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.*