
AFA TEXAS

NEWSLETTER



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WELCOME TO AFA TEXAS

The state organization acts as the focal point and unifying element for all of the AFA chapters located throughout the great state of Texas. AFA-TX presently has 12 chapters and over 10,000 members and extends from Abilene on the North to McAllen on the South and Houston on the East to San Angelo on the West. We are also on FaceBook! Look for “Air Force Association - Texas.



Donnelly Chapter



2021, Mrs. Claire Meschkat 2021 was selected as Air/Space Association's Donnelly Chapter's (#284) Teacher of the Year for her outstanding contributions and motivational techniques to local STEM programs.

This year, congratulations are due to Mrs. Meschkat, for being named the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDot) 2024 Aviation Educator of the Year. She received this honor in recognition of her enthusiastic approach to motivating K-12 students in aerospace related STEM activities such as rocketry and high-altitude balloon experiments.

Ms. Meschkat is co-founder of Vivify STEM Education (A group from the Fort Worth Chapter gathered on April 18th to participate via Zoom in the annual Toast Ceremony commemorating the 82nd anniversary of the launch of the Doolittle Raid on Tokyo from the deck of the aircraft carrier Hornet. Former Chapter Presidents Dave Dietsch & Tom Kemp organized the event, and were joined by current President Bill Lawson, and former President Rich Walker along with representatives from the 136th Airlift Wing and the 301st Fighter Wing from the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base, Fort Worth. We were also joined by a representative from the local office of First Command Financial Planning, and members of several other local Military support organizations including the Daedaliens, and the Air Force Sergeants Association. Preceding and after the ceremony, there was a discussion concerning reenergizing the Fort Worth Chapter. Dave Dietsch volunteered to assume the presidency from Bill Lawson, and Rich Walker volunteered to be interim Treasurer. We trust this will be the beginning of a revitalization of what was once one of the 3 largest and most active Chapters in the AFA. - Dave Dietsch contributing autho) and was an Aviation Education Panel expert at the 42nd Texas Aviation Conference, held in Galveston Texas in April 2024. They discussed the challenges of "preparing the workforce of tomorrow". *Mitzi Morison - Contributor*

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Sam Houston Chapter



On Tuesday evening the Sam Johnson Chapter lost a decorated war hero and one of its most distinguished members. Kenneth W Cordier (born February 16, 1937) is a former United States Air Force colonel and aviator who was an American prisoner of war (POW) in North Vietnam for over six years during the Vietnam War. He is a native of Akron, Ohio and is married to the former Barbara (Barbie) Leighton of Abilene, Texas.

Cordier graduated from the University of Akron in 1960 with a degree in Mechanical Engineering and was commissioned on July 16 as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force through the Reserve Officers' Training Corps program (ROTC). He later earned a Master of Science in Management from Troy State University, Alabama. His professional military education includes Squadron Officer School, the Armed Forces Staff College, the National Security Management Course, and Defense Attaché School.

In 1965, Cordier was assigned to Ubon AB, Thailand, where he flew 59 combat missions over North Vietnam and Laos. In July 1966, Cordier volunteered for another tour in Southeast Asia, this time to Cam Ranh Bay, Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam), where he brought his combat record to 175 1/2 missions. While escorting a B-66 north of Hanoi on December 2, 1966, Cordier's F-4C Phantom jet took a direct hit from an enemy surface-to-air missile (SAM), forcing him and his co-pilot to eject from their aircraft. He was captured immediately and held in four different prisons in and around Hanoi until his release on March 4, 1973.

Cordier was held as an American Prisoner of War in North Vietnam for six years, three months and two days. While serving in the U.S. military under the most difficult circumstances, he developed a strong personal philosophy relative to perseverance, goals and accomplishment. In spite of the brutal regimen of confinement and deprivation of food and contact with fellow American POWs, Cordier made a distinction between the Vietnamese people and the military criminal element, which abused the POWs under their control. He bore no malice towards the Vietnamese people and believes that the time has come to engage in a constructive dialog, which will result in achieving our objectives through diplomatic means. As part of the healing process, Cordier has made five trips back to Vietnam. On the second visit, he led a group of thirteen former POWs to visit several of the prisons where they were held, then to tour northern and southern cities and cultural sites. This trip was a success in that it not only helped the former POWs bring closure to their war experiences but served as a model for other former POWs who followed.

Cordier was a command pilot with more than 2,000 flying hours in fighter type aircraft. His military decorations and awards include: two Silver Stars, Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, two Bronze Stars with "V" Device for valor, Purple Heart, Meritorious Service Medal, seven Air Medals, Prisoner of War Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.

Ken and Barbie have been immense contributors to the community.

Northeast Chapter



May 18, 2024, was a great day in Greenville, TX. Thanks to the Civil Air Patrol (CAP), TX-645, Majors Composite Squadron, the Majors Flying Club, the City of Greenville, and the Municipal Airport team, a great 'BarnStormer' event was held. The Northeast Texas AFA Chapter 416 (AFA) was a contributor to the planning, funding, and advertising of the event. The Commemorative Air Force (CAF) was present with vintage aircraft. This was a treat for many in the area with great turnout for the overall event.

The Majors Flying Club, President, Dennis Mathis, "It is great to get such strong support from our community." Mathis has been a long time AFA member is very aware of the importance of our Air & Space Forces and the role of sharing and showing the public what aviation is all about.

"What a great event! Good early morning attendance," said Greenville Mayor, Dr. Jerry Ransom. "Thanks to all who make this happen and a special thanks to the Air & Space Forces Association (AFA), Northeast Texas, Chapter 416 for supporting the event."

excerpt from AFA in Action

-Vance Clark, Contributing Author

Alamo Chapter



Again this year, our Bryan Heilscher, went out to 14 out of 30 San Antonio Metro area schools to help present AF JROTC Annual Awards to also present Cadet of the Year at those schools. Bryan along with others travelled all over JBSA to present to AFA Cadets.
-Holly Olson, Contributor

A Word from Our State President...



"Hi folks

Summer is here and AFA is busy as usual. On the State level, the Annual Texoma Region conference is coming up at the end of July. Our National and Texas award recipients will be recognized. Congratulations to all. AFA National is changing to online voting by email this year for national leadership positions. Texas has a list of 33 delegates that will be able to vote without having to attend the National Convention in September.

My two year term as State President will end on October 1. It has been my distinct honor and privilege to serve with you and hope you support our new President well."

Upcoming Important Dates

Event	Date
2024 Texoma Regional Meeting - Oklahoma City, OK	26-28 July
AFA National Convention - National Harbor, MD	13 - 15 September
Fall Meeting	November TBA
State Spring Conference - Donnelly - Wichita Falls, TX	TBA

Texas AFA Executive Board

Norm King	President
Frank Eldridge	Vice President
Mitzi Morrison	Treasurer
Joan Lopez	Secretary