

As We Close Out the Summer: A Recap of the Past Few Months

As the summer season ends, we're taking a moment to reflect on the exciting events and accomplishments that have defined the past few months. Here's a look back at everything we've achieved together.

[AFA Official Website](#)

Advocating On Capitol Hill

June 20, 2024 - Advocating for a dominant U.S. Air & Space Force as the foundation of a strong National Defense is a key part of our Association's mission. Advocacy includes meeting with members of congress and their staff to make them aware of the legislative issues that are important to us.

On June 20, Bob Hill, who serves as the chapter's Vice President for Advocacy, met with Ms. Grace Brightbill, legislative staffer for Representative Don Beyer, Virginia 8th District. Bob shared with her the Association's FY 2025 Legislative Priorities. *[A link to the complete listing of the priorities is included in this newsletter.]*

Ms. Brightbill was interested in learning more about the expanded childcare priority and noted that the congressman has advocated for enhanced military benefits to include adequate childcare and expanded employment opportunities for spouses.



Ms. Grace Brightbill and Chapter's Vice President for Advocacy Bob Hill

Representative Beyer's 8th District covers most of Arlington and Alexandria and is home to over 50,000 veterans, major installations to include the Pentagon and many of the Steele Chapter's 5,400 members.

"Our members of congress want to know what we think," Bob noted, "You don't need to travel to Capitol Hill and meet your representative. An email with your ideas and opinions lets them know we care - and we vote."

Doolittle Leadership Center Teaches DAF Civilians How to be Better Leaders

August 1, 2024 - AFA's Doolittle Leadership Center (DLC) taught its first leader development workshop exclusively to Department of Air Force civilians at Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling (JBAB) on June 5 - 6, significantly expanding its outreach.

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Recruiters Learn How AFA AIMS Can Support Their Mission



July 30, 2024 - The collaborative efforts between AFA and the Air Force Recruiting Service were spotlighted during the 317th Recruiting Squadron's semi-annual training session held June 26, in Perryville, Md. The partnership, known as [Advocates Inspiring Military Service \(AIMS\)](#), was a focal point of the event.

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Promoting Excellence in Education: Steele Chapter's Commitment to STEM

At the heart of AFA's mission is education, with a focus on informing the American public about the necessity of a superior military defense. Additionally, AFA is dedicated to Aerospace Education, promoting STEM activities to develop the next generation of American workers. The Steele Chapter actively engages with several Northern Virginia schools, Civil Air Patrol squadrons and Junior ROTC (JROTC) units to support these educational initiatives.

Over the years, the chapter has developed a strong partnership with the Space Force JROTC unit at the Arlington Career Center. Chapter members met regularly with the cadets and cadre, supporting their innovative projects.

During a recent visit to the unit, Chapter Vice President Mike Maxwell and Chapter Member Alan Edmiaston met with unit leaders, Colonel Scott Dierlam and MSgt Jude "Sarge" Victor to review the cadets' progress as well as to discuss plans for Steele Chapter support during the upcoming school year.



Unit Leaders, Colonel Scott Dierlam, MSgt Jude "Sarge" Victor, Chapter Vice President Mike Maxwell, and Chapter Member Alan Edmiaston

At the heart of AFA's mission is this phrase: "Promote dominant U.S. Air & Space Forces as the foundation of a strong National Defense."

[Read About AFA's Fiscal 2025 Legislative Priorities Here](#)



Supporting Academic Excellence

May 3, 2024 - The Air & Space Forces Association proudly acknowledges the ongoing commitment to education and personal growth demonstrated by our Airmen and Guardians. As they invest in themselves, they concurrently enhance the capabilities of our Air Force and Space Force. This spring, the Steele Chapter actively engaged in recognizing the accomplishments of several enlisted members, exemplified by the presentation of the AFA Pitsenbarger Awards to four deserving Airmen.

The Pitsenbarger Awards, comprising a one-time grant of \$750 and a one- year complimentary AFA eMembership, are bestowed upon outstanding Air Force and Space Force enlisted members who have successfully graduated from the Bolling AFB Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) and intend to pursue a baccalaureate degree. Chapter President Lloyd Swede had the honor of representing the Steele Chapter at the ceremony, where he bestowed these scholarships upon the recipients. The event took place amidst the jubilant atmosphere of the CCAF graduation ceremony on May 3, hosted at the Bolling Club. The occasion was marked by an overflow of attendees, including proud family members, friends, and colleagues, all celebrating the achievements of these remarkable individuals.

Among those recognized by the chapter were Staff Sergeants Wayne Lufkin, Jeresha Noel, Ariana Rodriguez, and Logan Brown, representing the 11th Wing, Andrews AFB, and the Pentagon.

Chapter President Lloyd Swede presenting SSgt Wayne Lufkin an AFA Pitsenbarger Scholarship, at Bolling AFB.

This acknowledgment underscores the dedication of these individuals and their commitment to excellence in service.

The Pitsenbarger Awards are just one facet of the Steele Chapter's broader mission to support and empower our Airmen and Guardians. In alignment with this mission, in 2023, the AFA contributed over \$230,000 towards scholarships benefiting Airmen, Guardians, their spouses, and children. These scholarships encompass a diverse range of educational pursuits, including college tuition, flight school, dental school, participation in organizations like the Arnold Air Society and Silver Wings, and even full scholarships to select universities.

Through initiatives like the Pitsenbarger Awards and substantial scholarship programs, the Steele Chapter continues to embody the AFA's commitment to nurturing the growth and development of our dedicated service members and their families.

Steele Chapter Participates in Official Memorial Day Ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery

On Monday, May 27, Americans nationwide solemnly observed Memorial Day, a day dedicated to honoring the valor and sacrifice of the brave men and women who have given their lives in service to their country. At Arlington National Cemetery, the hallowed grounds were the site of a time-honored tradition as the nation paid homage to its fallen heroes.



Chapter President Lloyd Swede and Chapter Secretary Bob Hill

The Memorial Day ceremony, now in its 156th year, serves as a poignant reminder of the ultimate sacrifice made by those who served on active duty. As part of this observance, the Air & Space Forces Association (AFA) participated by presenting a wreath of remembrance at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

The official ceremony was held in the cemetery's amphitheater, where senior national leaders, including the President, Secretary of Defense, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, delivered remarks. Following their tributes to the fallen, the wreath-laying ceremony, sponsored by the Veterans Administration, provided an opportunity for military service organizations to honor their members who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

Representing the AFA were Lloyd Swede, chapter president and Bob Hill, chapter secretary. Reflecting on the significance of the ceremony, Swede remarked, "It was an honor to represent the thousands of AFA members at this ceremony," while Hill added, "Honoring these heroes helps remind us that freedom is not free."

As the nation paused to remember and reflect, the ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery served as a poignant reminder of the debt owed to those who have laid down their lives in defense of freedom and democracy.