



Flight Line

Air & Space Forces Association Chapter 105

2025-4

Tucson, Arizona

October 2025

Chapter Officers

President
Wally Saeger
wsaeger06@gmail.com

Vice President
Bryan Foulk
bfoulk@comcast.net

Secretary
Vickie Jo Ryder
ryderf16@yahoo.com

Treasurer
Marie A. Lankford
marihan53@cox.net

VP Aerospace Education
VP CyberPatriot
Wally Saeger
wsaeger06@gmail.com

VP Leadership Development

VP Government Relations
Bryan Foulk
bfoulk@comcast.net

VP Membership
Ed Ryder
ryderf16@msn.com

VP Veterans Affairs
Bill Goodall
bgoodall@mac.com

VP Military Liaison

VP Programs / Communication
Marie A. Lankford
marihan53@cox.net

VP Community Partners
Dave Carrell
dave.carrell@cfafranchisee.com

VP Awards

VP Airmen & Family Programs
Vickie Jo Ryder
ryderf16@yahoo.com

VP AFA Golf Fundraiser

VP Communications/
Newsletter
Dick Roberts
rrrgv@aol.com

From the Prez -

Welcome to Fall. Hard to believe that we're heading into the home stretch of 2025. Tucson received 2.82 inches of rain during the 2025 monsoon season (June 15 - September 30), which was below the normal average of 5.64 inches, making it one of the driest monsoons on record. A late-season system did bring some rain in September, but not enough to lift the city's totals to average. I hope you continue to enjoy your daily activities and count the blessings you have as an American. I also encourage you to become as involved as you can with your local AFA Chapter 105.

July is our normal "down" month with no scheduled chapter meeting. We did have several chapter officers prepare and serve food at The Loft located in the DMAFB dorm area to approximately 25 hungry airmen on Sunday July 28th. Those participating were Bryan Foulk, Marie Lankford, Vickie Jo Ryder and Wally Saeger.

Prior to that was the 355th Wing Change of Command on the 10th, 25th Operational Weather Squadron Chg of Cmd, Aero Club of AZ meeting and 355th Wing Command Chief Becker's retirement on the 11th. The 355th Force Support Squadron had their Chg of Cmd the 17th while the 48th Rescue Squadron and the 309th Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group had their Chgs of Cmd on the 18th. The month finished out with the Second Quarterly Awards on Wednesday the 30th.

August was busy again with changes of command on the 1st and the 5th, ALS Graduation on the 8th, SNCO Induction on the 15th, SSgt Release on the 20th and Community College of the Air Force graduation on the 27th.

For the August 22nd meeting, our guest speaker was Major David "Evil" Bown from the 312th Fighter Squadron at Luke AFB. His presentation covered his time as an F-15E Strike Eagle and F-35 Lightning II pilot. See separate article for more details.

September was a little less hectic with no changes of command and only the Davis-Monthan Tucson Valley Committee meeting to attend on the 12th, and an AFROTC class presentation at the U of A and the Daedalians Old Pueblo Flight 12 meeting to attend on the 18th.

But no rest for the wicked as I left on Friday the 19th for Washington DC and the AFA 2025 National Convention and the Air, Space & Cyber Conference, September 20-21 and 22-24 respectively. See separate articles.

Our last chapter event was the chapter meeting on Friday September 26th with Mike Nolan from the U of A as our guest speaker. See separate article. That evening, I attended the ALS graduation for class 25-6.

Speaking of chapter membership meetings, if you RSVP and are a NO-SHOW we are still responsible for your meal. If you don't prepay, please be considerate of those who do pay and send a check to cover your meal. Your check should be made out to AFA Chapter 105 and mailed to AFA Tucson 105, PO Box 15057, Tucson AZ 85708. Thank you

While your chapter continues to be in good financial health, we need to continue raising funds to support chapter activities and fund the support we provide to our local airmen and their families; please consider donating. If you are on Facebook, you can set up a fundraising event that directly supports YOUR chapter.

Chapter 105 is part of the Fry's Community Rewards Program. This program makes fundraising easy by donating to local organizations based on the shopping you do every day.

If you have any suggestions on other sources of funds, please let us know. The more we raise the more we can support our Airmen, Guardians, and their Families.

Since we use email to stay in touch, as does AFA National, please remember to let us know if you change your email address.

Wally Saeger, President

AFA Mission

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



Chapter's August Meeting Major David "Evil" Bown, USAFR

Major Bown gave an informative and engaging presentation at the August Tucson Chapter 105 Luncheon/Meeting covering his experiences flying the F-15E and F-35A.



"Evil" is an accomplished fighter pilot with over 2300 flying hours, including over 70 combat missions supporting Operation INHERENT RESOLVE in the middle east. He

has flown both the F-15E Strike Eagle and the F-35A Lightning II, and has served in leadership roles around the world, including Chief of Operations at RAF Lakenheath and Director of Mission Planning at Mountain Home AFB.



David is currently serving as the Assistant Director of Operations for the 312th Fighter Squadron at Luke AFB where he was instrumental in standing up Belgium's F-35 pilot training program. Maj Bown has flown over 900 hours as an Instructor and Evaluator Pilot and has been awarded three Air Medals. He holds a BS in Aeronautics and an MS in Space Systems.



During his presentation Maj. Bown briefly covered his USAF career path resulting in his current assignment as an F-35A Instructor Pilot in the USAF Reserve. He also gave a review of the F-15E capabilities and an in-depth and candid look at many of the unique systems and capabilities of his current platform, the F-35A.

His briefing was well received and included details of the F-35 airframe and cockpit avionics which made all the old fighter pilots in the room wishing we were still in the game.

AFA Tucson Chapter 105

The **AFA Tucson Chapter 105** serves over 1,000 AFA members of the Davis-Monthan AFB, Morris ANGB and greater Tucson region. The chapter hosts monthly meetings/luncheons that give our members opportunities to connect. Presentations by informative speakers help members stay informed of current issues affecting our airmen and guardians, along with covering interesting topics relating to our Air Force history and heritage. Additionally, we actively support Airmen, Guardians, and their families through financial support and volunteer activities at numerous programs.

We appreciate your AFA membership and your active involvement in our chapter. If you are not a member and would like to join the fight, please click the "Join" tab at the top of the page. Be sure to select (AZ) Tucson 105 as your affiliated chapter. If you are a member and would like to be more involved, please contact us at wsaeger@afatucson105.org.

Chapter's September Meeting OSIRIS-APEX: NASA's Apophis Explorer Michael Nolan, Professor

For our September 26th meeting, Michael Nolan gave the presentation "OSIRIS-APEX: NASA's Apophis Explorer." Michael is the OSIRIS-APEX Deputy Principal Investigator in the Lunar and Planetary Laboratory, University of Arizona.

Mike started his presentation by asking "Why Study Asteroids?". The answer had three parts:



Michael Nolan, Deputy Principal Investigator, OSIRIS-APEX Research Professor

1. Origin of the Solar System: Asteroids are the main source of meteorites from which we can determine the composition of the early solar system

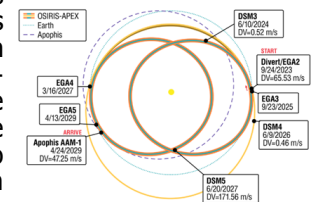
2. Hazards: Asteroids present a potential hazard to Earth that can be mitigated

3. Space Resources: If humans are to live in space, they will need materials, particularly water, which are far more available from asteroids than from other sources

OSIRIS-REx, which was launched in 2016, was NASA's first asteroids sample return mission. It arrived at the asteroid Bennu in December 2018. After adjusting the landing place to accommodate a surface that was much more rugged than originally thought, the spacecraft touched down on a surface that was more porous than expected. Nitrogen gas was fired at the surface which was "vacuumed" up and stored inside the spacecraft. The spacecraft used a rocket engine to lift off from Bennu and head back to earth. As the spacecraft flew past Earth, the recovery capsule was jettisoned and made a successful landing on the Utah Test Training Range September 2023. The UTTR is located west of the Great Salt Lake.

Since most of the spacecraft's instrumentation was still working and there was sufficient fuel for the maneuvering rockets, it was decided to repurpose the spacecraft for a mission to the asteroid Apophis. Apophis was selected after an extensive analysis of potential flyby targets in 2022. The 2029 Apophis-Earth encounter represents a once in a 7500-year opportunity. At that point in time, Apophis comes within 0.1 lunar distances of the Earth and will ideally be perturbed by the Earth. Ground-based observers cannot view Apophis shortly after the Earth encounter, but the redirected spacecraft will be the best tool to observe how Apophis responds to the close encounter with Earth. This presents a unique opportunity to understand the volatile content and surface response of stony asteroids.

The APEX trajectory presents several challenges. First, the spacecraft will get within ~0.5 au (46.5 million miles) of the Sun while the average distance from the Earth to the Sun is 93.051 million miles.



To protect sensitive equipment the spacecraft must "hibernate" in a special mode that uses the solar panels as shades. Since communication with the spacecraft at that distance isn't instantaneous, the spacecraft has to be programmed to perform this maneuver in advance. See the diagram to understand how complicated the APEX trajectory is.

The spacecraft will not land on Apophis but will instead maneuver close to the surface and use the maneuvering thrusters to excavate the surface. The spacecraft will make another reconnaissance pass using high resolution sensors to study the effects of the thrusters. All of this data will be sent back to Earth to be studied.

The briefing that was presented at the meeting can be found at:

https://tucson.afa.org/app/uploads/sites/22/2025/10/MCN_AFA_20250926.pdf

Unfortunately, to save the presentation to our chapter website, the animations were disabled.

2025 AFA AIR, SPACE & CYBER Conference

The 2025 AFA AIR, SPACE & CYBER Conference was held September 22-24 at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center on National Harbor, Maryland. While attendance was down this year due to guidance restricting the number of Air Force members that could attend, it did make it easier to find a seat in the main presentation hall and all of the other presentations and panels.

There were four Keynote Addresses on Monday and Tuesday presented by The Honorable Troy Meinke, Secretary of the Air Force; Gen. David Allvin, Chief of Staff of the Air Force; Gen. B. Chance Saltzman, Chief of Space Operations; and Chief Master Sergeant of the Space Forces John Bentivegna.

On Monday afternoon, the Twelve Outstanding Airmen of the Year, were introduced to those in attendance in the main presentation hall and were presented with their award. This was followed later in the evening with a formal reception in the Exhibit Hall.

To conclude the conference, the AFA's U.S. Air Force Birthday Celebration was held in the main presentation hall.

To see videos and other information related to the ASC Conference go to: <https://www.afa.org/air-space-cyber-conference/>

Of special note, nine members of the 355th Wing attended the conference including Col. Jose Cabrera, the wing commander, and CMSgt Kelvin Hatcher, the wing command chief. Using some of contacts, Chief Hatcher arranged for the airmen to get a tour of the Pentagon on Tuesday during which they got a group picture with the Secretary of War, The Honorable Pete Hegseth. Following a group dinner hosted by Bryan Foulk and Wally Saeger, the airmen headed to the White House for a special tour arranged by Chief Hatcher that supposedly included the "situation room".

The ASC Conference was again a busy event with lots going on.

"A Little Bit of History"

Philippine Mars



The Philippine Mars was the last operational Martin JRM Mars flying boat, a World War II-era aircraft, that served as a water bomber and cargo transport before its retirement in 2025. After its final flight from British Columbia, it was disassembled at Lake Pleasant, Arizona, and trucked to the Pima Air & Space Museum in Tucson, where it now rests as a permanent exhibit, honoring its long and significant history.

The Philippine Mars was one of seven Martin JRM Mars flying boats built for the U.S. Navy, designed for long-range ocean patrol, troop, and cargo transport during World War II.

After its military service, the aircraft became an aerial firefighting water bomber, working in this capacity alongside its sister ship, the Hawaii Mars, in British Columbia.

In February 2025, the Philippine Mars completed its final flight, a journey from British Columbia to the U.S., marking the end of its active flying days.

The Philippine Mars first flew from Sproat Lake, British Columbia, to the San Francisco Bay area for a brief stop before its final destination in Arizona.

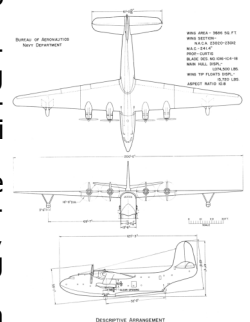
The large flying boat then landed on Lake Pleasant in Arizona, the closest large lake with a boat ramp, for a 40-day disassembly process.

The dismantled aircraft was then transported by truck to the Pima Air & Space Museum in Tucson, Arizona, where it will be on permanent display for visitors.

General characteristics

- **Crew:** four (with accommodations for a second relief crew)
 - **Capacity:** JRM Mars - 133 troops, or 84 litter patients and 25 attendants or 32,000 lb (15,000 kg) payload, including up to seven Willys MB jeeps
 - **Water/foam load:** Mars waterbomber - 60,000 lb
 - **Length:** 117 ft 3 in (35.74 m)
 - **Wingspan:** 200 ft 0 in (60.96 m)
 - **Width:** 13 ft 6 in (4.11 m) Hull beam
 - **Height:** 38 ft 5 in afloat, 48 ft beached
 - **Empty weight:** 75,573 lb (34,279 kg)
 - **Gross weight:** 90,000 lb (40,823 kg)
 - **Max takeoff weight:** 165,000 lb (74,843 kg)
 - **Powerplant:** 4 × Wright R-3350 Duplex-Cyclone 18-cylinder radial engines, 2,500 hp (1,900 kW) each
- Performance**

- **Maximum speed:** 221 mph (356 km/h, 192 kn)
- **Cruise speed:** 190 mph (310 km/h, 170 kn)
- **Range:** 4,900 mi (8,000 km, 4,300 nmi)
- **Service ceiling:** 14,600 ft (4,500 m)



2025 AFA National Convention

The 2025 AFA National convention was held September 20-21 at the Gaylord Conference Center on National Harbor, Maryland. The convention is an annual event where delegates gather in person or virtually to hear briefings on topics germane to AFA on the national level as determined by the Board of Directors.

This year, the delegates elected the following individuals to the indicated offices.

Chair of the Board of Directors: Kathleen Ferguson

National Director, Central Region: Janelle Stafford

National Director, At Large: Dwyer Dennis and Wes Hallman

The bios for these individuals can be found at: <https://www.afa.org/national-convention/candidates/>

Delegates were also asked to vote on three amendments to the bylaws. These amendments were all passed although none by unanimous vote. These amendments can be found at: <https://www.afa.org/national-convention/2025-resolutions/>

On Saturday night, the annual AFA Awards Dinner was held where numerous national, state, chapter and individual awards were presented. The following national-level awards were presented:

Donal W. Steele Sr. Memorial Award (AFA Unit of the Year: Paul Revere Chapter, Mass)

Outstanding State Organization: Colorado

Chair Award for Aerospace Education Achievement: Daniel P. Woodward

Member of the Year: Gavin "Mac" MacAloon

Buck Buckwalter Distinguished Sustained Aerospace Education Achievement Award: Stephen Gourley

AFA Citation Award, Presented by the Chair, AFA Board of Directors: Richard Balwin, Francis Bradshaw, Ross Lampert and Marianne Tango Williams

2025 Thompson-Mallett Teacher of the Year: Ashlie Smith, 8th-grade physical science teacher at Cranbrook Kingswood Middle School for Girls, Bloomfield Hills, Minn.

.Of note, your chapter garnered the Aerospace Education Excellence Award for Extra Large Chapter, an Aerospace Education Achievement Award and a Special Recognition Membership Award for Chapter Growth

In addition, from Chapter 105, Bill Foraker, Marie Lankford and Vickie Jo Ryder will receive a Medal of Merit, while Wally Saeger will receive an Exceptional Service Award.

The complete list of awards should appear in the next issue of Air&Space Forces magazine.



F-15C Fighter That Downed MiGs Arrives at Smithsonian for Display

Aug. 14, 2025 | By John A. Tirpak (Reprinted from AIR & SPACE FORCES MAGAZINE)



An F-15C is delivered to the Smithsonian's Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center in Chantilly, Va., as Cesar "Rico" Rodriguez—who shot down two MiGs in the aircraft—looks on. Rodriguez is embraced by Col. Adam "Axe" Gaudinski, commander of the 173rd Fighter Wing, who flew the jet in for permanent display. (Photo by Douglas Birkey)

The F-15C Eagle flown by Cesar "Rico" Rodriguez when he downed two Iraqi MiGs in the 1991 Gulf War was delivered this week to the Smithsonian's Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center in Chantilly, Va., where it will go on permanent display in the coming weeks. It's the first F-15 to be displayed by the National Air & Space Museum.

"The Eagle is one of the most iconic American fighter aircraft of the last 50 years, and this particular F-15 has powerful stories to tell," said Michael Hankins, modern military curator at the museum. "We are thrilled to accept the F-15C into the museum's collection."

The F-15C was designed with the exclusive mission of achieving air supremacy, featuring unprecedented thrust and maneuverability, a bubble canopy for unmatched visibility, and a powerful radar. Although originally planned for retirement in the early 2000s, the F-15 has soldiered on because its intended successor, the F-22, was not built in sufficient numbers. A two-seat model, the F-15E, was designed as a ground-attack platform but retains its air-to-air capabilities.

During Operation Desert Storm in 1991, Rodriguez brought down two Iraqi fighters—a MiG-29 and a MiG-23—in the Smithsonian's new display aircraft, while serving with the 33rd Tactical Fighter Wing's 58th Tactical Fighter Squadron. Later, in 1999, he shot down a Yugoslavian MiG-29 during Operation Allied Force, flying a different F-15. Since the Vietnam War, no American pilot has scored the five aerial victories necessary to earn the title "ace." But Rodriguez is one of four Air Force pilots—the others being Thomas Dietz, Robert Hehemann and Robert Wright—who have come the closest, each shooting down three aircraft in the last 50 years.

F-15s in the U.S. Air Force and several other foreign militaries have collectively brought down more than 100 adversaries, while suffering no losses in air-to-air combat.

The museum's F-15—aircraft 85-0114—arrived at the Smithsonian's Dulles Airport, Va. facility on Aug. 13. It was flown to the museum by Col. Adam "Axe" Gaudinski, commander of the 173rd Fighter Wing at Kingsley Field, Ore., where the new museum artifact concluded its 40-year service life. Gaudinski's name on the canopy rail was peeled off after landing, revealing Rodriguez's name underneath

See "Rico", Page 7

Highlighting Our Community Partner **Aero Club of Arizona**



In 1986, Green Valley, Arizona boasted more than 200 service, social and professional clubs. Except for airplane modelers, none of the clubs were tailored to residents who might have a consuming interest in aviation and space flight. Thus, three retired veterans of the aerospace industry founded the Aero Club of Green Valley, now named the Aero Club of Arizona, to fill what they had perceived as a real need.

It all started over coffee in 1986. Bob Johnson, Jim Greenwood and Milt Getker each a conformed aviation buff, met there regularly to swap stories of their flying experiences. Soon other aviation industry retirees joined the "hangar sessions" until the group got so big it had to find a new location.

The eager flyers landed on Sunny's Restaurant, where the owner generously allowed them to transform his Teriyaki Room with pictures of airplanes and celebrated airmen. And on October 30, 1986, over lunch at Sunny's, Johnson, Greenwood, and Getker proposed that they form an Aero Club of Green Valley, if the others agreed it was a good idea. They did.

Having outgrown Sunny's except for board meetings, the brand new club, with Greenwood as President, conducted its first general meeting on November 19, 1987, at East Social Center. The Club's purpose: preserve America's aviation heritage, offer a vehicle for kindred spirits to share their common interests and promote greater understanding of the history and future of human flight. Next the Club held its first annual membership meeting, which coincided with the second public forum, on January 17, 1988, also at the East Social Center. The main speaker was Col. Ralph D. "Hoot" Gibson, USAF (Ret), a Korean jet ace and former Air Force Thunderbird leader.

Since then, the Club has earned an enviable reputation for the quality of its informative and entertainment programs.

Programs are educational and feature a wide range of aerospace subjects from flight testing to flight safety.

Club membership is an impressive cross-section of people who either worked in some facet of the aerospace industry or simply have an affinity for flying machines.

It's a good rule of folks who have had professional careers in the armed forces flight training, aircraft manufacturing, air operations, aircraft services, federal regulatory agencies and commercial airlines. It also includes hard core aviation enthusiasts who never piloted an airplane.

Don Raymond, who succeeded Bob Johnson, was President when the Club became incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation.

In February 1990, during Bill Lafferty's administration, the Club name officially changed to the Aero Club of Arizona (ACA).

Many Club members have contributed to ACA's steady growth and success such as Milt Getker, who served as the first secretary and at one time personally accounted for more than a third of the total membership. But none was more dedicated than Ginny de Silva whose efforts to maintain complete records and to communicate regularly with the membership literally held the Club together during its formative years.

Ginny replaced Getker as secretary. Upon the incapacitation of Mary Kay Maynard, the Club's first treasurer, she assumed the duties of treasurer as well. Before stepping down after nine years of active service, she also acted as statutory agent.

As such, she became embroiled in a three year battle with the IRS, which for reasons never fully explained, altered its position and declared ACA a "private foundation" subject to tax liability.

With some assistance from Greenwood, no stranger to government confrontation, Ginny finally won out. The IRS restored the club's tax exemption and ACA operations returned to normal. And wherever the feds meet for their morning coffee today, they probably will talk about the feisty little club in Arizona that beat the system.

Aviation observed a major milestone December 17, 2003, as the world celebrated the one hundredth anniversary of the airplane's invention. An on that day in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, site of history's first flight, ACA was ably represented at the ceremonies commemorating Wilber and Orville's epical achievement. Highlights of the memorable event, attended by aviation legends and dignitaries, including President George W. Bush, were reported to members.

Now as we move into the second century of powered flight, the ACA objectives remain the same, but its directors are looking ahead to further growth and service. Well aware of the realities of life in a retirement community, the board hopes to counter expected attrition by increasing membership through new activities having a common appeal to a broader audience in a wider area.

see Aero Club of Arizona page 7

“Rico”, from page 5

The aircraft is painted in the modern F-15 air-to-air paint scheme, and its tail art honors David R. Kingsley, namesake of the Oregon air base. The tail also carries a graphic of that specific aircraft bringing down the Iraqi MiGs—and carries two Iraqi flags as kill markings. A Smithsonian spokesperson said that for the time being, the aircraft will be displayed in its current scheme, and won't be repainted to appear as it did in 1991.

“I put a lot of pain on that airplane, and the crew chiefs fixed her up and got her going again the next day,” Rodriguez told Washington CBS affiliate WUSA. He said flying the F-15 was “a lot of fun” despite “a lot of scary moments.” “I wouldn’t trade it,” he said.

Rodriguez earned his first kill on Jan. 19, 1991, when Operation Desert Storm had been underway for only three days. In that first encounter, he engaged with a MiG-29 in a descending scissors pattern; each pilot trying to gain and maintain superior firing position on the other, pushing the F-15 to its 9G loading limit. He attempted to get a lock with an AIM-9 Sidewinder heat-seeking missile, but the heat of the rapidly-approaching desert floor interfered. He got too close for radar-guided missiles and considered switching to guns. Nearing just 1,000 feet above the ground, though, the Iraqi made a mistake, inverting and pulling down in an attempt to escape. There wasn’t enough room to pull out of the dive, and he crashed; Rodriguez had maneuvered the MiG into the ground.

By chance, Rodriguez returned to aircraft 85-0114 a week later, when he and a flight of F-15s fired their AIM-7 radar-guided Sparrow missiles at a flight of advancing MiG-23s. Rodriguez fired the third of three missiles launched by the flight; two, including his, hit their targets head-on. He later recounted that he didn’t realize he was flying the same jet until he saw crew chiefs applying two Iraqi kill markings under its canopy rail.

He added his third kill on March 24, 1999, the first night of Operation Allied Force. Rodriguez shot down a Yugoslavian MiG-29 with an AIM-120 Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missile, one of the first kills for that weapon. He retired in 2006 as a full colonel.

The museum’s F-15 later served for a time with the 44th Fighter Squadron at Kadena Air Base, Japan, before it was transferred to the 173rd in Oregon. The new display aircraft will be demilitarized in the coming weeks, as Smithsonian technicians remove explosive charges and caustic chemicals so that it can be displayed safely. After that, it will be presented near other modern military aircraft like the X-35, A-6, and F-14. It will displace the World War II-era Sikorsky JRS-1 flying boat, which will be moved into the museum’s restoration facility. The F-15 is now in the museum’s restoration area and can be viewed from the mezzanine overlooking that hangar.

It’s likely the F-15 will be displayed with a representative load of ordnance, as the F-14 there is shown with an air-to-air loadout that includes AIM-54 Phoenix missiles unique to that aircraft. A display placard explaining the history of the Eagle is being developed, a spokesperson said.

Roughly 200 F-15s remain in the Air Force today, as the new [F-15EX Eagle II](#) replaces older [F-15C/Ds](#) flown by the Air National Guard. The new aircraft improves on the F-15 with a fly-by-wire electronic flight control system, a far more powerful processor and electronic warfare system, two additional weapon stations, and other upgrades.

Aero Club of AZ, from page 6

Monthly programs featuring prominent speakers have already replaced the original quarterly forum and are open to the general public. Members, of course are always encouraged to bring guests to the ACA’s monthly meetings.

Over the years ACA has supported a number of worthy causes related to aviation, especially those involving young people.

ACA currently supports four high school Junior ROTC programs

As for the organization’s future, it continues to be bright as long as members have the dedication and imagination to make good things happen. After all, aviation is their passion.

MEMBERSHIP

Congratulations Tucson AFA Chapter 105! Our chapter this year has again been awarded the AFA National Level Growth Award. This is because we have seen a growth in total membership from June 2024 through June 2025, so thank you all for helping keep our chapter active and growing. Below is a list of new members and transferees into Chapter 105 for the third quarter of 2025. Thank you all for helping support our Air & Space Forces Association mission, and we look forward to meeting you at a chapter event in the near future. Watch your email for announcements regarding the monthly meetings and other AFA opportunities. Welcome!

Mrs. Juliet C McDowell	Lt Col (ret) Manuel F. Lopez USAF	Andrew Loutzenheiser
Axel G. Diaz Torres	MSgt Cailin Molina	Milena E. Dorris
		Mr. Scott Youmans



WREATHS *across* AMERICA

Join us as we honor veterans on Saturday, 13 December 2025 at East Lawn Palms Cemetery (5801 E. Grant, Tucson). Opening ceremony will be at 1000 followed by laying wreaths on veterans' graves.

More than two million volunteers are expected to participate at 5,200 locations in all 50 states and overseas. Volunteers are encouraged (but not mandatory) to register online for the wreath laying.

It is a very solemn and rewarding occasion. As we place a wreath at **each veteran's grave, we "say their name" to ensure that the legacy of duty, service, and sacrifice is never forgotten.**



There are a total of 7 cemeteries in the local area participating in Wreaths Across America including Arizona Veterans Memorial Cemetery – Marana and Green Valley Mortuary and Cemetery at 18751 South La Canada Drive, Sahuarita. Other locations are available on the Wreaths Across America website.

If you are interested in sponsoring a wreath (or multiple), please visit the Wreaths Across America site at <https://wreathscrossamerica.org> . There are two tabs marked Sponsor Wreaths where you may choose to donate for one or multiple wreaths. Cost of each wreath is \$17.

We Have a New Community Partner

Susan Kelly



This is a new login for anyone using the VA website

Switch to VA's new secure sign-in by September 30

<https://news.va.gov/142310/switch-from-ds-logon-login-gov-id-me-sept-30/>

A U.S. Air Force EA-37B Compass Call aircraft assigned to the 43rd Electronic Combat Squadron takes off at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, July 24, 2025. U.S. Air Force pilots have trained with the EA-37B at Davis-Monthan since August 2024.



Logo for the Douglas
Aircraft Company
Flight Test Division



SCAMS AND FRAUD – Information from VA email dated 9/16/2025

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is committed to protecting you and your benefits from fraud and scams. We monitor the latest fraud and scam trends and share this critical information with you.

Overpayment Scam: Beware of anyone contacting you pretending to be VA

Have you received a call, text or letter from someone pretending to be with the Department of Veterans Affairs alleging you have a substantial VA debt due to overpayment? It can be a scam! The scammer uses high pressure tactics to insist the debt must be repaid immediately via wire transfer, gift cards, cryptocurrency, or other non-traditional payment methods. VA will never demand Veterans repay their debts in full up front, as VA offers many [flexible payment plans](#) at no additional cost. Official VA Debt Management Center (DMC) communication will provide specific details about the debt, offer secure payment through www.pay.va.gov, and your appeal or waiver rights.

If you are suspicious of a communication alleging to be VA, you can verify authenticity with VA at 1-800-827-1000 or contact the DMC at 1-800-827-0648. Never share sensitive information, such as social security numbers, bank account details, or credit card information, when responding to unsolicited requests.

New Scams:

Bad actors continue to come up with new fraudulent schemes, from unpaid toll texts and fraudulent mailing messages to bereavement scams exploiting families after the loss of a loved one.

Bereavement scams: Scammers exploit the vulnerability of grieving family members while contacting them to gather personal information or extort money with claims of fake debts owed by the deceased, inflated funeral expenses, processing fees, or unpaid insurance premiums.

Mail scams: Involve text messages alleging to be from shipping companies or the United States Postal Service attempting to make a delivery, demanding delivery fee payment, or with a gift offer.

Unpaid Toll Texts: Individuals receive a text notification indicating they have an excessive outstanding unpaid toll fee, and immediate payment is demanded to prevent driver privileges from being permanently revoked or arrest. The messages appear to be from companies such as EZPass, SunPass, PeachPass, and FastTrack, among others. The messages usually instruct the victim to click on a link to issue a payment for the outstanding fees.

Natural Disasters Fraud:

In the wake of natural disasters like tornadoes, flooding, earthquakes, fires, and hurricanes, it's important for Veterans and their families to know VA is here to help. Scammers prey on vulnerability resulting from [natural disasters](#) and often exploit the chaos and desperation of homeowners in disaster-stricken areas. To alleviate financial stress, which can heighten vulnerability, we recommend that Veterans enroll in [direct deposit](#) to receive their benefits. Likewise, scammers also seek to exploit generosity with [charity scams](#) to divert donations from genuine causes. [For resources to help manage fraud or to file a report](#), call 833-38V-SAFE.

Protect Your G.I. Bill Benefits from Scams

Unfortunately, some non-accredited educational institutions and programs employ [deceptive practices](#) and make embellished promises regarding the value and earning potential of their degrees. It is crucial for Veterans and their families to be well-informed when using their G.I. Bill benefits and to make wise financial decisions related to their education to avoid [student loan scams](#). Protect your benefits by only choosing [G.I. Bill approved schools](#). At VA, we are committed to empowering Veterans to make the best financial decisions related to their education. Therefore, VA encourages Veterans and their beneficiaries to familiarize themselves with education fraud warning signs.

Let's stand united as fraud fighters to safeguard the well-deserved benefits of our nation's heroes.

If you miss a VA benefits payment, identify a discrepancy in payments, or find suspicious activity with your direct deposit account, contact VA immediately at 1-800-827-1000. If you suspect you have experienced fraud, you can find resources to file a report to the appropriate agency by visiting vsa.gov or by calling 1-833-38V-SAFE

Community Partner Program

For more than 40 years, businesses have been joining the Air Force Association to support both AFA National and local AFA chapters. Becoming a Community Partner is a great way to get your business involved with your local Air Force Community. Community Partners are partnership businesses that want to assist both AFA National and the local AFA chapters by becoming involved in Community efforts to support the United States Air Force.

By forming a partnership with your local AFA chapter, your business will help AFA fulfill their mission to promote a dominant United States Air Force and a strong national defense. Any business or organization can become a CP and have two options for membership:

Category One (CP I) \$90.00 annually- Business can designate one person to receive AFA Membership and enjoy all benefits thereof.

Category Two (CP II) \$180.00 annually- Business can designate two people to receive AFA Membership and enjoy all benefits thereof.

Not only does a Community Partner receive all the benefits of an AFA membership, such as a variety of product and service discounts, insurance programs, and much more, but the partner will also receive the following upon joining AFA:

Date Medallion

Wooden Plaque

8"x5" "Our Business Supports Our Troops" Window Decal

If your business is interested in becoming a Community Partner, you should first contact your local chapter.

For questions or for more information on the program, please contact: **Dave Carrell, carrelldav@aol.com, (520) 305-4407**

Have your business become a part of a great cause and show your patrons that you support our Air Force!

Tucson Chapter's Community Partners

A & E Specialty Marketing
Elliott M. Klahr
P. O. Box 4423
Rio Rico, AZ 85648
520-281-1369 (P)
520-980-0515 (C)

Chick-fil-A
Dave Carrell
6675 E. Grant Rd.
Tucson, AZ 85715
520-305-4407

Chick-fil-A
Travis Kuhn
4885 N. Oracle Rd.
Tucson, AZ 85705
520-408-2456

Chick-fil-A
Brian White
3943 W. Ina Rd.
Tucson, AZ 85741
520-744-6269

Chick-fil-A
Matt Hountz
3605 E. Broadway Blvd
Tucson, AZ 85716
520-321-4232

Chick-fil-A
Andres Romo
1188 W. Irvington Rd.
Tucson, AZ 85714
530-741-2280

Ciruli Brothers
Chris Ciruli
5 Calle Cristina
Rio Rico, AZ 85648
520-281-1456

Coldwell Banker & Homes for
Heroes
Susan Kelly
11165 N La Canada Dr, Ste
175
Oro Valley, AZ 85737
520-760-3801
susan.kelly1@cbrealty.com
www.susankellyhomes.com
www.homesforheroes.com

Tucson Appliance Company
Chris Edwards
4229 E. Speedway Blvd
Tucson, AZ 85712
520-881-1207
tacappliance.com

Aero Club of Arizona
P. O. Box 856
Green Valley, AZ 85622
520-648-5749

Vantage West Credit Union
Lea Cazares
P. O. Box 15115
Tucson, AZ 85708
800-888-7882
Vantagewest.org

Upcoming Events

We hope to schedule future "field trips" to different organization on base while conducting chapter meetings at the American Legion Post 36 off base. If you have something specific you want to see, please let us know! There are MANY events supporting our local Airmen and changes of command! As a Chapter, we try to attend all that we can. If you are interested in representing your AFA Chapter at any of these, please inform Wally Saeger (wsaeger@afatucson105.org) and he will coordinate it. You just have to show up and enjoy these traditional military ceremonies and gatherings. First come, first served!!

Oct 2025

- 6th: Chapter Executive Committee Meeting, 1200, OG Conf Rm, DMAFB (all welcome!)
- 24th: Chapter Meeting, Subject TBD, 1130, American Legion Post 36
- 30th: Haunted House for military kids, Military & Family Readiness Center, for more info contact Vickie Jo Ryder (520) 820-8197

Nov 2025

- 3rd: Chapter Executive Committee Meeting, 1200, OG Conf Rm, DMAFB (all welcome!)
- 11th: Veterans Day Ceremony, Broadway Proper, Time TBD (Tentative)
- 24th: Dorm Bash (Feed Dorm residents) More info to follow
- 28th: No Chapter Meeting, Enjoy your Thanksgiving

Dec 2025

- 1st: Chapter Executive Committee Meeting, 1200, OG Conf Rm, DMAFB (all welcome!)
- 4th: Joint Awards Luncheon with Daedalians, 1130, American Legion Post 36
- 12th: Cookies & Coco with Santa for Military kids, Military & Family Readiness Center, for more info contact Vickie Jo Ryder (520) 820-8197
- 13th: Wreaths Across America Day
- 20th: US Space Forces Birthday
- 26th: No Chapter Meeting

SAVE THESE DATES/DATES TO REMEMBER:

- Jan 5th: Chapter Executive Committee Meeting, 1200, OG Conf Rm, DMAFB (all welcome!)
- Jan 23rd: Chapter Meeting, Subject TBD, 1130, American Legion Post 36
- Feb 2nd: Chapter Executive Committee Meeting, 1200, OG Conf Rm, DMAFB (all welcome!)
- Feb 27 – Mar 1: Heritage Flight (Tentative Date)
- Mar 2nd: Chapter Executive Committee Meeting, 1200, OG Conf Rm, DMAFB (all welcome!)
- Mar 27th: Chapter Meeting, Subject TBD, 1130, American Legion Post 36

AFA's Mission

Our Mission is to promote dominant U. S. Air and Space Forces as the foundation of a strong National Defense; to honor and support our Airmen, Guardians, and their Families; and to remember 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.