SPRING NEWSLETTER

From Orbit to Ops Center: Col. Nick **Hague Shares Insights from Space**

The AFA was proud to welcome **Col. Nick Hague**, Space Force officer and NASA astronaut, as the featured speaker for AFA's Warfighters in Action event on June 4. Held at the AFA Operations Center, the event was moderated by Maj **Gen (Ret.) Larry Stutzriem**, AFA's Executive Vice President.

Col. Hague, a U.S. Air Force Academy graduate with a master's degree from MIT, shared reflections on his **374** days in space—most recently as commander of NASA's Crew-9 mission to the International Space Station. That mission included a March 2025 rendezvous to retrieve astronauts Suni Williams and Butch Wilmore, who had spent over nine months aboard the ISS.



Hague, and Bob Hill, D.W. Steele Sr. Chapter Secretary. He emphasized the vital role of **Space Force Guardians** in supporting NASA missions. "NASA can't do its job if the

Space Force doesn't do its job," he said. With over 48,000 objects orbiting Earth, Guardians provide tracking and collision warnings to protect vital space assets and human

Hague also noted that nearly two-thirds of NASA's astronaut corps are military professionals, valued for their leadership, decision-making, and resilience. Reflecting on his early inspirations, he recalled childhood nights under the Western Kansas sky-moments that sparked his path to STEM, flight, and space exploration.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT:

∀olume 2, Issue 2

Financial Training for Airmen and Cadets

A Financial Readiness Bootcamp

equipped cadets and Airmen with key financial skills to support lifelong money habits and mission readiness. Read About it Here.

A Tribute to the Doolittle Raiders A Doolittle Raiders tribute drew

Honoring Heroism:

over 75 guests, featuring remarks by Col. Matt Coleman, a national live streamed toast, and a special appearance by former CMSAF JoAnne S. Bass. Read About it <u>Here.</u>

Wingmen Honored in **Atlanta for Outstanding Support of AFA**

The Andrew D. Turner Squadron and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt Silver Wings chapter earned the Lt. Gen. George Muellner Award at the 2025 National Conclave for leadership, service, and AFA partnership, strengthened by work with the Steele Chapter. Read About it Here.

Supporting AFA at the

Virginia CAP Cadet Summit Bob Hill, Secretary of the

Chapter, spoke at Burke Squadron's April 10 Dining Out, honoring its CyberPatriot team and Cadet 2nd Lt. Brisha Uprety as 2025 AFA Cadet of the Year. Read About it Here.

Col (Ret) Darian "DJ" Padilla

Celebrating Service, Continuity, and New Vision Honoring Lloyd Swede's Continued Leadership as Vice President and

Welcoming Col (Ret) DJ Padilla as Our New Chapter President Change is part of military life—and the same holds true for the



Chief of Staff.

Chapter. As of May 1, we bid farewell to **Chapter President Lloyd**

Air & Space Forces Association and our D.W. Steele Sr.

Swede, who received Permanent Change of Station (PCS) orders to the **University of Kansas**, where he will serve as an **AFROTC instructor**. Lloyd was selected for this prestigious assignment in recognition of his leadership at the squadron level and previous instructor experience. Though stepping down as president, Lloyd will continue his

leadership as Chapter Vice President. During nearly two years as president, Lloyd helped lead major milestones: expanding AFA's Families and Forces (F2) initiative, launching a successful Salute to Service honoring the

advancing the chapter's communications—now recognized as a model across AFA chapters. He balanced it all while serving as an NCO, completing a degree, and preparing with his wife, Kylie, to welcome a baby girl this July. As we thank Lloyd for his service, we also welcome Col (Ret) Darian "DJ" Padilla as our new president. A 1994 graduate of the Air Force Academy, DJ's career spans munitions and special ops maintenance, and senior leadership with **DTRA** and **AFDW**, where he finished as

12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year, raising over \$6,000 for aerospace education, and

that DJ met Claudine—the love of his life and now wife. Claudine is a successful entrepreneur, and together they make a powerhouse team. After retiring from active duty, DJ and Claudine chose to stay rooted in the **National Capital Region**. He now serves as a

It was during his time at **DTRA**, stationed at **Kirtland AFB**,

contractor supporting **AFDW**, where one of his current responsibilities includes overseeing the Air Force Memorial, helping preserve one of the service's most symbolic landmarks. With Lloyd continuing to support the chapter as Vice President and DJ stepping in as our new **President**, we're fortunate to have two dynamic leaders at the helm. Their shared passion for service and commitment to the AFA mission ensures our chapter is

well-positioned for continued growth, innovation, and impact.





Tony Frazier Virginia AFA Teacher of the Year The D.W. Steele Sr. Chapter proudly announces Mr. Anthony (Tony) Frazier, Jr., MAS,

Honoring Excellence in Education

MBA, AGI, LCP, as its 2025 Chapter Teacher of the Year. In recognition of his exceptional leadership in STEM and aerospace education, Mr. Frazier was also named the 2025 AFA

Virginia State Teacher of the Year. He will now represent Virginia in the national-level AFA Teacher of the Year competition. Each year, AFA chapters nationwide honor outstanding STEM educators shaping the future of aerospace. Chapter honorees move on to state-level competitions, with winners considered for national recognition.

Mr. Frazier teaches Aviation Technology and Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS) at Arlington Career Center in Arlington Public Schools. With over 20 years of experience, he leads one of only four public high school aviation programs in Virginia. His program's two-year waitlist reflects its exceptional quality and demand.

Using an FAA-approved curriculum, he prepares students for the **Private Pilot Ground School and FAA**

Part 107 Drone Certification exams. His teaching blends academic rigor with real-world experience, producing graduates who attend U.S. Military Academies, top aviation universities, and enter aerospace careers. Beyond academics, Mr. Frazier fosters mentorship, industry partnerships, and diversity in aviation especially among young women. His program has

attention, including an invitation from Saudi Arabia's **Technical and Vocational** Training Corporation to share their model abroad. "We are thrilled to recognize Tony Frazier's outstanding dedication, passion, and innovation in STEM education," said Darian "DJ" Padilla, President of the D.W. Steele Sr. Chapter. Virginia

even gained international

State AFA President Mike Maxwell added, "Tony exemplifies the best in STEM education. His work is a model for the nation." **Recognition at NATCON** At the 2025 Arnold Air Society and Silver Wings National





Marianne Tango Williams Award for her outstanding leadership as National Chief of Protocol Executive Officer. A dedicated Steele Chapter supporter and former 2023 Silver Wings Vice President, she recently graduated from George Washington University and was selected for the Air Force

Conclave (NATCON) in Atlanta, **Eva Guerrette** received the

Palace Acquire Program. Also at NATCON, Christian Williams, GWU Silver Wings President and Steele Chapter Vice President, helped secure Lt. Gen. George Muellner **Awards** for the Andrew D. Turner Squadron at Howard University and the First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt Chapter at GWU—recognized by Vice President Lloyd Swede as "among our most trusted and valued Wingmen."



Captain Jaedon Twum with the 2024 AFA Civil Air Patrol Cadet of the Year award—the chapter's highest honor for a CAP cadet.

of the Year

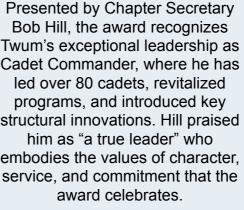
On May 12, the D.W. Steele Sr.

Chapter of AFA proudly joined the

Fredericksburg Composite

Squadron to present **Cadet**

Pictured above (left to right): Bob Hill, D.W. Steele Sr. Chapter Secretary. and Jaedon



Arlington On May 26, Americans across the nation paused to observe **Memorial Day**, a solemn occasion Cemetery, the Air & Space Forces Association joined

This year marked the **157th** official Memorial Day **ceremony**, held in the cemetery's historic

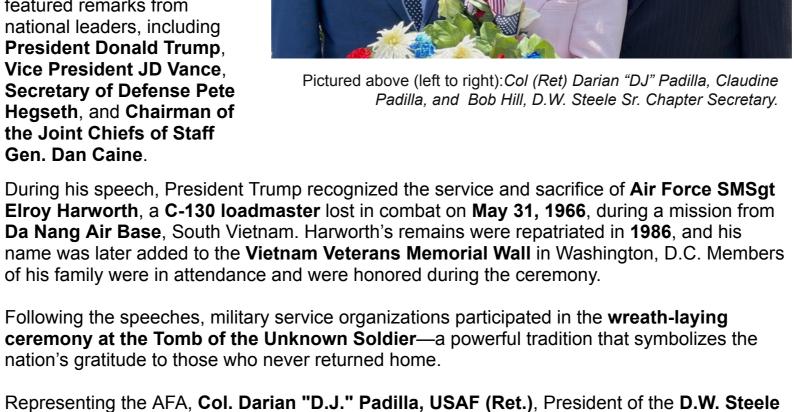
national leaders, including President Donald Trump, Vice President JD Vance, **Secretary of Defense Pete** Hegseth, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Dan Caine.

amphitheater. The event featured remarks from

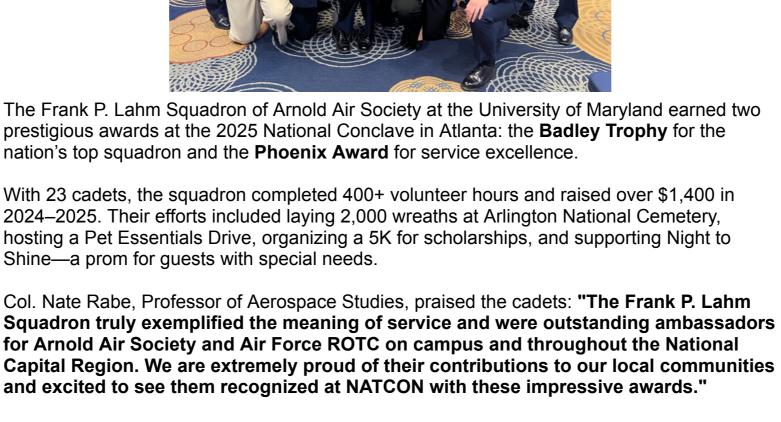
senior U.S. leaders in paying tribute to our nation's fallen

heroes.

nation's gratitude to those who never returned home. Sr. Chapter, and Col. Bob Hill, USAF (Ret.), Chapter Secretary, laid AFA's wreath at the Tomb. "It's so important that we never forget the sacrifices that Airmen have made over the years to keep us free," said Padilla. "Honoring our heroes reflects AFA's ongoing commitment to honor our heritage and history," said Hill.



University of Maryland's Arnold Air Unit **Earns Top National Awards**



The Steele Chapter is proud to partner with the Lahm Squadron on initiatives including a Financial Readiness Bootcamp and Tribute to the Doolittle Raiders.

Honor the Past, Inspire the Future: Volunteer with AFA

Air Force Historical Foundation. The Foundation plays a vital role in preserving the rich history of the United States **Air Force** by collecting and safeguarding irreplaceable

generations, the Foundation is working to **digitize its collection**—but they need help. They're looking for a volunteer with experience in grant writing to assist in securing funding for this important work. It's a chance to use your skills to honor and preserve the legacy of

the Airmen who came before us.

Association!

If you—or someone you know—has a few hours to give and experience in finding and writing grants, please contact Chapter Secretary Bob Hill at <u>VA239.steele.secretary@afa.org</u>.

Even a small contribution of time can make a lasting impact. Airshows and AFA - A Perfect Pairing!

What's better than the heart-thumping roar of jet engines, the gleam of polished aircraft on display, and the jaw-dropping precision of the Thunderbirds streaking across the sky?

Not much—unless you add great company and a chance to tell others about the amazing work of the Air & Space Forces

Mark your calendars: the **Andrews Air Show is happening September 13–14**, and this year, members from our Steele Chapter will be teaming up with the Gabriel Chapter (our NOVA neighbors) to represent the AFA right on the flightline. That's right—you'll be where all the action is, meeting airshow guests and sharing the AFA's story of advocacy, education, support, and heritage.

You don't need to commit to the whole day—just a couple of hours at the AFA tent can make a real difference. Plus, you'll get a front-row seat to all the aerial excitement!

Want to be part of the fun? Keep an eye out for more info as the date gets closer. In the meantime, if you're interested or have questions, reach out to Chapter Secretary Bob Hill, VA239.steele.secretary@afa.org. Let's show the public what the AFA is all about—and have a blast doing it!

Help Preserve Air Force History — A Grant Writing Opportunity One of our chapter's closest partners, or "Wingmen," is the AIR FORCE artifacts—photos, film footage, and written correspondence some dating back more than 80 years. But **time is not on our side**. Many of these historical documents are deteriorating. Photos fade, film reels degrade, and paper records become brittle. To protect these treasures for future