

AFA National Report

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By Frances McKenney, Assistant Managing Editor

Veterans Day in Washington, D.C.

On Veterans Day, Air Force Association Chairman of the Board S. Sanford Schlitt attended the annual breakfast reception hosted by President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama at the White House.

In the East Room, he joined distinguished guests, including Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric K. Shinseki, Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, and Air Force Secretary Michael B. Donley.

The dignitaries afterward traveled across the Potomac River to Arlington National Cemetery, where the President laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns.

Schlitt, too, presented a wreath, on behalf of AFA, and attended the ceremony in observance of Veterans Day, held in the cemetery's outdoor amphitheater. Before the President addressed the audience, the master of ceremonies read the names of veterans organizations—and their top leaders—acknowledging those supporting the memorial service.

C-SPAN aired the wreath laying and ceremony live.

Veterans Day in Iowa

In Fort Dodge, Iowa, on Veterans Day, Justin M. Faiferlick's cell phone rang just before 7:30 a.m.

AFA's vice chairman of the board for field operations picked up to find US Sen. Charles E. Grassley on the line.

The Iowa Republican called to say he would be attending the **Fort Dodge Chapter's** annual Veterans Day ceremony.

Do you want to address the audience, Faiferlick asked the state's senior senator. Grassley declined and said he just wanted to be part of the audience gathered for the observance in the St. Edmond High School gym.

An Air Force Outstanding Airman of the Year delivered the keynote address. SMSgt. David L. Newman traveled some 180 miles to Fort Dodge from Offutt AFB, Neb., where he is a US Strategic Command superintendent in knowledge operations management.

The local *Messenger News* newspaper reported that Newman described



President Obama greets AFA Board Chairman Sandy Schlitt (left) and Patricia Schlitt at the White House breakfast reception on Veterans Day.

More photos at <http://www.airforce-magazine.com>, in "AFA National Report"

the day as "a celebration of those who made victory possible."

In organizing the celebration, Fort Dodge Chapter members rounded up an honor guard from the 133rd Test Squadron, Iowa Air National Guard, to present the colors and perform the POW-MIA remembrance ceremony. The Veterans of Foreign Wars provided a rifle cordon, with representatives from the Marine Corps League as flag detail.

St. Edmond students provided the music, with their band, choir, and buglers. The school's CyberPatriot team was introduced, as well, giving the students recognition and Faiferlick a chance to explain the program to Grassley and the audience.

Afterward, Faiferlick took the senator to the local VFW "to spend some time with veterans and have some bean soup and corn bread."

We've Got Wi-Fi

An AFA matching grant, arranged by the **Gen. Bruce K. Holloway Chapter**, has brought wireless Internet service to transient lodging at McGhee Tyson Arpt., Tenn.

Some 14 enlisted professional military education courses and more than 40 skills training classes take place at the base's I. G. Brown Air National Guard Training and Education Center.

According to a center press release, the students asked for Internet access "for years," to do research, work on online courses, manage personal finances, and communicate with their families.

In June 2010, chapter officials presented a \$2,000 grant to the center to help purchase hardware to put five dormitory buildings online.

"As things often happen in the military," wrote James M. Mungenast, chapter past president, "they got tied up in the contracting process and also needed some additional funds to make the system function for all its dorms. Well, it finally came to pass this fall."

On hand in September for a thank-you from the center were Joseph E. Sutter, former AFA board chairman; Stephen J. Dillenburg, current chapter president; Alfred M. Coffman, former Tennessee state president; and Mungenast, now Tennessee state president.

Some 4,200 service members attend training at McGhee Tyson each year.

Old [Military] Wives' Tales

Military wives were the focus of the **Southern Indiana Chapter's** observance of Veterans Day in Bloomington, Ind.

Air Force spouse Barbi Pugh entitled her talk to the November chapter meeting "A Waiting Wife of Vietnam."

Army spouse Catherine W. Lynch called hers "Old Army Wives' Tales."

Pugh's husband, William R. Pugh, did a medical internship at Andrews AFB, Md., then served on active duty 1964-67, as a flight surgeon.

Lynch's husband, Homer M. Lynch, retired as a Special Forces lieutenant colonel in 1975, after 22 years of active duty.

Chapter President James E. Fultz wrote that the wives had "war stories" about having to keep the family car and washing machine running, while on their own, and making austere quarters into a comfortable home. Fultz said their tales evoked "laughter to feelings of tearful nostalgia."

Awards and Briefings

Chased by a Nor'easter that dumped snow in parts of their state, New York AFAers gathered in Syracuse on Oct. 29 for a quarterly meeting and annual awards presentation.

Sanford E. Way accepted the Outstanding Chapter of the Year award

as president of the **Genesee Valley Chapter**. Richard H. Waring, president of the **L. D. Bell-Niagara Frontier Chapter**, received honors for 60 years of AFA service.

Retired Maj. Gen. Marvin Jay Barry served as the gathering's keynote speaker. Before his retirement in 2006, he was the advisor, on individual mobilization augmentees, to the chief of the Air Force Reserve.

In addition to Barry, Col. Timothy J. Labarge, commander of the 109th Airlift Wing, Schenectady County Airport, spoke to the group. He described his unit's missions "to the poles," as State President Maxine Donnelly Rauch put it. With ski-equipped LC-130s, the 109th is the primary provider of airlift for the military and the National Science Foundation in the Arctic and Antarctic.

Up and Running

It didn't even have its charter, but that didn't stop a nascent Florida chapter from carrying out a defense forum featuring several flag officers.

The **Sarasota-Manatee Chapter** had no time to waste, given the urgency of its topic: "The Budget Crisis and its Impact on the Military."

On Nov. 12—just two days after submitting the application for the chapter's charter—AFA Board Chairman S.

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Some of the benefits of AFA's new Corporate Membership Program include:

- Invitations to monthly briefing programs conducted by senior Air Force leaders (planned 10 times per year) and periodic policy discussions about topical issues and emerging trends
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Sanford Schlitt took to the dais at New College in his hometown of Sarasota, as moderator for three hours of presentations and a panel discussion on the military budget.

Speakers included retired Gen. Arthur J. Lichte, former commander of Air Mobility Command; retired Army Gen. Leon E. Salomon, who headed Army Materiel Command until retiring in 1996; and retired Vice Adm. Lewis W. Crenshaw Jr., former deputy chief of naval operations for resources, requirements, and analysis.

Chapter President Michael Richardson reported that their comments were optimistic, although Crenshaw said the military in the past “used to get less of more,” since growth was built into its budget, but will now get “less of less.”

Richardson said that when organizing this event, “everywhere I went looking for support, ... I found an Air Force link.” The local *Herald-Tribune’s* marketing director came from an Air Force family; the newspaper donated four ads—worth \$7,000—that Richardson credited with helping attract the majority of the audience of 65 people.

The newspaper steered him to the venue, New College, its partner for community events. Richardson found that the scheduler for this liberal arts honors college was an Air Force retiree.

Schlitt pointed out that the symposium went from “concept to event in about a month.” The chapter itself went from concept to first meeting—in October—in less than a year. It has 70 charter members and a potential 330 members.

USAF in an Army Museum

With memorabilia from World War II Army Gen. George S. Patton Jr. as a backdrop, representatives of the **Gen. Russell E. Dougherty Chapter** took part in Retiree Appreciation Days at Fort Knox, Ky., in October.

Chapter President Jack A. Giralico and Chapter Membership VP Harold G. McManaway staffed a booth for two days inside the General George Patton Museum of Leadership.

The facility showcases the sometimes controversial Patton, who led Seventh Army in Sicily and Third Army across France. Its collection includes famous artifacts such as the general’s ivory-grip pistols and the 1938 Cadillac he was riding in when he received fatal injuries in a car crash in Germany in 1945.

Retiree Appreciation open houses and information fairs take place at installations nationwide. Fort Knox intends to serve not only those in the Bluegrass State but also retirees in Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, and West Virginia. Giralico wrote that 1,400 people registered for it.

Activities included ID card application processing, a windshield bus tour

of Fort Knox, flu shots and health care screening, briefings on Tricare programs and on the changes coming to the installation, and an evening banquet.

McManaway said the chapter created flyers to distribute. They covered AFA’s role in legislation affecting the military, the Outstanding Airman of the Year program, and AFA scholarships and grants.

The Air Force retirees seem to get a “boost from seeing the AFA presence” in an Army setting, McManaway wrote. “We also had numerous moms and dads stop by to tell us about their Air Force sons and daughters.”

More Chapter News

- In Minnesota, the **Gen. E.W. Rawl-**

ings Chapter’s membership VP, Robert McGonigle, set up an AFA booth for a Retiree Appreciation Day held in an equally unusual location: a huge casino hotel boasting more than 4,000 slot machines and nearly 100 blackjack tables. The Twin Cities Retiree Appreciation Day has taken place at this site for at least the last six years. Some 600 visitors dropped in to the information fair, this year, where about 20 booths had displays.

■ **David C. Jones Chapter** members visited the North Dakota Veterans Home in Lisbon, N.D., on Veterans Day. Chapter President Ken C. Fox arranged the event. Ronald L. Garcia, North Central Region president; James W. Simons, state president; and members James Bowman and Bernard L. Harper



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Jr. toured the facility and joined the residents to watch a flag ceremony. The AFAers were then introduced to the audience, and Simons related a history of Veterans Day and spoke about today's Air Force. Garcia presented donations to the facility, and the AFA visitors then sat down to chat with the residents.

■ In Texas on Veterans Day, several members of the **Fort Worth Chapter** attended the annual wreath-laying and luncheon at Texas Christian University. Attending the event were Joseph M. Ramsey, chapter president; Thomas J. Kemp, veterans affairs VP; James T. Castleman, education VP; Timothy J. Malone, leadership VP; and Peter Polinsky, a TCU alumni. Guest speaker was test pilot Paul Metz.

■ The **Tidewater Chapter** helped the city of Virginia Beach, Va., carry out its Veterans Day parade by coordinating an Air Force presence. Chapter VP Allan G. Berg invited the Air National Guard's 203rd RED HORSE Squadron, AFJROTC cadets from two high schools, and a Civil Air Patrol squadron to take part. Chip Moran arranged for a color guard from JB Langley-Eustis, Va., to lead these units. Chapter members rode in a van decorated with AFA emblems and distributed 3,500 aircraft photos, donated by aerospace companies. Chapter President William M. Cuthriell Jr.'s

grandchildren, Keri and Mitchell Cuthriell, rode in the chapter's parade float.

■ Representing AFA in Maryland, **Baltimore Chapter** VP Robert Pelletier attended the Community College of the Air Force graduation at Fort George Meade, Md., in November. He presented AFA Pitsenbarger Awards to MSgt. Walter Haden, SSgt. Thomas Blackshear, and SSgt. Steven Vanderheiden. The fourth awardee, SrA. Sheree McFadden, was not present. Pitsenbarger Awards provide \$500 to selected active duty and reserve enlisted personnel who plan to pursue a bachelor's degree.

Charles G. Thomas, 1940-2011

Retired Col. Charles G. Thomas, an AFA national director emeritus, died Nov. 2 in Albuquerque, N.M. He was 71.

Born in 1940 in Manhattan, N.Y., he graduated from the Air Force Academy, Class of 1961. He flew more than 7,000 hours in different aircraft, his favorite being the C-141. His final military assignment was as wing commander, 1606th Air Base Wing, Kirtland AFB, N.M.

After retiring from the Air Force in 1988, he worked in state government in New Mexico and for 13 years at Sandia National Laboratories.

He held several AFA offices and had been a member of the Audit Committee and the Field Council. ■

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Reunions

AF Public Affairs Alumni Assn, including civilians. May 3-5 at the Hilton St. Louis Frontenac, St. Louis, MO. **Contact:** John Terino (703-239-2704) (johnterino@afpaaa.org).

7th Special Ops/Air Commando Sq, all years. May 17-20 at the Quality Inn Hotel in Fort Walton Beach, FL. **Contact:** Max Friedauer, 7th Air Commando Society, 10 Ridgellake Dr., Mary Esther, FL 32569 (850-243-1343) (max@7thsos.org).

77th Fighter Sq. Jan. 7 at Shaw AFB, SC. **Contact:** Michael Long (803-895-1328).

Seeking **B-17 crew, 2nd Bomb Group, 15th AF**, North Africa and Italy, for a reunion. **Contact:** Ron Morrisette (ronmorr1@verizon.net). ■

E-mail unit reunion notices four months ahead of the event to reunions@afa.org, or mail notices to "Unit Reunions," *Air Force Magazine*, 1501 Lee Highway, Arlington, VA 22209-1198. Please designate the unit holding the reunion, time, location, and a contact for more information. We reserve the right to condense notices.

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