

Remain In Touch

*FREEDOM THROUGH VIGILANCE ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER*



March 2024



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The President's Corner

**By Bill Brockmiller
President, FTVA**

Hello everyone, I hope everyone had a great holiday season and that 2024 is everything you hope it to be! I will begin by congratulating Joe “Pepito” Figueroa on his appointment to the FTVA Vice President position. Pepito has been a driving force in the organization over the years, and I look forward to Joe’s leadership in his new role.

In 2024, we will continue to build on last year’s successes which included an enhanced FTVA website, recognizing and supporting our intelligence professionals, and expanding our collaboration with other like-minded organizations. This year, we look to increase the FTVA presence in our communities, maximize our resources, expand our membership numbers, and ensure our relevance as the Air Force enters an extensive recalibration.

For those that are not aware, the Air Force and Space Force announced sweeping changes to maintain superiority amid Great Power Competition which will include reshaping, refocusing, and reoptimizing the force. The changes are grouped into four main categories - Develop People, Generate Readiness, Project Power, and Develop Capabilities. These changes will impact the Intelligence and Cyber communities to include the reintroduction of warrant officers in the IT and Cyber fields. Exciting times indeed!

Spring is around the corner! We have warming temperatures, greener landscapes and the FTVA Spring Social. We are hosting the Spring Social here in San Antonio on 16 March 2024. Chief Master Sergeant Robert Hopkins, 16 AF/CCC, is our guest speaker. Please come out if you are available and the details are in the Reunions and Announcements section of this Newsletter. Hope to see you there!

The FTVA Hall of Honor Committee is accepting nominations for Hall of Honor consideration. Please contact Lee Anthony for information if you believe you have a candidate that warrants consideration. On the topic of Hall of Honor members, I would like to congratulate Mr. AJ Harrison on his outstanding service and support to the FTVA, and on his appointment as Director Emeritus! The FTVA hopes to continue to benefit from his experience and efforts for many years to come!

Finally, thank you FTVA members! Your efforts support those who serve and have served! Until next time.

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Hi Readers,

I want to wish all of you a somewhat belated Happy New Year. We hope you all enjoyed the past Reunion Issue of Remain in Touch. This issue is chock full of articles and photos helping us all to Remain In Touch, regardless of where we are located around the globe. In addition to Chapter happenings spanning from Hawaii to the Washington DC/Northern Virginia area, we offer up information on the active duty force in the 16 AF News section and sadly, we include our salute and tribute to those friends, co-workers and acquaintances from years past in the Fallen Eagles Section. Be sure to check out the President’s Corner, where our newly-elected President, Bill Brockmiller, lets us know the latest direction of 16th AF and the FTVA.

Again, wishing this Year of Dragon is a good one for you and yours. Please send in your inputs, photos, articles, and write-ups about get-togethers, both formal and informal. If you couldn’t make this issue, the suspense date for the June version of RIT is 1 June 2024.

Thanks for reading and, as always...

Remain In Touch,
Dennis Buxton
Your Newsletter Editor

FTVA Value Statement

Many Air Force senior leaders have released statements that should resonate with every member of the Freedom Through Vigilance Association (FTVA). They stated, “It is time for every one of us to strive for understanding and a culture of inclusiveness and belonging across our Air Force,” and “It is our very own General Benjamin O. Davis, Tuskegee Airman, who said, ‘The privileges of being an American belong to those brave enough to fight for them’.” These sentiments were recently echoed by the former Space Force Commander, General Jay Raymond, and former [Chief Master Sergeant of the Space Force Roger Towberman](#), who said, “We have an opportunity to get this right from the beginning by making diversity and inclusion ‘one of the bedrock strengths’ of the Space Force. And our prior 16th Air Force Commander, Lt General Timothy Haugh and prior Command Chief, Summer Leifer, have both implored NAF members to embrace diversity, challenge our own biases, and treat everyone with dignity and respect.

Since the formation of the USAF Security Service (USAFSS) in October 1948, and in its various iterations since then to the present 16th Air Force, we recognize that the one constant and bedrock strength of our organization is the people. Throughout the years, our leaders have understood that if we take care of the people, the people will take care of the mission. Our people are as diverse as the missions we support. Yet, despite these differences, we train and fight as one. We value and understand the importance of respect and dignity for all, regardless of ethnic background, religion, gender, and/or sexual orientation.

The FTVA reaffirms our commitment to our country and the people we serve. Now is the time for reflection and listening to those that may not have had a voice at the table. Those voices need to be heard and be part of this national debate. We, as an organization, understand the sacrifices that have been made so that all Americans can enjoy the benefits of liberty, freedom, and justice for all. These benefits must encompass all Americans for we are greater in strength unified than in division. The FTVA thanks all who have served and sacrificed through the years and remains committed to the values we hold dear of dignity and respect for all and the Air Force’s Core Values of *Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence In All We Do*.



FTVA Hall of Honor

Lee Anthony, Program Chair



Nominations Due June 17th

I'm usually averse to opening this input in a dark manner, but our community has suffered the loss of some really great people during the opening months of 2024. Often the word "legend" is used when describing their lives and careers, yet we don't often see the equivalent recognition associated with such a description.

The Hall of Honor is a gateway for you to ensure that true legends are recognized. Glance through the website – it is loaded with all types of individuals. Heroic actions, pioneers, visionary leaders, and skilled technicians from all ranks are cited.

You can make a difference. Each of us knows multiple people who deserve to be on that wall, and believe me, it's a lot more gratifying to celebrate with them while they're alive than it is to recognize them posthumously.

To date, I've received 3 nominations for the Class of 2024. We need your participation. The cut-off date for 2024 Hall of Honor nominations is **June 17, 2024!** I'll continue to encourage each of you to submit nominations – and I'll even find someone to assist with your nomination efforts.

Go to the website (<https://ftva.us/the-hall-of-honor/>)

or e-mail me directly (leanthony@satx.rr.com) with any questions or comments.

Thanks again for your program support! I look forward to hearing from you and keeping our Hall of Honor a model for others.

Minutes From the FTVA Executive Board Meeting 26 Jan 2024

FTVA BoD Meetings

Submitted by Evan Smith
(Edited for format)

The FTVA board convened at the LAFB Gateway club on 26 Jan 2024 (and via Zoom).
Participants included:

- Bill Brockmiller FTVA President
- Evan Smith, Secretary
- Andy Smith, Treasurer
- Ken Williams, Social Chair
- Dan Martin, Historian
- Roy Burnett, Membership & Web
- Ted Colquhoun, Past President
- John Tollion, Alamo Chapter President
- Lee Anthony, Hall of Honor Chair
- A.J. Harrison, Director Emeritus
- Dennis Buxton, RIT Editor

Financial Report/New Treasurer. Financial updates were provided by outgoing Treasurer Ken Maynard. Andy Smith has agreed to assume the Treasurer duties from Ken Maynard and this appointment will be fully voted on at this year’s Fall General Membership Meeting, after which

we’ll need to update account info at SSFCU.

Old Business.

- VP Support. Ken Williams and Lee Anthony are looking to support via Vigilant Partners.
- Maj Gen Hensley wants to join the FTVA (link provided by Mr. Ken Williams to the Vice's assistant).
- A link to banquet pictures was posted in the December issue of RIT.
- A link to the Vietnam commemoration ground was posted in the December RIT.
- Our Reunion golf POC mentioned that Golf Club of Texas will raise our rate to \$60 per person.



L-R: Dan Martin, Roy Burnett, Bill Brockmiller, Ted Colquhoun

- Dan Martin reiterated the idea of getting high-resolution photos from PA of the HoH plaques in the Bala in the event we want to make blow-ups to display in the Club should that be the location of this year's HoH ceremony. Evan and Ted took for action to discuss with PA what the Graphics section may or may not be able to assist with.



L-R: New FTVA Treasurer Andy Smith depicted with Ken Williams at a recent FTVA Board of Directors meeting.

New Business:

- The 2024 Spring Social is tentatively scheduled for 16 March; there is a possibility the new 16th AF Command Chief, CMSgt Hopkins, will be the Guest Speaker. Ted volunteered to broach it with the front the office. A.J. reminded us of the need to consider those who wish to attend but will need access to the base; we need to produce something for them to provide to the Visitor's Center in order to get a pass.
- The 2024 annual reunion is tentatively scheduled for 17-19 Oct.
- The president appoints Karen "Bam" Rolirad as the new Chair for Vigilant Partners (previously Mark Hess). The Board agreed to see if Ron Haygood can reach out to confirm.
- A.J.'s Director Emeritus status was confirmed by a motion and vote.
- There was a general discussion of AFCEA's status vs. FTVA's.
- Ted raised the idea of establishing a Memorial Scholarship. Ken W. noted that years ago this had been looked into with support from several Vigilant Partners, but the cost to initiate an enduring scholarship was prohibitive. Most agreed that there is merit in the idea, but details will need to be studied. Lee volunteered to be a part of any exploratory committee and advised that any scholarship has to be tied to the unincorporated 501-3C side of FTVA (Memorial Fund) for donors to receive a tax credit.
- Discussed the Membership Directory and need for more information to include addresses. Roy will work-up a solicitation requesting the info be provided.
- Brock provided an update on the Chubb Insurance policy. The cost went down from \$476 originally for two years by around \$200. He expects an increase this time around when it's due for renewal on 11 May.
- 1 March is the deadline for RIT inputs. Dennis needs a picture of the new President.
- Next meeting: annual luncheon on 10 Feb.
- The board requested that Roy post the constitution and by-laws on the FTVA website.
- The next Board Meeting is scheduled for 23 Feb 24 at the Gateway Club.

February 2024 FTVA BoD Meeting

Submitted by Roy Burnett

(Edited for format)

The FTVA board convened at the LAFB Gateway club on 23 February 2024 (and via Zoom). The meeting was called to order by FTVA President, Bill Brockmiller, at 1305L.

Participants included:

Bill Brockmiller FTVA President
Evan Smith, Secretary
Andy Smith, Incoming Treasurer
Ken Williams, Social Chair
Dan Martin, Historian
Roy Burnett, Membership & Web
Ted Colquhoun, Past President
Lee Anthony, Hall of Honor Chair
A.J. Harrison, Director Emeritus
Dennis Buxton, RIT Editor
Ken Maynard, Outgoing Treasurer
Pepito Figueroa, VP and Fallen Eagles

January Minutes. The minutes were emailed to all, reviewed and approved.

Financial Report. The detailed report was previously emailed out. Lee Anthony brought various pieces of mail that SSCFU had forwarded to him. Ken mentioned he would check with SSFCU as to why mail was sent to Lee and a discussion ensued about how a transition to the new folks needed to happen.

Old Business.

Spring Social - The Spring Social is 16 March at the Lackland Club. Invitations have been sent out by Ken Williams. Current estimates indicate 60 or more attendees. CMSgt Hopkins is the guest speaker.

Larson Olympics - Ted mentioned CMSgt Hopkins is reinvigorating the Larson Olympics, focusing on ISR and Cyber specialties. He plans on getting significant help from the Booster club. There will be monthly meetings to flesh this out. When asked if the FTVA will be allowed to significantly support, the answer was yes, details to be ironed out over the next couple months.

Vigilant Partners Update - The Vigilant Partners POC was Mark Hess and Bam Rolirad is interested in helping in this area. Ted will follow up with her on Monday. In addition, the FTVA received a \$1000.00 program donation from Mr. Greg Radabaugh, Gold Partner.

New Business.

Retirement Announcement. Ted reminded folks he is retiring soon from Civil Service. His last day will be 29 March.

Payment Vehicles. Adding the PayPal QR code to the *Remain in Touch* issues was discussed. Ken Maynard mentioned that we should do more research as there might be better, less costly, alternatives. Andy Smith and Roy Burnett discussed this as we need to ensure we make it easy enough for younger and legacy members.

RIT Inputs. *Remain in Touch* inputs are due by 1 March.

Membership Directory. Roy reminded all that work continues on a rejuvenated Membership Directory. However, our tech team has run into some technical glitches and is working with D3fy, our web hosts, to resolve. In addition, the email issue for resetting passwords has been fixed.

The adjourned at 1340L with the next board meeting at the Gateway club will be 22 March at 1300L.

16th Air Force News

Articles compiled and submitted by Ken Maynard
Associate Editor Extraordinaire

SECURING THE INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT: 16TH AIR FORCE JOINS FORCES WITH POLAND CYBER COMMAND

Adapted from an article by Capt. Dorothy Sherwood, 16AF/PA

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-LACKLAND, TX—Interoperability is the ability of organizations and systems to work together effectively and efficiently to reach a common objective.



Lt. Gen. Kevin Kennedy, 16th Air Force commander (fifth from the left), shakes hands with Polish Maj. Gen. Karol Molenda, Commander, Poland Cyber Command, at Cyber Command Headquarters, Poland, during a group photo of 16th Air Force leadership and Poland Cyber Command leadership, Aug. 21, 2023. Bilateral engagements like this cultivate partnerships to better coordinate information warfare operations and converge NATO defense capabilities. For 16th Air Force and the Poland Cyber

Command, the common objective is to hunt, expose, disrupt and defeat malicious cyber actors and other malign threats in the Information Environment.

“The key to compete and win in the 21st century is to develop critical relationships with our partners and Allies,” said U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Kevin Kennedy, 16th Air Force (Air Forces Cyber) commander. “Those relationships are built upon information sharing at all levels. A secured digital environment with our ally Poland creates a wider security cooperation enterprise at the strategic, operational and tactical levels.”

The Poland Cyber Command is a new specialized component of the Polish Armed Forces with over 6,500 skilled personnel responsible for uniting capabilities in advanced information and cryptographic technologies.

Aligning talent with 16th Air Force, the Information Warfare Numbered Air Force and the lead for cryptologic activities, they are a perfect match for exchanging knowledge and expertise in the face of shared challenges and threats.

"Cooperation between Poland Cyber Command and 16th Air Force is crucial in combating continuously increasing sophisticated cyberattacks," said Polish Maj. Gen. Karol Molenda, Poland Cyber Command commander. "We have joined our capabilities in the daily battle for security."

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Poland Cyber Command's number of cyberattacks in their systems has increased more than fivefold. During this time, the Polish Cyber Command's teams have effectively countered their operations by identifying these advanced persistent threat groups, allowing their organization to gain insights into these APT groups' tactics, techniques and procedures.

Sharing this information enhances IW resources, which has been a continual discussion between the Poland Cyber Command and 16th Air Force.

One program in particular, Iron Cactus, is used to map and visualize defensive recommendations and insights to adversary TTPs. It was discussed with the Poland Cyber Command at their visit to the 90th Cyberspace Operations Squadron in June 2023.

The 90th COS, assigned to 16th Air Force, is the U.S. Air Force's premier cyberspace capabilities development organization. The visit focused on both hardware and software solutions.

In the era of Great Power Competition, collaborations on information domain capabilities with our ally Poland ensures a long-term competitiveness in IW — an imperative reason Kennedy and Molenda have hosted each other and met with subject matter experts at their respective commands.

Another advantage is expertise exchange, which has been ongoing throughout the past year between the two organizations.

During Cyber Coalition 2023, NATO's largest cyber defensive exercise, 35 countries including the Poland Cyber Command and 16th Air Force trained and tested more than 1,300 cyber operators.

The Poland Cyber Command led the planning and execution of cyber operators from Central and Eastern European countries, while 16th Air Force led the U.S. Cyber Coalition. Their teams operated in four time zones preparing themselves for real-life challenges.

The Information Environment presents real-life challenges daily, in which misinformation, disinformation and influential operations from threat actors seek to destabilize our societies and sow discord.

Combining 16th Air Force and Poland Cyber Command's capabilities and expertise represents a foundational advantage over these threat actors that must be protected and reinforced.

USAF ISR AIRMEN ACE GERMAN AF PROFICIENCY BADGE COMPETITION

Adapted from an article by Matthew McGovern

FORT EISENHOWER, GA—Three Airmen from the 16AF’s 480th Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance Group (ISR) earned the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge at a German-hosted competition, Fort Eisenhower, Georgia, 22-26 Jan, reinforcing the long-standing partnership with German allies.



SrA Omar Perez-Castellanos and SrA Allexis Anderson (middle), both from the 451st IS, display their German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge certificates with USAF Airmen and German Armed Forces liaisons at Fort Eisenhower, Georgia, 26 Jan 24. The GAFFPB competition included Combat Lifesaver Training, basic fitness test, an HK P30 pistol marksmanship event, 100-meter swim and culminating in a seven-mile ruck hike where participants carry 33-pound rucksacks across the finish line. Any U.S. service member can participate after obtaining an evaluation report from their

commanding officer recognizing their physical and moral standards to show they are both physically and morally fit.

Fourteen of 17 Airmen and Soldiers passed a series of eight events, administered by German Armed Forces Liaisons. The events test strength, endurance, accuracy, and adaptability, and if successful, provides Airmen a permanent badge on their uniforms.

SrA Thomas McClenathan, 3rd Intelligence Squadron (IS), SrA Omar Perez-Castellanos, and SrA Allexis Anderson, both from the 451st IS, respectively secured gold, silver, and bronze badges based on points earned throughout the competition.

“This is a phenomenal achievement and will become a permanent decoration contained in their military records and is undoubtedly something they will forever be proud of,” said Col Matthew Norton, 480th ISR commander. “The badge in German is formally called the Abzeichen für besondere Leistungen im Truppendienst, which translates to, award for special performance in military service.”

Training, exercise, and competitions with allies and partners increase combat effectiveness and

grow readiness, two 16th Air Force priorities, but also, "...maintaining an active lifestyle is the key to health and longevity," said Anderson. "It's a priority for me to stay active and challenge myself, this competition checked all my boxes."

The competition originates from when military proficiency badges were introduced in Prussia in the 19th century. These badges represent discipline, skill, and professionalism within the German military. The German Armed Forces opened the competition to foreign military around the globe to foster intercultural exchange and cooperation.

"The German Liaisons here at Fort Eisenhower contribute to building mutual trust needed for effective transatlantic armaments cooperation by way of continuous dialogue with the U.S. and Canadian partners," said Anderson. "One of the many ways they build connections with people here is through the GAFPB competition."

"Train as soon as you can, and as often as you can if you are shooting for gold," said Perez-Castellanos. "The best time frame for training to meet the gold standard is two months, if you're already in decent shape. However, if you would like a feel of what the GAFPB is like, sign up as soon as you can."

Some of the events are similar to U.S. Air Force physical training; for the basic fitness test portion, participants are required to complete three fitness tests in 90 minutes or less. This includes 11-by-10-meter sprint, a flexed arm hang, and a 1,000-meter run.

"Even if you're eliminated or fail to meet the gold standard you will at least know where you stand and what you need to improve," he said. "Don't be afraid of failure, be afraid of never having tried."

Specific GAFPB events include Combat Lifesaver Training, a basic fitness test, an HK P30 pistol marksmanship event and a 100-meter swim. The standards for passing are high.

To pass the swim event, competitors must swim in military uniform with the physical training uniform underneath, upon completion they must remove their outer uniform without touching the side of the pool.

Perez-Castellanos' first GAFPB swim attempt was difficult, "I failed the swim qualification and was eliminated from the rest of the event," he said. "At that time, I only started seriously training two weeks prior, not enough time to bring my skills to meeting the standard."

Before this competition, Perez-Castellanos practiced three times a week, "Within a month and a half, I was able to bring my swim time from 100 meters in six minutes to 100 meters in 3 minutes and 40 seconds, and I was able to bring my shooting proficiency to meeting the gold standard for that event."

The competition culminates in a seven-mile ruck hike where participants carry 33-pound rucksacks across the finish line.

"Personally, I had a fantastic time participating in the competition and would recommend it to anyone who is even slightly interested," said Anderson. "It's a great way to meet new people and

just overall a whole lot of fun. Don't take yourself too seriously, have lots of laughs, and enjoy the moment. It's a unique opportunity to represent your branch and unit."

Any U.S. servicemember can participate after obtaining an evaluation report from their commanding officer recognizing their physical and moral standards to show they are both physically and morally fit.

The 480th ISR Wing at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia, provides a comprehensive set of ISR capabilities for the Air Force Distributed Common Ground System (DCGS), as well as the national cryptologic, information technology, cyber ISR, tactical analysis, Combined Forces Air Component Commander (CFACC)-support, and national-to-tactical signals intelligence integration.

The 480th ISRW is functionally aligned to span the full spectrum of ISR operations, from humanitarian assistance to major theater conflict, leveraging federated mission partners to synchronize timely, relevant intelligence regionally aligned to support combatant command operations.

16TH AIR FORCE AIRMEN SHARE CYBER EXPERTISE WITH 130 MIDDLE-SCHOOL STUDENTS

Adapted from an article by Matthew McGovern

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-LACKLAND, TX — Sixteenth Air Force members visited with more than 130 eighth-grade students during an Airmen-led panel discussion at Zachry Middle School, Dec. 13.

The panel of six Airmen and one civilian discussed their cybersecurity backgrounds, explained information technology opportunities, and described the benefits of Air Force and government cyber career fields.

"It's hard to recruit members to join the Air Force for cybersecurity since we have a lot of competition from companies like Amazon and Google, but those companies are looking for experience," said Capt. Christine Hanson, an instructor at the 39th Information Operations Squadron, Det 1. "The great thing about the Air Force is you might not have a technical background, but we'll stick you in a technical course and get you the technical experience."

Hanson described her role as an instructor for a two-month long basic operator course and how it's "one of the first courses you ever take to become a cyber professional."

TSgt Alfredo Pelaez, 39th IOS, Det 1 student, is no stranger to cyber training and spoke to the students about his background. As a prior cyber defender, he is currently enrolled in Future Operator Readiness Growth and Enrichment training. The class is designed to teach cryptologic organization tools and risk management to carry out missions.

"Upon completion from my course, I'll be well rounded with both cyber defense and cyber offense experience," Pelaez said.

Aside from his military education, he credits the Air Force’s military tuition assistance program, that funds up to \$4,500 per year to help with continuing education.



Sixteenth Air Force members speak to students about their cybersecurity backgrounds during a panel discussion at Zachery Magnet Middle School Dec. 13, 2023, San Antonio, Texas. The panel explained information technology opportunities and described the benefits of Air Force and government cyber career fields to more than 130 eighth-grade students. (U.S. Air Force photo by Matthew McGovern)

“Because of the Air Force, I was able to get two bachelor's degrees and a master’s degree from a top-25 research university. Not only that, but I'm able to work side by side with officers, and people who have graduated from top tier schools who are amazing, like literally geniuses,” Pelaez told the students.

“The Air Force has also paid me to go to MIT for conferences, attend interesting, classified briefings, and go listen to the smartest people in the world talk about the most exciting cybersecurity topics, like AI.”

When asked what a cybersecurity job was like in the Air Force, TSgt Deven Poepperling, 616th Operations Center operations technician, gave the students a

glimpse into a typical day analyzing malware.

“My job is never done, it’s always evolving,” he said. “There’s no specific end state—it’s always combating the future vulnerability and looking for the next potential issue and combating it with updates and moving things forward with planning and coordination.

“There's a world full of people who don't want to do nice things, and it's not one person in the fight against them. We're all in the fight together. Partnership and teamwork is paramount to combating threats and operating in today's environment, where everything is connected.”

Poepperling explained how this teamwork often comes from new recruits and what he likes to see in new Air Force members is creativity and the ability to solve puzzles. “If you like solving puzzles, there are websites allowing you to work with cyber tools,” said Poepperling. “We use Linux a majority of the time, C++ and any other kind of coding we are interested in having you learn and continue that effort.”

Raul Casiano, a Zachry student, said he enjoys computer coding and relishes the advice he received from the panel.

“I found it interesting hearing what they do on a daily basis and how they use attention to detail to solve cyber problems to make things easier for people,” he said.

Casiano is considering joining the Air Force and said he “would like to help the world by learning about defense hacking and stopping those kinds of threats.”

The 16th Air Force headquartered at Joint Base San Antonio, Texas, focuses on information warfare in the modern age. Information Warfare requires integrating: Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance; Cyber Warfare; Electromagnetic Warfare; Weather; Public Affairs; and Information Operations capabilities.

363D ISR GROUP PAYS TRIBUTE TO 1LT PAUL SCHMIDT; PILOT ACCOUNTED FOR FROM WWII

Adapted from an article by TSgt AJ Hyatt, 363 ISRW

JOINT BASE LANGLEY-EUSTIS, VA — In March 1945, U.S. Army Air Forces 1Lt Paul W. Schmidt, a pilot assigned to 161st Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, 363rd Tactical Reconnaissance Group, 8th Air Force, and his squadron were engaged with attacking German lines of transportation along the Rhine River. On March 23, 1945, Schmidt was attacking an enemy train near Sendenhorst, Germany, in his F-6D, a reconnaissance version of the P-51 Mustang fighter, when he went missing in action at the age of 20. The War Department issued a presumptive finding of death March 24, 1946.



In May 1945, a set of unidentified remains was recovered, but there was insufficient evidence to make an identification. The remains were buried as an Unknown at the Netherlands American Cemetery.

U.S. Army Air Forces 1st Lt. Paul Schmidt, pilot assigned to 161st Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, 363rd Tactical Reconnaissance Group, 8th Air Force, stands next to his brother, Roy. Schmidt was interred Nov. 28, 2023 at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Va., with family members and members from both the 363d IW and 363d ISRG in attendance.

In 2016, historians with the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) determined that the unidentified remains could be those of Lt. Schmidt. Almost 77 years later, on Sept. 28, 2022, based on anthropological analysis, circumstantial evidence, and finally mitochondrial DNA

analysis, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency positively identified Lt. Schmidt, allowing his family to finally bury him.

Schmidt was interred Nov. 28, 2023 at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Va., with family members and members from both the 363d ISRW and 363d ISR Group in attendance.

When Mr. Michael Limmer, 363d ISRW historian, first learned that Lt Schmidt's remains had been identified, he immediately started coordinating with the 432d Wing at Creech Air Force Base, Nevada, to see if they were preparing travel plans to attend the funeral. The 432d Wing owned the squadron heritage, but unfortunately were not able to attend. Limmer knew the Group needed to be there.

"This is the kind of thing that a historian lives for," Limmer said. "This is an American hero, from our unit, who gave his life for this nation and who has been buried on foreign soil for 75 years. I felt a strong urge to see him brought home and to ensure that representatives from his unit were there to bury and honor him at Arlington."

Accompanying Mr. Limmer was USAF LtCol George Dibble, 363d ISR Group deputy commander, and U.S. Air Force CMSgt Jeremy Murphy, 363d ISR Group senior enlisted leader.

"Today, I experienced one of the biggest honors of my career, and it had absolutely nothing do with me," said Dibble. "I, along with our group senior enlisted leader, and our wing historian, had the honor and privilege of representing the 363d ISR Group as Lt. Schmidt's family said goodbye to him one final time."

Dibble had the opportunity to meet with Lt Schmidt's brother and nephew at the funeral.

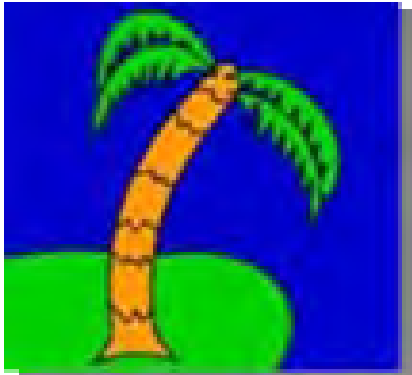
"Schmidt sounded like he was a remarkable man who cared deeply about others and had a lifelong habit of standing up for people who couldn't stand up for themselves," said Dibble. The group also met another special guest who attended the funeral.

"When Lt. Schmidt's plane crashed, it hit a house that held civilians, and sadly a man in the house was killed," Dibble said. "His grandson would go on to become a journalist and dedicated significant time to researching the circumstances of his grandfather's death. This led him to Paul Schmidt's younger brother, Roy, and while they were bound together through a shared tragedy, they built a years-long friendship."

"I'm proud as a person who was able to briefly work the accounting mission several years ago," said Dibble. "I'm proud as the deputy commander of the same unit under which Lt. Schmidt served 80 years ago, and for the chance to pay heartfelt respects to him and his family. But I'm especially proud of the tireless, and generally unsung, efforts that go on every day to provide the families of those lost or missing with a full accounting of their loved ones 'whereabouts and sacrifices.'" Schmidt's name is recorded on the Wall of the Missing at Lorraine American Cemetery in St. Avold, France, along with others still missing from WWII. Schmidt's personnel profile can be viewed at: [1LT Paul Schmidt Profile](#)

FTVA CHAPTER NEWS

Forward your chapter inputs at any time (monthly, weekly or all at once) to Dennis Buxton, RIT Editor, at newsletter@ftva.us or dennis.buxton@me.com. Please include captions and names on all photos submitted. Submission can be in any form or format, and I will edit.



Aloha Chapter
Honolulu, HI
John “Tilly” Toillion, President

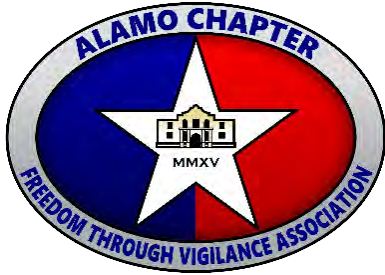
Aloha All –

The Aloha Chapter did not have an official chapter meeting this quarter, but we did Celebrate the Life of beloved chapter member Richard “Dickie” Hites on January 20 in a very moving ceremony. As you know, Dickie sadly, for us and all, joined the FTVA’s “Fallen Eagles” Chapter.

However, we plan to meet later this month at a new venue as our long-used “watering hole,” Mililani’s Ruby Tuesdays, has closed down.

Until next time – “Aloha ā hui hou” – (until we meet again).

John “Tilly” Toillion
Aloha Chapter President



Alamo Chapter

San Antonio, TX



Ken Williams, President
Dennis "Rass" Rasmussen, Vice President
Ken Maynard, Secretary/Treasurer

The Alamo Chapter's monthly meeting convened at High Noon, 15 February at the Alamo Café where 16 members and guests broke bread, conducted a bit of Chapter business, and engaged in lively discourse and fellowship. Members present were:



Early arrival Ed Barnes (with Ron Haygood looking on) reads the room with a critical eye, deciding how to obtain the best seat in the house.

- Ken and Shiela Williams
- Dan Martin
- Ed Barnes
- Doug Williams
- Dennis Buxton
- Greg Mahoney
- Pete Siegel
- Bob and Donna Crabtree
- Dennis Rasmussen
- Darby Stacey
- Ron Haygood
- Rick and Debbie Wadle

President Ken Williams called the meeting to order at 1230. The members decided not to meet in March for lunch as the annual FTVA Spring Social will be held from 1700-2100 at the Lackland AFB Gateway Club on Saturday, 16 March. Members were asked to RSVP to Ken Williams and Ted Colquhoun if they plan on attending.

We discussed the pending Air Force and Space Force reorganization, and the hope is we will get the 16AF Command Chief, CMSgt Robert Hopkins, to be the Spring Social Guest Speaker to discuss the planned reorganization.

The next Alamo Chapter meeting is slated for the IH10 Alamo Café at 1200 noon on 18 April. The meeting adjourned at 1330.

Front to back; Alamo Chapter President Ken Williams, Shiela Williams, Donna Crabtree, Bob Crabtree and Darby Stacey all hoping the photographer is the server with the vittles.



Left, back and around the horn: Ron Haygood, Greg Mahoney, Dennis "Rass" Rasmussen, Doug Williams, Darby Stacey, Bob Crabtree, Donna Crabtree and Shiela Williams.



Clockwise (l-r): Pete Siegel, Dan Martin, Ed Barnes, and Dennis Buxton, your indomitable Remain in Touch editor.

From the back (l-r): Debbie Wadle, Rick Wadle and Ed Barnes at the February 15 FTVA Alamo Chapter meeting.



January 2024 Chapter Meeting.

The San Antonio Chapter of the FTVA held their monthly meeting at the Alamo Café Restaurant on IH10 on 18 January 2024. Nineteen members enjoyed fellowship and lunch. Members present included:

Ken and Shiela Williams
Ron and Kay Weaver
Bob and Donna Crabtree
Doug Williams
Paul Turner
Greg Mahoney
Marco Aldaz
Dennis Rasmussen
Andy Smith
Dennis Killian
John Lopes
Ken and Carol Gendolfe
Bill Sheck
Tom Holding
Gene Sloat

President Ken Williams called the meeting to order at 1200. Discussions centered on how we might support 16AF in the future; the upcoming Spring Social in March; the recent passing of CMSAF #5 Bob Gaylor, and Bill Brockmiller, the new President of the FTVA. We also had a Treasurer's report that we have \$1,080 in our account.

Gene Sloat asked Ken Williams if he could get a memento to the 16th AF History Office that commemorates the Order of the Sword presentation to Brig Gen R.F.A. Urschler from a ceremony in May 1985. Ken said he would get it to the headquarters. After sharing numerous "war stories" and reminiscing about times past, the meeting adjourned at 1400. Unfortunately, no one took any photos as we were too busy enjoying each other's company.

Gold Country Chapter

Yuba City, CA

John Aurelius, President

jaurelius@mikodi.com



Check back in June!



Heritage Chapter San Angelo, TX

Ronald 'JJ' Graham, President
Submissions by Wayne Bascom

FTVA Chapter Shines at 37th Annual Tet Reunion

By JJ Graham & Wayne Bascom

The Heritage Chapter not only attended this annual event as in the past, but for the first time was invited to set up a booth to exhibit our activities in San Angelo. The 37th Annual Tet Reunion took place on 3 February in Abilene, TX. This event is sponsored by the Abilene Grunts Association and is primarily geared toward Vietnam War-era veterans and their families; but all are welcome. There were approximately 70 vendors, some selling and some exhibiting. There were also several Veteran Service Organizations in attendance. As in years previous, one of the highlights of the event was the incredibly funny Bob Hope impersonation of a Vietnam-era USO show. A free meal was also provided.

The Heritage Chapter used this opportunity to provide information on the FTVA and our local Heritage Chapter. We displayed four of our large tri-folds keying on specific events and ceremonies our chapter had sponsored at Goodfellow and in the San Angelo area. We also provided information and handouts on the Vietnam Commemoration Committee's Vietnam veterans pinning program and the popular EC-47 Paver Program. Finally, we advertised the upcoming 29 March Vietnam Veterans Day Commemoration ceremony at Goodfellow AFB.



On the Far Right we have Heritage Chapter members JJ Graham and Rick Premo posing with Tet Reunion Event Organizers. Photo by Glenda Steddum.

As a result of the visit several veterans registered for the March 29th Vietnam Veterans Day activities in San Angelo, and one major vendor signed up to exhibit numerous Vietnam-era artifacts at the hotel ballroom during this two-day event.

Dave Vargo's extensive Exhibit of Vietnam-era artifacts, some of which will be on display in San Angelo on March 29th. Photo by JJ Graham.



Hundreds of veterans and their families attended throughout the day and were entertained by the organizers. Photo by JJ Graham.

Heritage Chapter "Christmas Hangover" Social

Story and Photos by Wayne Bascom

Over two dozen members and guests continued the annual tradition of the Christmas Hangover Party last January. This year we were treated to wonderful service by the staff at Luigi's Italian Restaurant in downtown San Angelo. After a short meeting to catch up on business we sat down to a fine meal and friendly chatter.



(l-r) Cindy Willey, Steve Willey, Carl Frentz, Harriett Samad (standing), Pat Miller, Larry Miller.

Below, (l-r), Larry Mills, Micky Mills, Laura Ross, Diane Ross, Bob Kent, Chae Bascom, Sherry Kirner, Scott Dickson and Marc Kirner in the background.



Four-Star General Ambushes Heritage Chapter Vice President

Story by Heritage Chapter Vice-President, Larry Miller

On February 2, 2024, Lieutenant General Timothy Haugh, the first commander of the 16th Air Force was FINALLY, after a very long delay, promoted to four-star General and took command of the National Security Agency and Cyber Command from General Paul Nakasone. The ceremony, held at the NSA, was attended by the Secretary of the Air Force, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, half of Washington, D.C., and our own Heritage Chapter Vice President Larry Miller.

Upon his arrival, Larry was oblivious as usual to what was going on around him, and what he was soon to be roped into. Miller simply didn't have the vaguest idea what was to happen. Dazzled by all the generals and celebrities attending, Miller's situational awareness was non-existent. The very first clue bird that should have landed on him, that he failed to note, was that Larry and his lovely bride Pat were seated up front with most of the generals and government officials sitting directly behind them. Larry just kept gawking at all the big wigs while Pat did something constructive and read the ceremony's program. When Pat finally spoke to him and told him that he was in the program, Miller initially didn't respond since – like a typical husband – he wasn't listening. After several more repeated attempts, Pat finally broke through her knuckleheaded husband's unconsciousness and told him he was actually IN the promotion program! Disbelief blanketed Larry's face as he dumbfoundedly looked at the program. There it was! Half-way down the page, it read:

***“PINNING OF RANK INSIGNIA
Haugh Family Members
Maj. Larry Miller, USAF (Ret)”***

Larry's first response was the word “Holy” followed by an appropriate though less genteel word. He was truly “gobsmacked” at being given this honor, and his initial thoughts were “How can I screw this up?” General Haugh's aides calmed Larry down as best they could and briefly explained what his task during the pinning ceremony would involve. He was to assist General Haugh in taking off his old service coat with three stars on it and help him into his new one with the rank of four-star General on it. No big deal? Right! Fortunately, and despite all misgivings, Larry pulled it off. He didn't drop either coat on the floor, and each of General Haugh's arms went into the correct sleeve. Mission accomplished! Now time for a big manly hug.

Now for the back story. At Misawa in 1993, Major Larry Miller was the initial supervisor for a fresh group of 2LTs including now-General Haugh. However, it became much more than that. Larry and his wife Patty became “surrogate” parents for this group who were on their first overseas tour and thousands of miles from their real families. Larry acted as their mentor at work helping them to learn the ESC way of accomplishing the mission, and both of them steered these LTs through problems and crises including one very, very difficult pregnancy. Needless to say, Larry was extremely excited and honored by General Haugh's touching gesture of friendship.



Above: Larry Miller does the honors in pinning that 4th star on General Timothy Haugh, new commander of the National Security Agency and Cyber Command (photo courtesy NSA).



Right: General Tim Haugh (left in mufti) poses with his cutout doppelganger and the Heritage Chapter's Larry Miller. At Misawa AB in 1993, Larry was the initial supervisor and mentor for 2nd Lt Tim Haugh (photo courtesy Larry Miller).

Heritage Chapter & EC-47 History Site Team Up for Vietnam Veterans Day Recognition

The EC-47 History site along with the FTVA Heritage Chapter is once again partnering with the Goodfellow AFB Heritage Committee to commemorate National Vietnam Veterans Day on March 29th. This event on the base is open to the public and will begin at 1100 on the 29th.

Pre-registration is required. The Heritage Chapter will compile the Base Access List and along with the leadership of the EC-47 History Site will organize and manage all activities.



National Vietnam Veterans Day
Commemoration Ceremony
 at the Weyandt-Eddy Memorial Plaza
 351 Kearney Blvd
 Goodfellow AFB, Texas

Friday, March 29, 2024
11:00 AM

WELCOME HOME TO ALL VIETNAM WAR VETERANS

This is a Vietnam War Commemorative Partner Program event registered by the EC-47 History Site, partnered since 2015.

A block of 20 rooms with a special lodging rate of \$79.00 per night base price has been negotiated with the Clarion / Suburban Extended Stay Hotel for the nights of 28 & 29 March 2024. These are open on a first-come-first-served basis. The Clarion/Suburban Extended Stay Hotel is located at 441 Rio Concho Drive, San Angelo, Texas 76903. Please telephone the San Angelo Clarion/Suburban Hotel at number (325)658-2828 to make your arrangements. Be sure and ask for the EC-47 Veterans Event special rate.

Thursday evening the Clarion will be the site of a free, casual reception for registered guests and local veteran groups. The following morning the commemoration will take place on Goodfellow AFB at 1100 hours. On Friday evening the Clarion will also be the site of a casual dinner at 1800, with a preceding reception at 1600. The cost of the dinner is \$25 per person.

The Clarion is our base of operations, and as such, will be where many displays and memorabilia will be on hand for your viewing pleasure.

You may sign up for just one, two, or all three events. Payment for the dinner can be made at the event via cash or check, no credit cards please. You can also pay in advance to the Heritage Chapter.

The online form for registration and for more information can be found at <https://www.vietnam50thcpp.com/reservations>.



Mid-Atlantic Region Chapter

P.O. Box 544, Fort George G. Meade, MD 20755

Bob Bastian, Acting President, Treasurer

Submitted by Bob Bastian

On 30 January 2024, the FTVA's Mid-Atlantic Region Chapter (formerly called National Capital Chapter) held its first meeting in over two years. The meeting was held in Columbia, MD, and attended by 13 members.



MARC Members (l-r): Dick and Anna Smith, Beth Yandow, Al Gray, Andy Alexander, Al Dowling, Bob Bastian, Dave Doiron, Jim Griffie, Jon McCracken, Sharon Frizzell, Mike Summers, and Jerry Gething.

During the meeting we discussed the intended focus of the Chapter, the need to hold elections, and how best to serve our widely dispersed membership. We established an election committee, with the goal of holding elections in late February or early March. Bob Bastian provided some background and an update on the status of the C-130 memorial aircraft (#60528) that had held a commanding presence in National Vigilance Park next to the National Cryptologic Museum just outside the entrance to the National Security Agency.

Al Gray talked about his efforts to get a couple of Airman recognized on the NSA Wall of Honor. Seven airmen were crew on an Air Force reconnaissance aircraft that was lost over the Sea of Japan in September 1956. NSA has so far not agreed they merit inclusion on the Wall. One issue

seems to be a fairly recent change in the criteria. Al Gray and Al Dowling also brought up the fact that the Cryptologic Museum includes more civilian and officer memorabilia and not much enlisted history. This is something they plan to advocate for. Several members of the group agreed that these might be efforts our chapter would like to get more involved in the future.

Our second meeting of the year was held on 29 February, via Zoom, from 1900-2000. Sixteen members joined us online for additional discussions on nominees and volunteers for elections to a new Chapter board, ways to reach out to today's Airmen, and beginning preparations for a Spring Social event.

Mike Meermans provided an update on efforts to return a memorial to AF C-130A Aircraft #60528 to a place of honor near the National Cryptologic Museum. The original aircraft on display was irreparably damaged when an attempt was made to move it in 2017 to make way for a new vehicle control entrance to the National Security Agency.



Photograph of the former memorial to USAF Reconnaissance Aircraft #60528 in National Vigilance Park outside Fort Meade, Maryland.

Al Gray also provided an update on efforts to recognize the 6091st Reconnaissance Squadron crew of an RB-50G that was lost on 10 September 1956 on its inaugural operational electronic intelligence mission in the Sea of Japan.



Photograph of an RB-50G (Courtesy of <https://stationhypo.com/2018/07/17/nsga-kami-seya-part-2-of-5/>)

Minutes from the January meeting are already posted to our [Chapter's Facebook Page](#), and the February meeting minutes will soon follow. Our next meeting is tentatively scheduled for March 20th and is planned to have both in-person and Zoom participation options.



Rocky Mountain Chapter

Colorado Springs, CO

Greg Roman and Stan Cook Co-Presidents

[Rocky Mountain Chapter Website](#)

Submitted by Ike Eichelberger

The Rocky Mountain Chapter held our February meeting on the 21st at Rhino's Sports Bar.

Old business included a financial report, to include sending our chapter numbers for 2023 to Ken Maynard in San Antonio, and Greg Roman submitting an invoice for the Holiday Party in December.

New business focused on the next Vietnam Veterans Recognition Ceremony which will take place on Friday 29 March at the Summit Glen Retirement Center in Colorado Springs. We have the names of 20 veterans and 6 spouses to be honored at the ceremony.

We assigned the standard tasks of preparing for the ceremony and are looking forward to this being our first recognition of 2024. Of note: we know of one Vietnam Veterans to be recognized, who also served in WWII and Korea as well!



(l-r) Greg Roman, George "Ike" Eichelberger, Dennis Daniels, Ricky King, Mike Click

Finally, word was shared that Bill Polk, long-time fixture in the RJ and SOF communities had recently passed away.

Everyone who had the privilege of knowing and serving with him agreed they never heard anyone having a bad thing to say about him. Rest in peace, SMSgt Polk.

Ike Eichelberger

(719) 650-8929

Fishing 2 Miles High!

Old Eagles Gather

The chapter hosted a "Gathering of Old Eagles" recently on the ice at 9,500-feet in Colorado.

John Lewis, Greg Roman, Rick Osmon and Ike Eichelberger, Colonels all, met for their annual ice fishing weekend. Old friends sharing old stories (if we can still remember them) along with a cigar and glass of bourbon. No grumpy ole' men in this bunch!

For the record, John Lewis caught the first, and most, trout!





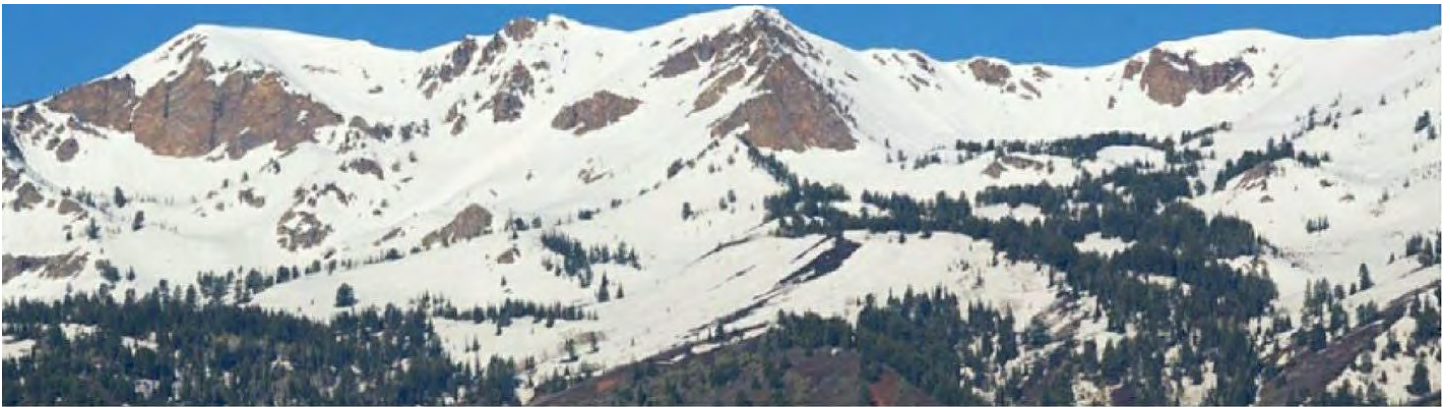
Wasatch Chapter Salt Lake City, UT

Jacob Scheid, President
Shawn Heckman, Vice President
Scott Lawson, Treasurer

Input from Scott Lawson

Hi All,

Slow quarter for us with no meeting. Hoping to have more gatherings soon and an input for you next time around. In the meantime, continue to find the latest info on our irregularly scheduled meetups, join us, and follow us on [Facebook](#) by clicking on our chapter page below.





REUNIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Annual FTVA Spring Social

By Ken Williams

The annual FTVA Spring Social is coming up on Saturday, March 16, from 1700-2100 at the Lackland AFB Gateway Club. Cost is free, but we ask for a voluntary \$5 donation at the door to defray costs. There will be free finger foods, coffee, and tea, a pay-as-you-go bar, and, as Guest Speaker, CMSgt Robert Hopkins, 16th Air Force Command Chief.

For those without a DOD-ID (retired or active duty), you'll have to get a Visitor's Pass at the main gate, so allow 30 minutes for that process. Just tell the Security Police you're attending an event at the club.

Sequence of events: 1700-1730 mingle, 1730 Pledge of Allegiance and welcome by the FTVA President, Bill Brockmiller, 1745-1815 eat, 1815-1830 a brief intermission, then introduction of the Guest Speaker at 1900. From 1905-2000 guest speaker followed by a Question-and-Answer period. More socializing afterward and then home by 2100.

Please RSVP to [Ken Williams](#) and [Ted Colquhoun](#) or call 210-688-7099 if you and a guest/spouse will be attending. (We need an accurate count to ensure we plan for enough food for everyone.)

FTVA BoD Get Together

Incoming FTVA President Bill “Brock” Brockmiller hosted an informal get-together to start the New Year on Saturday, February 24, 2024 at the Outback Steakhouse, 12511 I-10 West.



Clockwise from left: AJ Harrison, newly elected Director Emeritus, Ginny Harrison, Dan Martin, Bill Brockmiller, Pepito Figueroa, Rosario Figueroa, Jen Anthony, Lee Anthony, Ted Colquhoun, Shiela Williams, Ken Williams. Photo provided by Ted Colquhoun.

FTVA VIGILANT PARTNERS

**P.O. BOX 691616
San Antonio, TX 78269**



PLATINUM PARTNERS

**Prop Wash Gang
Mrs. Doyle E. Larson
(IMO Maj Gen Doyle E. Larson)**



GOLD PARTNERS

**Security Services Federal Credit Union
Engrave-Tech & Graphics
Anonymous
(IMO MSgt Robert "Bob" Fenstermacher)
Regis F.A. Urschler
(IMO Maj Gen Doyle Larson and
Tom Tennant)
Greg Radabaugh**



SILVER PARTNERS

**Anthony F. Jensen
Grover Jackson
William F. Sheck
Bob & Debbie Cope
"Picnic Partners"
Donald Bundy**





BRONZE PARTNERS



Mark and Amy Hess

Ronald Hentz

(IHO Col Bob Cope)

Jack V. Brewer

E.W. Forbess



PATRON PARTNERS



CMSgt Roger Towberman

James Mayer

Charles Bishop

Edward Sellmeyer

Thank You VPs! Your continued support is vital in helping us continue the FTVA mission.



FALLEN EAGLES

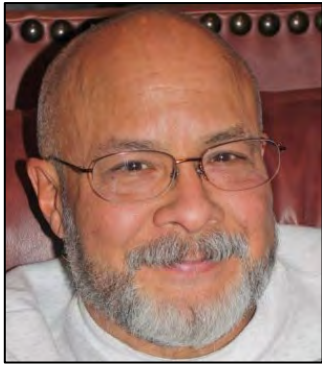
Compiled by Joe Figueroa, Associate Editor



Received word of the following losses from caring relatives, friends or obituaries and offer prayers and sympathy to loved ones.

“It is the soldier above all others who prays for peace, for it is the soldier who must suffer and bear the deepest wounds and scars of war.” Douglas MacArthur

Andrade, Lionel Francis "Andy", USAFSS
 Antkowiak, Peter E., USAFSS
 Bendinelli, Edward A., CMSgt (ret), USAFSS ***FTVA Lifetime Member
 Buckbee, George C., USAFSS
 Cantrell, Richard W., MSgt (ret), USAFSS ***FTVA Lifetime Member
 Carter, Don Clyde, SSgt, USAFSS
 Cissel, Jerry, CMSgt (ret), USAFSS * **FTVA Hall of Honor 1996
 Cooper, Neal B., MSgt (ret), USAFSS ***FTVA Member
 Corrado, John J., SSgt, USAFSS
 Corsaut, Keri M., USAF
 Dorffi, William E., Maj, USAFSS ***FTVA Member
 Dykeman, James W., SSgt, USAFSS
 Ellingson, Edward M. II, USAFSS
 Ewell, Randall K., MSgt (ret), USAFSS
 Galliher, Jacob "Jake" Michael, SSgt, **Active Duty** 16th Air Force
 Graham, Gordon Ernest, USAFSS
 Hartman, Steven Allan, SMSgt (ret), USAFSS ***FTVA Lifetime Member
 Hebron, Robert, SMSgt (ret), USAF
 Hindman, Kenneth, MSgt (ret), 16th Air Force
 Hobbs, James Michael, MSgt (ret), USAFSS
 Jarvis, Jefferson "Jeff" James, Capt, USAFSS
 Jaynes, Jay Joseph, Col (ret), USAFSS ***FTVA Member
 Johnson, Lloyd E., SMSgt (ret), USAFSS
 Mintel, Joseph W., USAFSS
 Peters, James, E., SSgt, USAFSS
 Peterson, John R., USAFSS
 Polk, William F., MSgt (ret), USAF
 Scott, Ronald Wayne, USAFSS
 Stevenson Sean "Ryan", SrA, **Active Duty**, 16th Air Force
 Streit, William Joseph, SSgt, USAF
 Trask, Carlos Chester "Skip" III, USAFSS
 Yoder, Samuel "Denny", USAFSS



Andrade, Lionel Francis "Andy", Jr., 72, passed away January 15, 2024. Andy joined the Air Force in 1970. The Air Force ultimately brought him to Texas, working under high clearance for the Air Force Security Service in information technology. Following his time in the Air Force, he continued in the military in the National Guard. He served our country for a total of 13 years. He had two daughters with his first wife, Nancy: Michelle Cuellar (Carlos) and Melissa Hajek (Brian). //Obit - **Fredericksburg Standard Radio-Post**//



Antkowiak, Peter E., 85, passed away January 13, 2024. He joined the USAF in 1955. A codebreaker's sharp mind and gift for language caught the attention of the US Air Force Security Service, and eventually of IBM where he would spend 30 years excelling in computer programming. He bids au revoir to Peggy, his wife of 63 years; his children Peter (and Fenella), Ed, Janet (and Keith) Bowles, John, and Dan Antkowiak. //Obit - **Daily Freeman**//



Bendinelli, Edward A., CMSgt (ret), 82, passed away February 27, 2024. Ed served in the USAF from 1960-1977. He served at various overseas locations with the United States Air Force Security Service (USAFSS), including two tours in Vietnam where he flew 236 missions aboard the EC-47 Airborne Radio Direction Finding platform, earning the Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star and eleven Air Medals. On August 3, 1972, Ed returned from Vietnam and, later that same day, married the love of his life, Kathleen Marie Dolan. In 1978, after tours in Germany and Japan, they came to Goodfellow AFB, San Angelo, TX, where Ed served with the USAFSS NCO Academy and then Intelligence

Analyst training until his retirement in 1986. Ed & Kathie raised three "foreign-born" children: Bennie born in Germany, Tony born in Japan and Danielle born in West Texas. After retiring, Ed attended Angelo State University (ASU) where he earned both his Bachelor and Master's degrees in Business Administration. He was an active member of the "small but robust" Heritage Chapter of the Freedom through Vigilance Association. He leaves behind his wife of 51 years, Kathie, children Edward (Bennie), Anthony, and Danielle. //Obit – **Harper Funeral Home**//

Ed was a mentor to many of us as we prepared to leave Italy in 1965 enroute to Viet Nam. He remained a friend to all of us. We will miss his smile and his sense of humor. //Mitch Cooper//

This is a sad day. My heart goes out to Kathy and the family. I've lost one of my heroes and a very close friend. Met him years ago at Goodfellow and had the pleasure of working with him in the Heritage Chapter of the FTVA for many years. A quiet but dynamic personality, he taught me

a lot about life over the years. I will miss his friendship and our times together. I'll keep Kathy and the family in my thoughts and prayers. RIP my friend. //Ron JJ Graham//

The Heritage Chapter mourns the loss of our friend and colleague, Ed Bendinelli. Ed was one of the earliest members of the Heritage Chapter, serving on the board in various capacities for nearly 20 years, most recently as Vice-President. //Wayne Bascom//



Buckbee, George C., 84, passed away December 30, 2023. Husband of Carol Buckbee for 61 years, George enlisted in the USAF in 1957 and served in USAFSS until 1962. George is also survived by three children, his son George Jr, (Mary Ellen), daughter Laura Lewis, and son Bill Buckbee. //Obit - Danbury News Times//

George is wearing a 6918th RSM hat. //Joseph "Pepito" Figueroa//



Cantrell, Richard W., MSgt (ret), 83, passed away January 4, 2024. He joined the USAF in 1959. Prior to enlisting, he met Loretta Gail Uselton. Upon completion of basic training, they were married on December 23, 1959. They were married for 58 years until the love of his life, Gail, passed in 2017. Richard and Gail had two children, Beverly Gail and Kevin Richard. He enjoyed a successful 22-year career in the United States Air Force Electronic Security Command. He was a Vietnam War Veteran. His many tours of duty took him to Alaska, Thailand, Turkey, Japan, and multiple assignments within Texas. He retired as a Master Sargent in 1981. Richard is survived by his son Kevin (wife Carolyn), //Obit – Wayne

Boze Funeral Home//



Carter, Don Clyde, SSgt, 90, passed away December 20, 2023. After high school, he entered basic training for the Air Force in Mississippi during the Korean War. He later worked in the Pentagon in Washington DC in the Air Force Security Service and ended with a top security clearance. From there he was stationed in Alaska working with top clearance security following U2 surveillance airplanes covering Europe. His tour of duty was at March Air Force as a Staff Sergeant. Don is survived by his wife Judy and their 7 children; Jeffrey Don Carter (Debbie), Lori Carter (Kevin) Johnson, Derek Kneil Carter (Mindy), Ross Anthony Carter (Brenda), Kelly Ann Carter (Brian) Zufelt, Jennifer Carter (Nate) Warner and Benjamin Hammond Carter (Jana). //Obit – Nelson Family Mortuary//



Cissel, Jerry, CMSgt (ret), 94, passed away January 3, 2024. In 1948, driven by a calling to serve his country, Jerry enlisted in the United States Air Force, beginning his military career at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California. Trained as a Russian linguist and technician, Jerry’s military career would take him to Korea, Crete, Germany, Scotland, and Texas. His first operational assignment was during the Korean War, where he became well known for his abilities as a linguist and leader, and his positive impact on young airmen. Jerry served most of his career in the Air Intelligence Agency (AIA), and in 1996 he was one of eight former members of the AIA to be inducted into its prestigious Hall of Honor. Jerry retired from the service in 1969, as

Chief Master Sergeant, from Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio. During his service in Scotland, Jerry met his first love, Ina Kilgour, a native of Glasgow, Scotland. Jerry and Ina were married in Glasgow in 1957, which would begin a thirty-two-year marriage filled with love, service, and the raising of three children – Richard, Paul and Gail. Ina passed away unexpectedly in 1989, leaving a lasting legacy of family, kindness, friendships, and community. Jerry was fortunate to meet his second love, Barbara Groves, in 1994, with whom he shared his life up until his passing. Jerry is survived by his loving partner, Barbara Ann Groves; his three children – Richard Cissel (Pam); Paul Cissel (Nicole); and Gail Cissel Oliver (Jason). //Obit – Hamlin and Hillbish Funeral Directors//



Cooper, Neal B., MSgt (ret), 86, passed away September 1, 2023. Neal served 20 years in the US Air Force, He served as flight instructor, became fluent in Mandarin Chinese and he flew thousands of combat hours during the Vietnam war and on missions during the cold war. He received many other accolades too numerous to list here. Neal dedicated his professional life after his time in the Air Force to supporting our

military and national security. Neal is survived by his children Pat (Fred) Bright, Neal (Ellen) Cooper, Michael Cooper, Joshua Cooper, Dawson (Nicole) Cooper, Travis (Michelle) Cooper, Braden (Brie) Cooper. //Obit – North Dallas Funeral Home//

According to Veteran Affairs Gravesite Locator, Neal retired as a MSgt //Joseph “Pepito” Figueroa//

“A full and purposeful life” describes Neal perfectly. I didn't know Neal well until the last 20 years but considered him initially as a mentor and subsequently as a friend. There was never a doubt that he was the smartest person in the room, and I greatly enjoyed hearing of his experiences and his perspective on a myriad of topics. He was a great man who did so much for this nation...much of which will never be publicly known. Deep, deep condolences to Neal's entire

family and the numerous friends he left behind. He was truly one of the USAF giants! //Lee Anthony//

So sorry to hear of Neal's passing. We flew together in Southeast Asia (and other interesting places). After retirement from USAFSS, travelled to some OTHER interesting locations (London, Tel Aviv, Bangkok, Taipei, and all over the US). I will certainly miss our chats and war stories. RIP, old friend. You're in great company now. Many prayers for family and friends. //Bob Cotti//

A good friend, a great man, one who could be counted on during the high-pressure environment of providing intelligence to our forces in Vietnam, the go-to "ear" for anyone having difficulty with Chinese. These are what I think about when I think of Neal. He was a real leader, leading by example always and providing assistance to younger airmen in a way that was always listened to. RIP, old friend. Save me a seat at the poker table. //Walter C (Rosie) Rosenstrom//



Corrado, John, J. "Jack", SSgt, 82, passed away January 8, 2024. He enlisted in the USAF and in 1959 & 1964 he attended Yale University Institute of Far Eastern Languages to study Mandarin Chinese and graduated 2nd in his class both times. He served a total of 8 years in the US Air Force Security Service as a Chinese interpreter/translator and flew numerous missions. He was honorably discharged as a Staff Sergeant in 1968. He is survived by his devoted wife Dotty; his 4 beloved children, daughter, Gina Thomas and her husband Darrell; son, John Corrado and Heather Merrill; daughter, Tanya Furillo and her husband Brad; daughter, Carla Beck and her husband James. //Obit - Conte-Giamberardino Funeral Home//

John was a USAFSS Pioneer Chinese Linguist. //Pete Siegel//

To Dolly and the extended Corrado family, I offer my sincere condolences on the news of Jack's passing. Jack, myself and 12 other airmen were classmates at Yale Institute of Far Eastern Languages for an intermediate course in Mandarin Chinese in 1964. I have fond memories of Jack, the jovial one. his photo here bears this out. He was always happy, and indeed he made us happy not only with his presence, but often when he returned to New Haven from a weekend trip home bearing several bottles of his grandfather's homemade wine. Unfortunately, after graduation followed up by additional training in Texas, our great class was split into assignments to different bases in the Far East and I never saw Jack again, although we did stay in touch via our email group in later years once that technology became available to us. By all accounts Jack led a very full and active life, and his Air Force "family" will retain great memories of our service time together. //Doug Brown//

I am so sorry, Dotty, and family for your loss. Jack was a wonderful storyteller and expert Chinese translator in the Portsmouth Library Chinese Language Group every Thursday evening. I loved his stories of his time in Taiwan...the food (he loved the dumplings, and he could eat quite a few)...the people...his military experience of Taiwan. I was born in Taiwan, and these were stories I grew up with, so it was a treat to hear it from an American point of view. Jack had an ear for

the tones and inflections of Mandarin Chinese...he heard me speak and immediately knew I was from Taiwan, due to my accent. He was a brilliant man, and we will miss him dearly. //Karen Morency//



Corsaut, Keri Marie, 41, passed away December 3, 2023. Keri joined the United States Air Force, where she trained and served as an Arabic linguist at the Defense Language Institute in Monterrey, California. Keri served in USAF Intelligence until 2010. Her passing leaves a void in the hearts of those who cherished her, but her spirit lives on in her kids, Dexter and Isla Harrison. //Obit - Falls Funeral Home & Cremation Center//



Dorffi, William E., Major, 91, passed away December 10, 2023. Bill entered active duty in 1955 and joined USAFSS in 1959. After training at Goodfellow AFB he was assigned to the 6981 RGM at Elmendorf AFB, AK. From there he was assigned to the USAFSS IG team at HQ Kelly AFB where he had the good fortune to work for Ben Ardisana. After Kelly he was assigned to TUSLOG Det 94 and from there to the 6994 SS, Tan Son Nhut AB, RVN. He spent his last 5 years active duty on the Management Faculty, National Cryptologic School, NSA. He was the Course Director for a number of courses in professional development

for junior officers and senior NCO's and Warrant Officers, and courses in Collection Management, retiring in 1975. After retiring he spent a year on a special project in Iran. He's survived by his daughters Roxanne Dorffi O'Moore, Lynne Dorffi and Christina Charbonneau and granddaughters, Chelsea O'Moore and Kelly Killingsworth. //Obit - Roxanne Dorffi O'Moore//



Dykeman, James W., SSgt, 87, passed away December 26, 2023. He served four years in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War and Cold War as a member of the U.S. Air Force Security Service deployed to Japan and Germany. Jim received an honorable discharge and several medals, attaining the rank of Staff Sergeant. He was the loving father of Kim Kianidehian, Eric Dykeman, James M. Dykeman and his wife Sherill Dykeman. //Obit - Cartmell - Davis Life Celebration Funeral Home - North Plymouth//



Ellingson, Edward, 85, passed away November 23, 2023. Edward enlisted in the US Air Force during the Vietnam Conflict in January, 1961. He trained in San Antonio and San Angelo, and then was assigned to the Air Force Security Service Foreign Electronic Transmissions Analysis and served in Manila and at the National Security Agency in Washington DC. //Obit – www.legacy.com//



Ewell, Randall K., MSgt (ret), 66, passed away December 4, 2023. He joined the USAF and served for 20 years, rising to the rank of Master Sergeant, and received multiple medals and awards. He graduated from the University of Maryland with his master's degree in computer science. Randy was dedicated to computer information security, first working in the Air Force then moving on as a private contractor. He is survived by his wife, Mae "Angie" Angeletta Ewell, whom he was married to for over 47 years; daughter, Amber Christina Ewell Butner, //Obit – **OMPS Funeral Home//**

According to USAFSS Facebook page, Randall attended X2 school at Corry Station Florida. His assignments included Crete in 1976. //Joseph "Pepito" Figueroa//



Galliher, Jacob "Jake" Michael, SSgt, 24, passed away November 29, 2023 after the CV-22 Osprey crash in Japan. He was based at Yokota Air Force Base in Western Tokyo, Japan. Jacob joined the United States Air Force in August of 2017. Jacob's first assignment was to the 25th Intelligence Squadron in Hurlburt Field, FL, until August of 2022. Upon arriving in Japan, he served as a Direct Support Operator assigned to the 43rd Intelligence Squadron, Detachment 1, Operation Location – Alpha, 363rd Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Wing. Jacob received many honors throughout his career. He was an Honor Graduate of Basic Military Training, a distinguished graduate of the Cryptologic

Language Analyst course, an Honor graduate of the Defense Language Institute's Chinese Language Course. He was fluent in Mandarin Chinese. Jacob was recognized with The Air Force Achievement Medal, Air and Space Commendation Medal, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award and Air Force Meritorious Unit Award.

Jacob is survived by his beautiful wife, Ivy Groshong-Galliher of Kirkland, WA., along with their two perfect sons, Malcolm age 2, and Killian age 9 weeks old. He was a beloved husband and father who fought to get back to his family. Besides his wife and children, Jake is survived by his mother and father, Kim Krautter and Jon Galliher; as well as his stepfather, Tor Krautter and

stepmother, Virgin Galliher. The family and community are devastated by the loss of their wonderful husband, father, son, brother, classmate, friend, teammate, and Airman. We thank Jacob, as well as all our other United States Service Members, for their bravery to serve and protect our country. Our condolences are with the families of Jake's crew who also lost their lives in service to their country. //Obit – Dery Funeral Home//

A United States Air Force CV-22B Osprey from Yokota Air Base, Japan, assigned to the 353rd Special Operations Wing, was involved in an aircraft mishap while performing a routine training mission off the shore of Yakushima Island, Japan with eight Airmen on board. The incident was on November 29, 2023, and all eight onboard died. SSgt Jake Galliher was the first recovered, and he was a standout performer and skilled Chiling DSO. AFSOC has a mishap update page, <https://www.afsoc.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/3600634/afsoc-aircraft-mishap-releases/>, if you want the official message. Tough news is hard to pass, but I felt that you would want to know if you didn't already. //CMSgt (ret) Tom Barefoot//



Graham, Gordon E., 76, passed away November 27, 2023. He served in the USAF for six years. He was awarded commendation by the United States Air Force as a Russian Linguist for being the first to hear and report Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Survivors include his wife, Roxie; children, Jim and Sarah (daughter-in-law) Graham and their son Kaden, Chris (son-in-law) Roberts, and her daughter, Ehlana, Janna and Dan (son-in-law) Hinds, their daughters, Sydney and Parker, and Jon Graham, and his children Haylee and Mason. //Obit - Simplify Cremations & Funerals//



Hartman, Steven Allan Hartman, SMSgt (ret), passed away January 1, 2024. We are sad to announce Steven Allan Hartman (Tucson, Arizona) passed away. Family and friends are welcome to leave their condolences on this memorial page and share them with the family. //Obit – Echovita//
Condolences to the Hartman Family. I remember Steve well from when we were Stationed at Davis Monthan AFB. Rest in peace Steve. //Jim Mayer//

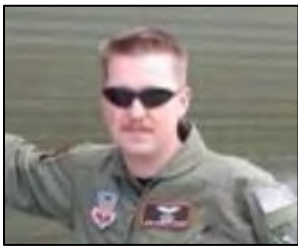
Steven Hartman was a Chinese Linguist. //Bert Turner//

According to USAFSS Facebook site Steven was stationed in Okinawa in 1973. //Joseph “Pepito” Figueroa//



Hebron, Robert, SMSgt (ret), passed away December 2023. The following are extracts from Social Media posts. One post specifically mentioned “Please keep Jana, Heather and Nic in your thoughts during this rough time” Robert was a MIMI. Assignments included Osan and Hickam. In addition, he deployed to Southwest Asia as a Datalink Operator Trainer. Tributes indicate he was extremely beloved in the ISR community, especially by his fellow MIMIs. A mentor to many, his character has been

described as humorous, with many one-liners and always a positive demeanor. There was a MIMI Call in his honor on December 17, 2023. **//Joseph “Pepito” Figueroa//**



Hindman, Kenneth, MSgt (ret), 45, passed away December 3, 2023. at his home. He enlisted in the USAF December 18, 1997 where he earned his associate degree and served 22 years as a Spanish linguist. He was honorably discharged on December 31, 2017 as a Master Sergeant in Intelligence Command. Kenneth and Joanne Marie Sneed were united in marriage on December 18, 2002 in Las Vegas, NV. They made their home

near Malvern and were blessed with two children, Noah and Shelby. Kenneth is survived by his wife of almost 21 years, Joanne Hindman of Malvern; children, Noah Hindman and Shelby Hindman, both of Malvern; mother Martha Hindman. **//Obit - Loess Hills Funeral Home-Malvern//**

I was Ken’s supervisor and mentor during the latter stages of his career. However, we all knew who was really in charge in that relationship. Ken was. He was always an out-of-box thinker and was never shy about pushing his ideas at all levels. This led to many “Chief, heads up you may be getting a phone call.” Such a joy to have as a fellow Airman and dear friend. Many lives were enriched professionally and personally thanks to Ken. I am especially appreciative of his family selecting the specific picture for his obit. We were deployed together in Southern Command when his picture was taken. This was my original post, literally posted while crying like a baby “With great sadness and shock, this is to notify Ken Hindman passed away unexpectedly on December 3, 2023. He is very respected and beloved by this community. Please keep his wife, son, and daughter in your prayers. This is the MK turnout for his retirement ceremony. This brought much joy to his life. He convinced Offutt public affairs to let me officiate his ceremony and convinced me to put on uniform as a retiree. I don’t think I ate for a week.”



Pepito Officiating Ken's retirement Brothers



The MK turnout at Ken's Retirement Ceremony made him so joyful.

Ken was the epitome of a servant leader. I ALWAYS trusted his advice and ability to accomplish anything we needed him to achieve. He just frankly got the job done, every single time! I think this scripture best describes Ken: Philippians 2:3, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in all humility, consider others more highly than yourself." I enjoyed the conversations we had outside of work and the friendship we built. Ken inspired me to be a better leader and person. His loss will be felt in so many ways in this world. He is the kind of person I hope to be in life. Praying God comforts his family, friends, and all those who mourn the loss of an amazing friend. //Colonel (ret) Ben "Felix" Ungerman//

Amazing mentor, leader, Airman, friend and family man. Ken is my brother. As many Veterans do, we didn't stay in touch as much as we should've after retiring, but when we talked, it was like we called each other every day. Privileged and honored to serve alongside a hero. Our conversations centered around two things...#1 his wonderful family and #2 what scheme he came up with to fix all of the Air Force problems. He was definitely an out-of-box thinker and the Airmen he took care of, including me, were so enriched professionally and personally because of him. Love you and miss you. His assignments included Offutt Air Force Base, Lackland Air Force Base (Medina Annex), and Utah Air National Guard Base, Salt Lake City, UT as Air Force Technical Advisor. //Joseph "Pepito" Figueroa//



Hobbs, James Michael, MSgt (ret), 69, passed away on December 3, 2023. He proudly served his country in the United States Air Force for 20 years. Michael is survived by his wife, Gayle Hobbs and his two children, LaRena Stetina (Jim) and Jason Hobbs (Melissa). //Obit - McDonald and Son Funeral Home//

James was a Chinese linguist. Hawaii, NSA. //Bert Turner//



Jarvis, Jefferson "Jeff" James, Capt, 79, passed away January 9, 2024. He was appointed to the United States Air Force Academy in 1962. Jeff graduated in June 1966 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering. Upon graduation he was commissioned a U.S. Air Force Second Lieutenant. His initial assignments were to the USAF Security Service and AF Special Operations Group with duty tours in Alaska and Southeast Asia (Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos). He subsequently served a series of covert assignments with the Defense Intelligence Agency and the USAF Special Operations Group in the European Theater. His duties took him throughout Europe, the Mediterranean and the Near East. While stationed in Germany

he earned his Master's Certificate in Economics from the Frei Universitat, Berlin.

He returned to the United States in 1975, an Air Force Captain assigned to the US Air Staff in Washington, D.C. Jeff was an honors graduate at the Security Service training school in San Angelo, Texas. He was also the top graduate of his class at the US Army Covert/Counter-Intelligence training school formerly located in Baltimore, Maryland. He was a two-time recipient of the USAF Commendation Medal for meritorious achievement. He was awarded the Bronze Star during his service in Vietnam. His military group was also awarded the USAF Outstanding Unit Award with the coveted "V" for valor in action. He was an excellent marksman and strategist.

He was honorably discharged from active duty in 1975. He is survived by his beloved wife of 47 years, Donna; their children, Jon (Sara), Ben (Deanne), Dan (Sussan), and Kristyn (Joe). //Obit - Lindquist Mortuary//



Jaynes, Jay Joseph, Colonel (ret), 75, passed away November 7, 2023. Jay was a proud member of the class of 1965, Texas A&M University. After graduation, he entered the U.S. Air Force that fall. Early in his career he was deployed to Vietnam – November '67 to November '68. During his 28 years of active duty, he held many Communications/Intelligence positions. He was commander of the 6903rd Electronic Security Command, Osan, Korea; 6912th Electronic Security Command, Berlin, Germany; and the Air Force Technical Applications Center, Satellite Beach, FL. He also served from 90-93 in Operation Desert Shield/Storm. He retired as a Colonel in 1993. Jay is survived by his wife of 56 years,

Pam, children Jeanine Anderson and her husband Jeremy Sibert, Wendy Vance and her husband Ryan Vance, Robyn Jaynes and Jason Brown, Jay D. Jaynes and Lorraine Howe, and eight wonderful grandchildren, Carter, Sloane, Jayden, Jaxsen, Gage, Everett, Nolan and Fiona. //Obit – Texas A&M Roll Call Tribute//

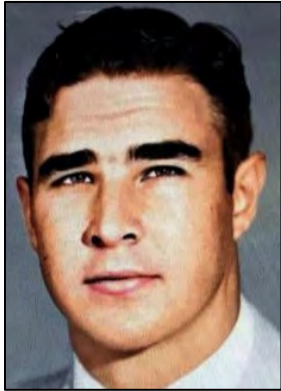
He was one of the best commanders at Skivvy Nine, Osan AB; an Airman’s Commander. //Dennis Buxton//

A game changer. For those of you in Berlin during the mid-80’s, JJJ was a quintessential commander, he knew everyone’s name and something about you besides the unit winning the Travis Trophy multiple times. Leader of a great senior team with the likes of Wayne Fau and Stu Engbretson and countless others who served with pleasure. //Ted Colquhoun//



Johnson, Lloyd Earl, SMSgt (ret), 91, passed away February 3, 2024. Lloyd Earl Johnson grew up barefoot in backwoods Kentucky with his three brothers and extraordinarily kind parents. The minute he grew up, he joined the United States Air Force, where he served as a Russian linguist and interpreter for 24 years. In 1955, while stationed in England, he met and ran off with Ivna – a local beauty with

a wild streak. They spent the next 68 years living all over the world. He is survived by his wife of 68 years Ivna Johnson; daughter Sandra Robinson; son Keith Johnson (Cheri). //Obit - Bellevue Memorial Funeral Chapel//



Peters, James, E., SSgt, 90, passed away December 28, 2023. After graduating high school in 1950, he served four years in the Air Force with basic training at Lackland in San Antonio, Texas, technical training at Keesler in Biloxi, Mississippi, and more training at Brooks, also in San Antonio. He was then assigned to the Aleutian Islands where he participated in electronics surveillance activities as part of intelligence gathering by the Air Force Security Service Command. He was honorably discharged in 1954. He is survived by his son, James 'Jim' Elbert Peters, Jr., daughter, Carol Wisdom and son-in-law, Brian Wisdom. //Obit – Laughlin Service Funeral Home//



Mintel, Joseph W., 71, passed away November 11, 2023. He was married to Diane M. (Ruggieri) Mintel. He was an Air Force veteran and proudly served his country as a Morse Intercept Operator during the Vietnam War era in Brindisi, Italy, and Taiwan. Joe had been an Electro-Mechanical Technician for RICOH (formerly IKON) for over a decade before retiring in 2011. Besides his wife he leaves his children, Rebecca McDermott and her husband James of Warwick, Amy Mintel, Jacklyn O’Hara and her husband Colin, and Justin Krakowsky and his wife Courtney. //Obit - Anderson-Winfield Funeral Home//

Per USAFSS Facebook Site posts, he served in San Vito and Taiwan. //Joseph “Pepito” Figueroa//

Joe and I served together at Shu Linkou Air Station in Taiwan 1972-1974. We had lost touch for many years but managed to reconnect recently. I had talked to him a few times in the last few weeks, and he was struggling with his health. May he rest in peace.” //Ted Webster//



Peterson, John R., 86, passed away December 27, 2023. John is survived by his wife of 43 years, Thais, his daughter Elizabeth (Kurt) Sutphen. He was a man of many talents-scholar, linguist, world traveler, naturalist and woodworker. He loved reading above all else-one day it might be a Serbo-Croatian dictionary, the next how to bake bread or build a yurt. John was a proud veteran of the US Air Force where he served as a Chinese language specialist in the Security Service. Upon discharge, he was an instructor of Chinese in the military's language program at Yale. He was a graduate of the University of Michigan where he pursued his PhD in Chinese Linguistics. //Obit - Robison-

Bahnmler Funeral Home and Cremation Services//

This one wonderful man changed my life. I first met him in 1961 when we were students and working as monitor-technicians at the University of Michigan Language Lab. He inspired me

with his knowledge of Asia, particularly Taiwan and the Chinese language. More than once, he and Lydia invited me to their apartment and treated me to home-made jiaozi dumplings, which became a lifelong favorite. Later he invited me to join him in working on a learning program for Chinese language at ALLP (Audio-Lingual Language Project). I left Ann Arbor in 1963 and spent years in Taiwan, never forgetting my forever debt of gratitude to "Pete," as we called him. I was an overnight guest at his home in 1972, before returning to Korea where I was living at the time. Korea was where Pete was sent as an Air Force language specialist, but he kept asking to go to Taiwan, where they did finally send him. John, John, John....I wish I could've seen more of your playful blue eyes....and I pray you are now among the Blue Angels of Heaven, where we may yet meet again! From John Huston in Brisbane, Australia. //John Huston//



Polk, William F., MSgt (ret), 64, passed away February 19, 2024. A celebration of life was held for Bill Polk on February 24, 2024 at First Baptist Church of Van, TX with Pastor Mark Frizzell, Lee Anthony, and Juan Flores officiating. Bill retired from the military after a 22-year distinguished career with the US Air Force. After the military, he went to work as a defense contractor for L3 in Greenville for 22 years, where he also retired. Survivors include his wife of 18 months, Debbie Sharp Polk; children,



Brandi Polk Holden (Waylon), Kari Polk Spaniel (Paul), Eric Polk (Kathleena), Jennifer Polk, and Tyler Polk. //Obit – Hilliard Funeral Home//



My great buddy Bill Polk passed away. There are periods in my life when I can't imagine flying a mission or stepping onto an intramural football field without him. I'll think of him every time I see a Taylor guitar. Bill was probably more comfortable in his own skin than anyone I've known - he never met a stranger, was always good for a big laugh, and his compassion knew no bounds. I loved him and will miss him immensely. Bill

touched the lives of many, many people on very personal levels. I once called him "Ubiquitous" and he responded, "They didn't teach me words like that in the Mississippi school system but if it means I'm a better musician than you, that's true." On a national level, people will never know of his heavy contributions in the reconnaissance and special ops communities both during his USAF career and his post-career days. Sell your stock in Pepsi, Barq's root beer, and ketchup...their sales are about to plummet. Sometime today, play a vintage Poco song from the '70s - '80s era. //Lee Anthony//

I first met Bill when were stationed in Panama as Airborne Spanish Linguists. Amazing Airborne Mission Supervisor! We met up again when serving as Air Force Special Operations Direct

Support Operators at Hurlburt Field, Florida. Bill was one of the most respected leaders and mentors within our community. Per social media posts, he was also stationed at Offutt AFB. Many references were also included about his amazing music skills. //Joseph “Pepito” Figueroa//

Bill gave me a nickname that stuck for life: Boss Hog. We played all the squadron sports while stationed together at Offutt AFB. In one of our softball games, a pop fly was hit down the right field line. Bill was playing right field; I was in right center. He looked at me, waved me off and said, “I got it Boss; I got it.” The batter was barely jogging to first because it was a shallow pop up, right to Bill. The ball hit Bill’s glove and dropped to the ground. In his haste to throw the batter out at first, he kicked the ball while trying to pick it up. Still with enough time to throw the batter out, his throw went about four feet and rolled the rest of the way to the first baseman. The batter was safe, Bill was mortified and wanted nothing more than to disappear! And Bill could throw; I caught a lot of his passes when we played football. “I got it Boss” became our own unique greeting. RIP Bill. //Dennis Hogue//

"It's only been a few days since you left us, and I'm still having trouble believing you're gone. Thank you for being an example of true camaraderie and kindness towards others. Plus, you were always a true inspiration for a lot us. Know that I will miss your kind soul and friendship amigo. I hope you're good in Heaven. I'm hanging around here on Earth for a bit longer. Take care, CWD RIP. //Wilson "CWD" Soto-Adames//

I was Bill's office chief in Airborne Operations and Operations Management during our tenure at Offutt AFB together. We deployed to Desert Shield / Desert Storm on the same aircraft in late December 1990. He was the AMS for Crew 6. You can't find a man more upbeat, positive, cheerful, and willing to pitch in without complaint than Bill Polk. He was always there with a smile, a gentle giant and the most natural leader I ever met! People just wanted to work for him and learn what he had to teach us all. He was always a man of faith and dedicated his life right until the end to God. Every day, he'd send out these lovely devotionals with Bible quotes, thoughts, and explanations ... even as his physical health was going into serious decline. We used to chat on the phone or via message about the old days, old friends, and past experiences ... he always took the time. //Lady Kimberly Hagen//

In his early career at Skivvy Nine, I recall Bill (“Beer Pork”) and I and Randy “Random” Poole doing our share of running the ville; always stopping in at Ma Boogie’s, the S9 Songtan HQS, where Bill was always true to form. A great character and my honor to have served with him. //Dennis Buxton//



Scott, Ronald Wayne, 85, passed away January 26, 2024. He served in the United States Air Force Security Service from 1957 to 1960, spending the majority of his career in Turkey, where he monitored Soviet missile launches during the Cold War. He loved Turkey, had lifelong friends there, and late in his life made several “Bul Runs” to Istanbul with some of his service buddies. He finished his military career working with the National Security Agency. Ron is survived by his son Wayne. //Obit – Viegut Funeral Home//



Stevenson, Sean “Ryan”, SrA, 24, passed away November 1, 2023. In July of 2017, Sean Ryan decided to follow a longstanding tradition by joining the “family business” and enlisting in the US Air Force. He was a Tactical Systems Operator assigned as aircrew aboard the Air Force Special Operations Command U-28A “Draco” Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance aircraft. A skilled special operations aviator and warfighter, Sean Ryan accumulated 800+ combat flying hours over Afghanistan and Somalia. He is the holder of multiple Air Medals for his combat

actions. Additionally, Sean Ryan recently cross-trained into the Air Traffic Control career field, graduating USAF Technical Training as the top graduate. He was in the process of moving to his first control tower facility at the time of his passing. During his high school years, Sean Ryan was active with the Air Force Junior ROTC Detachment at Fort Walton Beach High School. He was the recipient of numerous accolades, most notably Distinguished Cadet of the Year and General “Hap” Arnold awards. As a youngster, Sean Ryan traveled the globe along with his military family, living at a wide variety of locations including Hurlburt Field, Florida; Scott Air Force Base, Illinois; Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan, White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico; Dover Air Force Base, Delaware; Osan Air Base, Republic of Korea; and Central Square, New York. Sean Ryan is survived by his parents Sean and Lisa Stevenson, his twin sister Sarah Stevenson. //Emerald Coast Funeral Home//



Streit, William Joseph, SSgt, 60, passed away November 29, 2023. He enlisted in the United States Air Force in 1981. Bill served with distinction in the Air Force from 1981-1988 where he was a Cryptologic Linguist - Arabic Language. His many awards include the Joint Service Achievement Medal, the Joint Service Commendation Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Good Conduct Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster and the Defense Meritorious Service Medal. He is survived by his wife, Neida Elaine Gentry Streit, his son, Matthew (Veronica Goodman) Streit, his daughter, Tiffany (Tyler Ellis) Streit. //Obit – Dayton Daily News//



Trask, Carlos Chester "Skip" III, 92, passed away January 22, 2024. He joined the Air Force, stationed in Alaska, a Russian linguist during the Korean War. He is survived by his children, Carlos C. “Skipper” Trask, IV (Paulette), Cheryl Trask Byerly, Terry McCormack Gravely (Walter), Michelle Trask Allan (Bruce), and Tim McCormack (Cyndi). //Obit - Sumner Funeral & Cremation Lakeside//



Yoder, Samuel “Denny”, 79, passed away peacefully on December 5, 2023. Denny served on the Goshen VFW Honor Guard for many years and most recently, he was given the honor of being the 2023 Memorial Day Parade Grand Marshal. In addition to serving his community, Denny served in the United States Air Force/NSA as a security analyst in Germany and Japan during the Vietnam War. He received a Presidential service citation for his role in identifying a new Russian aircraft. //Obit - Rieth Rohrer Ehret Funeral Home//

I was saddened by the report of the passing of my friend and compatriot Denny "Gramps" Yoder. I am privileged to have served with him in the USAFSS in Wakkanai Japan. He was a mentor to me in my transition from voice analyst to operations analyst with Sgt. James Lance, and MSgt Engbretson. He will certainly be missed by all who ever came in contact with him. Always a friend's friend, a human being of character and integrity. I will pray for peace and comfort for family members under the circumstances of this sudden loss of "Denny". // Thomas "Little Kids" Mancuso//

Denny Yoder, My Dearest Air Force Friend Of 55 Years: Back in 1968-69 Denny was known to us as “Gramps” on Baker Flight of the 6986th Security Group at Wakkanai Air Station in the farthest north of Hokkaido, Japan. He had been there for about a year before I arrived in Sept. 1968. He was an expert analyst of intelligence on the Soviet Air Force, and was stationed at

Darmstadt, Germany for two years prior to Japan. He was discharged to home when he finished his 15-month remote tour at Wakkanai in mid-1969, and told us he was returning to Goshen to take over his father's business: "The Oasis Bar & Grill "We nicknamed him "Gramps" not because he was older, which he was by only a couple years, but because of his overall demeanor. He had this consistent quiet, calm, wise "older than his years", confident manner about him. He never got excited or upset about anything - no matter how irritating it might seem to be for the rest of us. He would make short, very wise quiet comments that would make anyone listening pause, calm down, and then think something like "Yeah, that makes sense. Why am I getting so upset about this?" I organized two wonderful reunions in Erie, PA (2014 & 2022) with him and a couple of other guys from 1968-69 Wakkanai. And I just spoke with him on the phone about 3 weeks ago. Denny was the greatest Air Force service buddy a guy could have. I am still in shock at the news of his passing and will miss him terribly. And as I texted his son Todd: God definitely broke the mold after he made "Gramps". There will never be another like him! My sincerest condolences to his family and closest friends, and may God bless and keep you all. //Tom Kowalski//

Denny and I served together in the USAF in Texas and Germany back in the mid-'60s and I still vividly remember how he was always talking about Goshen. When Google became a "thing" I searched on Yoder and Goshen, and sure enough there he was. Although we never got together, we kept in close touch commenting on life's comings and goings. Denny was a remarkable guy, and I will always remember him fondly. Rest in peace, my fellow Silent Warrior. //David Burns//

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WE ARE YOU!
Past Present Future



***THE FREEDOM THROUGH VIGILANCE
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