



## The Quarterly Newsletter of Chapter 398 of the AFA

**Oct-Dec 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.

### Chapter Officers

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

### State Officers

President – Michael Liquori  
Vice President – Gavin MacAloon  
Secretary – Sharon Branch  
Treasurer – Tom Carney

### **AFA Chapter 398**

Box 1220  
Mary Esther, FL 32569

[www.Hurlburt.AFAFlorida.org](http://www.Hurlburt.AFAFlorida.org)

## 479<sup>th</sup> Training Group Combat Systems Officer Graduation

Colonel Joe Kinego, USAF (Ret), Hurlbert AFA Chapter 398 VP for the Pensacola Area, attended the 479<sup>th</sup> Flying Training Group Air Force Undergraduate Combat Systems Officer (CSO) graduation, which was held at the National Naval Aviation Museum on Naval Air Station Pensacola, on December 19, 2025. The Hurlbert AFA Chapter donates \$500 each January to the 479<sup>th</sup> FTG to be used for their awards program.

Col Kinego is congratulating 1<sup>st</sup> Lt Riffard, the #1 graduate in his CSO class. Lt Riffard will report to Seymour-Johnson AFB to begin his training as an F-15E Weapons Systems Officer (WSO).



The 479<sup>th</sup> FTG's Undergraduate CSO (UCT) program at NAS Pensacola is a pivotal part of the Air Force's training for future CSOs. This program is designed to prepare students for the complex and dynamic nature of modern warfare. Here's a summary of the key aspects of the UCT program:

- The primary syllabus includes classes on basic airmanship, weather, physiology, and navigation, as well as advanced training in weapon systems employment, electronic warfare operations, and navigation.
- During flight line training students participate in flights in a T-6B Texan II, practicing aerobatics, instrument procedures, and visual navigation.
- The advanced phase of UCT focuses on specialized training for EWOs, WSOs, Navigators, and Special Operations students, preparing them for their roles in the Air Force.

Career Development: UCT lays the foundation for a career as a CSO, equipping students with the necessary skills and mindset for success in the battlespace.

The UCT program is a testament to the Air Force's commitment to training future leaders and officers who can lead and integrate diverse technologies in combat operations.



## Hurlburt Chapter Supports Wreaths Across America

Each December on National Wreaths Across America Day, the mission to Remember, Honor and Teach is carried out by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies at more than 4,225 locations in all 50 U.S. states, at sea and abroad. Anyone who wants to offer a small gesture of gratitude for the freedoms Americans enjoy can volunteer at a wreath laying ceremony to assist in saying veteran names aloud and thanking them for their service. Volunteers across the nation play a valuable role by placing live, balsam veterans' wreaths on the headstones of our fallen heroes. For centuries, fresh evergreens have been used as a symbol of honor and have served as a living tribute renewed annually. Wreaths Across America believes the tradition represents a living memorial that honors veterans, active-duty military, and their families. When each wreath is placed the servicemember's name is said out loud, ensuring their memory lives on. This year's Wreaths Across America Day took place on December 13, 2025. On that day, more than 2 million Veterans' Wreaths were placed across Local, National and Military Cemeteries as well as Veterans' Memorials and historic sites. At each of those sites, a Wreaths Across America Location Coordinators worked throughout the year to organize and promote the ceremony, coordinate wreath delivery and manage the placement of wreaths. In addition to location coordinators, most Wreaths Across America locations rely on the assistance of community members, local businesses and civic groups and organizations to place wreaths on the day of the event This year as in years past Chapter 398 members once again participated in the laying of wreaths at the Beale Memorial Cemetery in Fort Walton Beach.



## Presentation to Pensacola High School JROTC

Colonel Joe Kinego, USAF (Ret), Hurlbert AFA Chapter 398 VP for the Pensacola Area, presented a talk to the Pensacola High School AF JROTC FL-12 cadets on Thursday, 20 November. The subject of his talk was his Air Force career and how he got into the SR-71 Blackbird program as a pilot. He stressed the importance of focusing on doing a good job in your current position as well as the importance of being recognized as a team player rather than always looking



towards your next desired job or assignment. He stressed that good things happen if you work hard and do a great job. Col Kinego also talked about the SR-71 aircraft that he flew. He brought a full



pressure suit with him to show the cadets and explain to them exactly how it worked and what it was like to fly an airplane while wearing the suit. Joe spoke to an assembly specifically for the JROTC cadets. The cadets asked many outstanding questions, and they loved seeing the pressure suit first hand! It was an overall very successful visit and the cadets and the unit senior staff were very appreciative that he took the time to come and interact with them.

## Chapter Awards Night

On October 15 October Chapter 398 held it's annual Teacher of the Year Recognition and Chapter Awards dinner at the Clubhouse Grill in Ft Walton Beach. This annual event affords the chapter to honor exemplary STEM teachers from the local area, chapter members, and recognize our community partners who support the chapter. A list of our Community Partners is provided in this newsletter.

Our Teachers of the Year were Mr Rob Simon from Navarre High School, Mrs Maria Erdberg from Northwest Florida Ballet Académie and Mrs Anna Prindle from Holley Navarre Intermediate School. The Chapter Overall Teacher of the Year was Mrs Erdberg from the Northwest Florida Ballet Académie.

Individual Awards presented:

- State Member of the year - Mark Chapman
- Chapter Member of the Year - Mark Chapman
- State Presidential Citation - Joe Kinego
- State Exception Service Award - Meredith Coleman and Bud Sauvageau
- National Metal of Merit - Susan Ault-Davis

Unit Awards: Presented

- National Exceptional Service Award for Community Relations and Aerospace Education
- State Exceptional Service Award for Communications, Community Relations, and Best Single Program (Unsung Heroes)
- Special Recognition for Chapter Membership Growth

And though not a member of our chapter, Gavin "Mac" MacAloon, Past AFA Vice Chairman of the Board for Field Operations and current AFA Florida Vice President was recognized as the AFA-National Member of Year

## Chapter Awards Night Pictures

Just a few of the pictures from our awards night. Congratulations to all.



Mark Alsid, LM FWB; Ms Anna Prindle ,Elementary TOY; Shari Rogers, LM SOF GLSS, Ms Maria Erdberg, Middle Grade and Overall TOY;and Mr. Rob Simon HS TOY



Chapter President Dann Mattiza and Mark Chapman, State and Chapter Member of the Year



Mark Alsaid receives recognition for Lockheed-Martin Rotary Systems and Mission Systems Community Partner of the Year



Meredith Coleman accepts the State Exceptional Service Award. Bud Sauvageau also received the award but was unable to attend

## AFA Chapter 398

### Community Partner of the Year 2025



Lockheed Martin

Rotary and Mission Systems

1106 North Eglin Parkway Shalimar, FL 32579

Congratulations to Lockheed Martin Rotary and Mission Systems (RMS) for being selected as our Community Partner of the Year, 2025. They have been an outstanding AFA Chapter 398 Hurlburt Field Community Partner since 2011, actively supporting our Air Force family, Airmen, cadets, veterans, teachers, students and our community. Lockheed Martin RMS features more than 1,000 programs, including helicopters, integrated air and missile defense, littoral warfare, undersea warfare, radar, electronic warfare, cyber solutions, C4ISR, and training and logistics systems. The business area supports the U.S. Air Force, U.S. Army, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Navy and Missile Defense Agency, as well as intelligence, civil, commercial and international military customers.

Thank you!





## Community Partner of the Quarter

4thQuarter 2025



1016 Beal Parkway N.W.

Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32547

(850) 862-9414

Congratulations to Aqua Pool & Patio for being selected as our Community Partner of the Fourth Quarter 2025. Aqua Pool & Patio is a long-standing AFA Chapter 398, Hurlburt Field Community Partner and active supporter of AFA programs since 2014.

Aqua Pool & Patio is a full-service swimming pool and spa company that offers commercial and residential services, while improving the quality of life in our community. As respected swimming pool and spa construction contractors, Aqua Pool & Patio has established a strong reputation for over 60 years. Their friendly staff is happy to answer any questions and accommodate your needs to enhance the aesthetics and functionality of your property.

Thank you!

## 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.

<b><u>Diamond</u></b>	
Emerald Coast Connected	OMNI Broadcasting
<b><u>Platinum</u></b>	
The Boeing Company – Ft Walton Beach	Lockheed Martin – Ft Walton Beach
Lockheed Martin Rotary and Mission Systems (RMS)	Lockheed Martin SOF Global Logistics Support (GLSS)
<b><u>Gold</u></b>	
Eglin Federal Credit Union	Lt Col Gerry & Kay Chapman Memorial
The Kinego Family Trust	Reisburg Institute
SA Technical Services Inc	
<b><u>Silver</u></b>	
Emerald Coast Endodontics	Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Associates
<b><u>Bronze</u></b>	
Awards Plus Frames by Sharon	Aqua Pool and Patio Company
Emerald Coast Funeral Home	First National Bank and Trust (FNBT)
Preston Hood Chevrolet	
<b><u>Basic</u></b>	
Clubhouse Grill	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.

"A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE WITHIN THE STATE. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE."

Call 1-800-HELP-FLA (435-7352) or visit [WWW.FLORIDACONSUMERHELP.COM](http://WWW.FLORIDACONSUMERHELP.COM), Chapter 398 registration number is CH32205

## 2025 COMING EVENTS

### January

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

### February

4 – Today marks 80 years of AFA Mission Excellence – Happy Birthday AFA

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

11 – East Panhandle Regional Science Fair, Northwest Florida Fair Grounds, Ft Walton Beach

17 – Science Fair Awards, Beachside Church, Ft Walton Beach

23-25 – AFA 2026 Warfare Symposium, Gaylord Rockies Resort & Convention Center in Aurora, CO

TBD- AFA Florida Winter Meeting (Virtual)

### March

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

TBD – Unsung Heroes Recognition



## AFA's 10 Key Milestones in 2025

What a year! Thanks to supporters like you, AFA had a real impact on 2025. Here are 10 ways your Air & Space Force Association made a difference for our Air Force and Space Force family over the course of the past 12 months.

Please check out AFA's Key Milestones in 2025 at <https://www.afa.org/afas-10-key-milestones-in-2025>