



The Quarterly Newsletter of Chapter 398 of the AFA

Jan-Mar 2025

The official newsletter of Chapter 398 of the Air & Space Forces Association (AFA).

AFA Mission

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

To accomplish this, we:

Educate the public on the critical need for unrivaled aerospace power and promote aerospace and STEM education for a technically superior and professional workforce to ensure national security.

Advocate and promote aerospace power to favorably shape policy and resourcing decisions to guarantee the strongest aerospace forces in the world.

Support Airmen, Guardians, and the families of the Total Air Force and Space Force, including Active Duty, National Guard, Reserve, civilians, families, and members of the Civil Air Patrol.

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Vice President – Nelson Arroyo
Secretary – Susan Ault-Davis
Treasurer – Dann Mattiza

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SR-71 Blackbird Briefing

Col Joe Kinego, USAF (Ret), Hurlbert AFA Chapter 398 VP for the Pensacola Area, traveled to Mobile, AL, on 24 March to present an SR-71 Blackbird briefing to University of South Alabama Aircraft Design students. Col Kinego, an SR-71 Blackbird pilot and squadron commander, explained to the students that the Blackbird was a



Cold War reconnaissance aircraft designed to specifications far ahead of its time. The aircraft required cutting edge technology and extreme performance capabilities. He explained to the students that Kelly Johnson, legendary aircraft designer and head of the Lockheed Skunkworks, was given three major requirements for the jet – fly high, fly fast, and have a low radar cross section. Additional requirements were an un-refueled range of greater than 3000 miles, and the ability to carry and use state-of-the-art cameras, radar sensing equipment, and electrical intelligence (ELINT). Following his briefing, Col Kinego toured the aircraft design laboratory and talked to students about their specific aircraft design models and what they were trying to achieve. It was an overall very successful day and the students were very appreciative that he took the time to come and talk to their class.

Additionally, several students from the AF ROTC Detachment at the University of South Alabama attended the briefing and Col Kinego talked to them about the Air Force as a career and about flying in particular.

Coming Soon – The Chapter Web Site will be moving to the AFA server at [www.https://Hurlburt.AFA.org](https://Hurlburt.AFA.org) in June 2025. The current website will remain through August 2026 but will redirect to the new link.

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Hurlburt Chapter 398 and 1st Special Operations Wing 2024 Unsung Heroes Awards

Max Friedauer, Vice President, Unsung Heroes Program

Chapter 398 recognized and honored 17 of Hurlburt's finest Airmen, four were unable to attend because they were deployed or otherwise committed. With the continued support of our co-sponsor, the Boeing Company, we recognized these "Unsung Heroes" (E1-E4) who contribute to the mission by always going above and beyond what is expected of them and we were honored to have them as our guest for lunch.

The emcee for the luncheon was SrA Fleck from the 8 AMSOXS/MXAAS. SrA Fleck then led the group in the National Anthem with his electric guitar and Chaplain Potts provided the invocation.

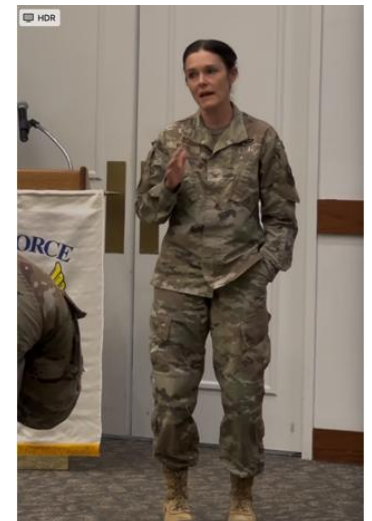
The guest speaker for the lunch was the Senior Enlisted Leader from the 1st Special Operations Civil Engineering Squadron, CMSgt Michael R. Holmes. He said *"...today we shine a light on a different kind of hero – the silent warriors of Air Force Special Operations Command"*. He also emphasized that *"humans are more important than hardware"*. He continued and reminded the audience that *"Special Operations Forces are not built on assembly lines. They are forged in the fires of relentless training, honed over years of sweat, sacrifice, and unwavering commitment. To rush the process is to invite disaster, for the true capability that lies within the shadows cannot be rushed."* He concluded with *"These are the Airmen of AFSOC, the embodiment of the Air & Space Forces Association's highest ideals. They do not seek glory, for their actions are their reward. They are the silent guardians, the unseen shield, the unsung heroes who prove time and again that when the stakes are highest, quality will always overcome quantity"*.



Emcee SrA Fleck and guest speaker CMSgt Holmes

Following Chief Holmes' presentation, the 1st Special Operations Support Group Commander Col Kristen Wood, assisted by the senior enlisted leader from the 15th Special Operations Squadron, CMSgt Eric Adkins, and Air & Space Forces (AFA) Chapter 398 president Dann Mattiza presented each "Unsung Hero" with a Certificate and Mr. Mattiza presented each with a treasured RMO (round metal object). SrA Fleck read a few of each Airman's accomplishments as they came forward. The luncheon was sponsored by a generous grant from the Boeing Corporation represented by Mr. John Hillsman. The Boeing Company is one of 21 Community Partners that support the many programs the chapter is involved in.

Col Wood, then addressed the group and said *how are quiet professionals, we take the time to recognizing those people who are out just "jobbing" it every day, who put their head down, getting the mission done, things that we could not do without them. Thanks to AFA for reminding us that we need to thank them more often. She thanked the families for coming out, she said "I love to see families out here, and thanks for coming up to get your picture taken, I will say take as many pictures as you can because it will mean a lot in five, 10, 20 years from now, it's gonna mean a lot to the little ones that I saw, and the ones on the way."* She thanked everyone again, but truly the quiet professionals, the Unsung Heroes and the AFA and all the AFA community partners and especially the Boeing Corporation for their sponsorship. She also thanked MSgt Juan Santiago and his entire team who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to put this all together, sending out e-mail requests for nominations, organizing and printing the award certificates, and coordinating the event with the 1 SOW Command Section, Wing Protocol, and the Hurlburt Soundside Club for the meals and room setup. Col Wood emphasized that the Unsung Hero Program is her favorite event and will remain one of the wing's most important recognition programs. *(Continued on next page)*



Col Wood

Mr. Mattiza also thanked everyone and presented CMSgt Holmes and MSgt Santiago and his team with a chapter coin and thanked all again for attending and supporting this program.

Our 17 honorees and Unsung Hero Award Recipients were: SrA Logan Fischer (8 SOAMXS); SrA Kevin Figueroa Flores (1 SOMXS); SrA Nicklaus Fritz (1 SOCPTS); SrA Caleb Locher (1 SOFSS); SrA Joshua Munoz (15 SOAMXS); SrA Ashton Proffitt (11 SOIS); A1C Gilbert Quiroz (4 SOAMXS); SrA Ryan Shepard (65 SOS); SrA Jayden Smith (1 SOSS); SrA Noah Steffen (8 SOAMXS); A1C Hayden Souther (1 SOLRS) SrA Ocean Torres Torres (1 SOSFS); SrA Skyler Yancy (1 SOCS); SrA Colin Courtney (4 SOS); SrA Charles Holland (1 SOCES); SrA Christian Biesecker (1 SOLRS); and SrA Payton Wilkinson (1 SOMUNS). SrA Tyler Baber, 901 SOAMXS A1C Citlali Hernandez, 1 SOMDO



East Panhandle Regional Science and Engineering Fair Regional

On 5 February, chapter members Max Friedauer, Susan Ault-Davis, Eddie Arroyo, and Mark Chapman represented the Hurlburt chapter as judges at the East Panhandle Regional Science and Engineering Fair in Fort Walton Beach. Judges selected projects focusing of Air and Space applications. As always, the entries were amazing, impressing our judges. 1st and 2nd place winners in both the Senior and Junior Divisions were presented checks for \$150 (1st Place) and \$75 (2nd Place) by Chapter President Dann Mattiza and his wife Jean at the 11 February award ceremony.



Chapter President Dann Mattiza presenting Ian Allen with a check for \$150

Senior award winners were:

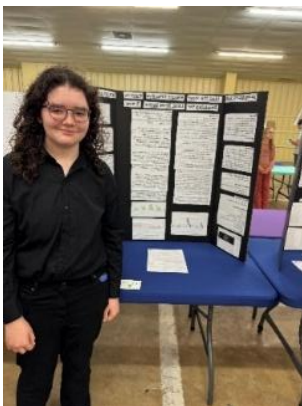
1st Place, Ashley Summer House from the Magnet Innovation Center –“Using GEANT4 To Find the Most Weight Effective Passive Radiation Shielding for Long Term Space Travel”

2nd Place, Jackson Despard from the Magnet Innovation Center - “Improving Dropsounde Descent Accuracy”

Junior award winners were:

1st Place, Ian Allen from the Okaloosa STEM Academy - “SAND – Simulation of Absorption in Nanosecond Quantum Dots”

2nd Place, Eli Haley, Rocky Bayou Christian School - “What Shape Winglet Reduces Wingtip Vortices and Fuel Consumption the Most”



From left to right, Ashley Summer House, Jackson Despard, Ian Allen, and Eli Haley



Community Partner of the Quarter

1st Quarter 2025

The BOEING Company

Boeing is a dedicated AFA Chapter 398 Community Partner since 2006. Boeing is the world's largest aerospace company and leading manufacturer of commercial jetliners, defense, space and security systems, and service provider of aftermarket support. As America's biggest manufacturing exporter, the company supports airlines and U.S. and allied government customers in more than 150 countries. Boeing products and tailored services include commercial and military aircraft, satellites, weapons, electronic and defense systems, launch systems, advanced information and communication systems, and performance-based logistics and training. Boeing provides continued support to our Airmen and Guardians, veterans, cadets, students, teachers and our Air & Space Forces' family.

Thank you Boeing!



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CHAPTER 398 COMMUNITY PARTNERS

AFA Chapter 398 is very fortunate to have very supportive Community Partners. Through their generous funding and involvement, we were able to support our Wounded Warrior training camp, Teacher Workshops, Teacher of the Year recognition, Space Camp, student scholarships, Unsung Heroes Airmen recognition, Cyber Patriot competitions, regional Science Fair and much more.



Thank you to all current partners who renewed their commitment this year and went above and beyond with grants and other financial support.

Again, "Thank you" to all our Community Partners who supported us throughout the year. We are looking forward to a very busy and successful new year and with your support we will make it better than ever.

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<u>Basic</u>	
Clubhouse Grill	Dr. Lynn W. Reynolds
Jimmy's Men's Store and Pawn	

Community Sponsorship levels are: Commando - \$5000, Diamond - \$2500, Platinum - \$1000, Gold - \$500, Silver - \$300, Bronze - \$150, and Basic - \$100. If you know of any business interested in becoming a Community Partner, please contact one of our chapter officers.

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2025 COMING EVENTS

April

9 – Chapter Executive Board, Clubhouse Grill, Fort Walton Beach

15 – Tax Day

24 UWF AFROTC Awards Ceremony, Pensacola FL

24 Eagle Claw Remembrance, Hurlburt Field Air Park, 1000

May

5 – Gulf Breeze HS AFJROTC Awards Ceremony

7 – Pensacola HS AFJROTC Awards Ceremony

7 – Navarre HS NJROTC Awards Ceremony

14 - Chapter Executive Board, Clubhouse Grill, Fort Walton Beach

26 – Memorial Day

June

5-7 – Air Commando Association Convention, Hurlburt Field

11 - Chapter Executive Board, Clubhouse Grill, Fort Walton Beach

14 – Flag Day

27 – JROTC Summer Camp Graduation, Navarre HS, Navarre FL

July

4 – Independence Day

9 - Chapter Executive Board, Clubhouse Grill, Fort Walton Beach

19 – Florida AFA State Convention, MacDill AFB, FL