



The Quarterly Newsletter of AFA Chapter 398

Apr-Jun 2026

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
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AFA Chapter 398

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AFA Chapter Member Briefs UWF Leisure Learning Program



Colonel Joe Kinego, USAF (Ret), Hurlbert AFA Chapter 398 VP for the Pensacola Area, presented a talk as part of the University of West Florida Leisure Learning program on Friday, April 3. Leisure Learning at the University of West Florida provides programs for adults ages 50+ who are interested in joining a community of lifelong learners. The subject of his talk was about his time flying the SR-71 Blackbird, and was titled, *"Fighting the Cold War from 85,000 Feet"*. He spoke about the development of the SR-71 aircraft and discussed the types of high-speed, high-altitude reconnaissance missions he flew during the Cold War. He brought a full pressure suit with him to show the class and explained to them exactly how it worked and what it was like to fly an airplane while wearing the suit. He took the time to answer several questions following his presentation. The feedback he received from the university and the students was very positive.

JROTC Summer Leadership School Graduation

Col Fred Gross, USAF (Ret) of Chapter 398 attended the JROTC Summer Training Camp graduation at Fort Walton Beach High School on 26 June. Guest speaker was Col Joe Gross, USAF (no relation), the Commander 720th Special Tactical Group. Fifty-five students graduated and 300 friends and family were in attendance. Fifteen students of the Commando Flight were awarded AFA Chapter 398 Coins for being selected as the Honor Flight. The school is led by Col Ken Rodriguez, USAF (Ret).

The Summer Leadership School (SLS) is a voluntary program for high school Junior ROTC cadets focused on leadership, teamwork, service and personal excellence. SLS helps to prepare cadets for leadership roles in their JROTC units, schools, and communities with activities focused on team building, leadership, citizenship, character development, academic achievement, health & fitness,



and community service. SLS cadets are exposed to hundreds of superb military role models in a structured and positive environment. They are inserted into a highly disciplined life style that includes daily pre-dawn PT, exacting uniform wear, military-style discipline, nutritional meals, no phone/ internet access and multiple team-before-self activities. Short term we see improved grades, greater commitment in academic and extra-curricular activities and greater interest in our communities. Long-term, we believe SLS to be an investment in the leaders of our future regardless if they choose a military path or a civilian one. SLS has been sponsored each year since 2011 by Escambia County School District, HQ Air Force JROTC, and the 1st Special Operations Wing, Hurlburt Field, FL. Additionally, both the Hurlburt Chapter of the Air & Space Force Association (Chapter 398), and the Air Commando Association provide substantial financial support for the program.

ROTC/JROTC Recognition

It's that time of year again to recognize ROTC and JROTC students that have excelled in both academics and leadership across our two county (Escambia and Santa Rosa) area. This year Chapter 398 participated in awards ceremonies at the University of West Florida (AF ROTC, Pensacola and Gulf Breeze High Schools (AFJROTC), and Navarre High School (NJROTC).

UWF ROTC Scholarship Award

Colonel Joe Kinego, USAF (Ret), Hurlburt AFA Chapter 398 VP for the Pensacola Area, attended the University of West Florida (UWF) AFROTC Detachment 014 Spring 2026 Award Ceremony and Change of Command on April 27 2026. During the ceremony, he presented Cadet Jaden Hose a \$500 scholarship check from our Hurlburt AFA Chapter 398. Cadet Hose was picked by his unit's leadership team to receive the award. He is a junior and the son of an Air Force veteran, and according to his unit commander, "his leadership serves as the glue that holds his class together, and he provides the stability his peers rely on to thrive amid the demands of college and ROTC life". Cadet Hose is truly deserving of this award.



Gulf Breeze High School AFJROTC Award

Col Joe Kinego was honored to present the AFA National Certificate and Medal, as well as our local Hurlburt Chapter 398 \$500 scholarship check to Cadet Matthew Alano at the Gulf Breeze High School AF JROTC Awards Ceremony.

Cadet Matthew Alano is the former JROTC Cadet Corps Commander and will attend the University of South Florida in the fall to study Aerospace Engineering. He will be part of the AFROTC unit at USF, and he desires to be a fighter pilot upon commissioning.

Cadet Alano is truly deserving of the AFA awards and our scholarship check.



Pensacola High School AFJROTC Awards

Colonel Joe Kinego, USAF (Ret), attended the Pensacola High School (PHS) AF JROTC 2025-2026 Annual Awards Ceremony on May 6, 2026. During the ceremony, Colonel Kinego presented Cadet Colonel Carissa Swanson the AFA Medal and Certificate and a \$500 scholarship check from our local Hurlburt AFA Chapter 398. Cadet Swanson is the current AF JROTC Cadet Corps Commander, leading over 150 cadets through numerous academic, fitness, and military efforts. She is a senior, the #1 cadet in the corps, and a top 15% student in her PHS graduating class. She is currently dual-enrolled at Pensacola State College working on her Associates Degree while completing high school. She plans to attend college in the fall and pursue a career in education.



Navarre High School NJROTC Awards

Navarre High School: Lt Col Eddie Arroyo, USAF, (Ret), Hurlburt Chapter Vice President and Lt Col Mark Chapman, USAF, (Ret) presented a \$500 scholarship to Cadet Gabriel Morris at the Navarre High School NJROTC Awards Ceremony on May 6th. Cadet Morris is a hard-working, reliable young man with a patriotic heart for service. Cadet Morris will participate in the Enlisted-to-ROTC Program where he will attend Air Force Bootcamp this summer and serve as a reservist while subsequently attending The University of West Florida and AFROTC, where he will seek a degree in Cybersecurity.





AFA Chapter 398
Community Partner of the Quarter
2nd Quarter 2026

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, 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.

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

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2026 COMING EVENTS

July

4 – Independence Day

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

17,18 – AFA Florida State Convention, Jacksonville, FL

August

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

18 – Florida Primary Election

September

9 - Chapter Executive Board, Clubhouse Grill, Ft Walton Beach, 1130-1300

12-13 – AFA National Convention, National Harbor, MD

14-16 – Air, Space, & Cyber Conference, National Harbor, MD

