



Flight Line

Air & Space Forces Association Chapter 105

2026-4

Tucson, Arizona

October 2026

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Newsletter

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From the Prez -

Well, well we've made it to Fall and hopefully the worst of the heat is behind us. Make sure to get out to enjoy the cooler temperatures and plentiful sunshine when you can.

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 was relatively quiet as we had no chapter meeting but there were three changes of command, a TSgt Release Party and an ALS graduation on DMAFB. Your chapter again hosted the Southwest Region Conference 25-26 July. My thanks to Marie Lankford and Vickie Jo Ryder for their outstanding work on the details needed to make this event a success. DMAFB had the fini-flight of the A-10 on 29 July conducted by the 355 OG/CC and 357 FS/CC.

August started off with the SNCO Induction Ceremony on 7 August that was conducted at the El Conquistador Resort. The inactivation ceremony was held for the 55th Rescue Generation Squadron on 10 August. I had the pleasure of presenting both the Chapter 105 and Arizona State Runner-up TOY awards to Melissa Samsel of Innovation Academy on 11 August. On 19 August, I attended the SSgt Release Party on DMAFB and then a presentation by the 492 SOW wing leadership that night at the U of A that was hosted by the DM-50. We had our Chapter Meeting on 28 August, and I attended another ALS graduation that evening.

September was even busier, and I was gone for most of it. The AFA Convention was held at the Gaylord Conference Center, National Harbor MD, 12-13 September, and the Air, Space & Cyber Conference followed immediately after 14-16 September. DMAFB had numerous activities on 18 September that chapter members attended (separate articles). Ed Ryder gave a presentation on the 18th to the Daedalians Old Pueblo Flight 12 on his career flying the F-16. The September chapter meeting was on the 25th as was the DMAFB Ball later that night.

See the Upcoming Events for events for the upcoming two quarters.

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

AFA has a new membership category, Mission Membership, which is free. This is an opportunity to introduce family & friends to the AFA at no cost to see if they are interested. Joining is easy, go to afa.org and click on the yellow **Join** box on the upper right side of the home page.

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.

It's that time of the year that Wreaths Across America are looking for individuals to sponsor wreaths to be laid at cemeteries across America on veterans' graves. See separate article on how you can support this cause and your chapter.

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

For our August 28th chapter meeting we received a presentation from CMSgt Anthony "Tony" Slaght, the Senior Enlisted Leader, 55th Electronic Combat Group, DMAFB.

Chief Slaght entered the Air Force in September 1997. He has flown over 3,800 hours as a Career Enlisted Aviator on the C-130E/H, MC-130W, AC-130W Stinger II, MC-130H Combat Talon II, and EC-130H COMPASS CALL. He has deployed numerous times in support of named operations worldwide, logging over 1,400 combat flight hours in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. He has been awarded numerous major awards and decorations to include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal w/2 oak leaf clusters, Air Medal w/7 oak leaf clusters, Aerial Achievement Medal, Joint Meritorious Unit Award w/1 OLC, Meritorious Unit Award w/7 OLCs, and Air and Space Outstanding Unit Award w/5 OLCs.

His presentation, "Same Tribe, New Wings", focused on the transition from the venerable EC-130H to the EA-37B that will continue the effort to dominate the Electromagnetic Spectrum: a Warfighting Domain. The first deployment of an EC-130H was to Sembach AB, Germany on 19 March 1982. Since then, these COMPASS CALL aircraft have participated in every major operation around the world; including the most recent – EPIC FURY – despite being on the tail end of the fleet's drawdown.

Its replacement, the EA-37B, started its career by also deploying to EPIC FURY, despite being a fleet of only two airframes stationed at DMAFB. The EA-37B provides multiple advantages over the airframe that it is replacing with longer range, increased speed and altitude, and improved electromagnetic attack through phased upgrades and integration of artificial intelligence.

To learn more about the EC-130H, <https://www.af.mil/About-Us/Fact-Sheets/Display/article/104550/ec-130h-compass-call/>, and the EA-37B, <https://www.airandspaceforces.com/weapons/ea-37b/> click on the included links.

September 2026 Happenings on DMAFB

September was a busy month for DMAFB and your chapter leadership supported as many activities as possible despite the chapter president being MIA for most of the month.

The 355th Wing started with a ceremony proceeded by the 355th Wing Commander, Colonel Jose Cabrea, for the inactivation of the 355th Operations Group, 357th Fighter Squadron, 357th Fighter Generation Squadron, and the 355th Training Squadron.

The 55th Electronic Combat Group was next with a ceremony to recognize the retirement of the EC-130H COMPASS CALL aircraft after over 44 years in the inventory and the "reveal" of its replacement, the EA-37B "Banshee". The ceremony was conducted by the 55th Wing Commander, Colonel Aron Gray. More info at <https://www.acc.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/4609528/silence-of-the-jammed-ec-130h-retires/>. And the new EA-37B. <https://www.airandspaceforces.com/air-force-retires-last-ec-130h-davis-monahan-transition/>

The wing held a POW/MIA ceremony that afternoon at the Pima Air & Space Museum.

Despite this hectic schedule, your chapter was represented at all significant events. Ed Ryder even presented at the Daedalians Old Pueblo Fight 12 meeting on his experiences flying the F-16.

The night concluded with Bryan Foulk attending the DMAFB Air Force Ball OBHO Chapter 105.

Thank you to everyone that participated and represented AFA Chapter 105.

Chapter's September Meeting



Dr. Bryan Foulk gave a very informative and well received presentation at the September Luncheon/meeting. Dr. Foulk is the Executive Vice President of AFA Tucson Chapter 105, the AFA Arizona State Vice President, and a member of the AFA Advocacy Committee.

His presentation covered the activities and proceedings during the AFA National Convention where he was a delegate. It included the election results and discussions on the new AFA premium membership rates.

He also covered areas where AFA is helping advocate to fill US Air Force shortfalls and needs. This ranged from recapitalizing the USAF aircraft inventory, challenges with meeting force requirements for the EA-37B, all the way to novel approaches to solve the on-base Child Development Center staff shortfalls.

Overall, his presentation was insightful, thought provoking, and a candid look at what goes on behind the scenes at Air & Space Forces Association.

EC-130H Compass Call Final Operational Flight



The U.S. Air Force's final active EC-130H Compass Call electronic warfare aircraft conducted its final operational flight at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Arizona, concluding more than 40 years of continuous military service. Flying under the callsign VOLT01, the aircraft logged a six-hour sortie alongside its modern EA-37B replacement, marking the end of the four-engine Hercules-based jamming platform before its formal service retirement.

2026 Wreaths Across America

This year, National Wreaths Across America Day will be held on Saturday, December 19, 2026. Join millions of volunteers and supporters who will gather to Remember, Honor and Teach at over 5,500 participating locations in all 50 states, at sea and abroad.

Sponsor a veteran's wreath in honor of or in memory of a loved one who served in our armed forces. Or, sponsor and allow us to designate a recipient among the millions of heroes who rest in honored glory.

Your Tucson Chapter 105 is again part of Wreaths Across America's donation program. This program allows individuals to designate a non-profit organization to receive \$5 for each wreath that individual purchases.

This year, you have the opportunity to sponsor wreaths for two locations to benefit the chapter:

East Lawn Palms Mortuary & Cemetery 5801 E. Grant Rd

www.wreathsasscrossamerica.org/AZ0311P

All Faiths Memorial Park 2151 S Avenida Los Reyes

www.wreathsasscrossamerica.org/AZ0LDC

The other WAA participating cemeteries in the greater Tucson area that are NOT part of sponsorship program are Evergreen Cemetery, South Lawn Mortuary & Cemetery, Holy Hope Cemetery, Mount Calvario Veterans Cemetery, Green Valley Mortuary and Cemetery, Marana Mortuary Cemetery, and Arizona Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Marana.



35 Years Ago



The C-17 Globemaster III completed its first test flight from Long Beach, CA in September 1991, launching a new chapter in heavy and tactical airlift used by the U.S. Air Force and international allies to transport troops, oversized cargo, and equipment worldwide.

279 C-17s were built: 223 for the USAF and 56 for International partners.

"A Little Bit of History"

North American F-86 Sabrejet



The **North American F-86 Sabre**, sometimes called the **Sabrejet**, is a transonic, jet-powered fighter aircraft. Produced by North American Aviation, the Sabre is best known as the United States' first swept-wing fighter that could counter the swept-wing Soviet MiG-15 in high-speed dogfights in the skies of the Korean War (1950–1953), fighting some of the earliest jet-to-jet battles. Considered one of the best and most important fighter aircraft in that war, the F-86 is also rated highly in comparison with fighters of other eras. Although it was developed in the late 1940s and was outdated by the end of the 1950s, the Sabre proved versatile and adaptable and continued as a front-line fighter in numerous air forces.

Its success led to an extended production run of more than 7,800 aircraft between 1949 and 1956, in the United States, Japan, and Italy. In addition, 738 carrier-modified versions were purchased by the US Navy as FJ-2s and -3s. Variants were built in Canada and Australia. The Canadair Sabre added another 1,815 aircraft and the significantly redesigned CAC Sabre (sometimes known as the Avon Sabre or CAC CA-27), had a production run of 112. The Sabre is by far the most-produced Western jet fighter, with a total production of all variants at 9,860 units.

General characteristics

- **Crew:** 1
- **Gross weight:** 15,198 lb
- **Max takeoff weight:** 18,152 lb
- **Fuel capacity:** JP-4 fuel: 437 US gallons
- **Powerplant:** 1 × General Electric J47-GE-27 turbojet engine

Performance

- **Maximum speed:** 687 mph
- **Range:** 1,525 mi
- **Service ceiling:** 49,600 ft at combat weight

Armament

- **Guns:** 6 × M3 Browning machine guns
- **Rockets:** variety of rocket launchers; e.g.: 2 Matra rocket pods with 18 SNEB 68 mm rockets per pod
- **Bombs:** 5,300 lb of payload on four external hard-points, bombs were usually mounted on outer two pylons as the inner pairs were plumbed for two 200 US gallons (760 L) drop tanks which gave the Sabre a more useful range. A wide variety of bombs could be carried (max standard loadout being two 1,000 pounds bombs plus two drop tanks), napalm canisters and could have included a tactical nuclear weapon.

Avionics

- AN/APG-5 – Airborne Range-Only (ARO) radar
- AN/APG-30 – Fire-control radar

Tucson Chapter 105 wins the Jack Gross Award (Extra Large Chapter) for 2026



AIR & SPACE FORCES ASSOCIATION



Jack Gross Award – Extra Large Chapter

Tucson Chapter – Arizona

September 2026

The Jack Gross Award is awarded to the chapter in each size category with the highest number of new recruited members as a percentage of the size at the beginning of the qualification period (1 July 2025 – 30 June 2026). Thanks to the support of all our members, Tucson Chapter 105 earned the award for 2026 in the extra-large chapter category.

Membership

Our membership status continues to be very healthy. Over the past year, we have almost doubled the size of our membership roster and currently have over 2000 members in Tucson Chapter 105. Thank you to all who have joined, and especially those who have recruited new members of our team.

Because of your efforts, your Tucson Chapter has earned the ***Special Recognition Membership Award*** for continued growth and also earned the coveted ***Jack Gross Award*** in the extra-large category for the most recruited new members. Great job Tucson Chapter!

At the annual Air & Space Forces convention last month the current options for membership in AFA were a topic on the agenda. The last change to membership rates was in 2017, and a proposal was brought before the delegates which was recommended by the Membership Committee and Board of Directors. It included three categories of membership. Mission, Premium, and Life membership.

There is no change to Mission and Life membership, however, there will be a change to the Premium, or paid membership rates. The new membership rates which were ratified by the delegates are:

2-year \$90
3-year \$120
5-year \$175

Although the details are still being resolved, we can expect to see an increase in benefits for the paid membership categories (Premium and Life) over the basic entry level Mission membership category.

Regardless of which membership you opt for, you are a valued member of our chapter, and we welcome you to participate in all our activities and events. See you at the next luncheon.

Chapter 105 President Earns Prestigious Aerospace Education Award

The Buck Buckwalter Distinguished Sustained Education Award (DSEA) is presented to an individual AFA member whose AFA record undeniably demonstrates distinguished sustained service in support of the AFA educational mission at a national level over a period of years. This year, the DSEA was presented to Col (Ret.) Wally Saeger at the National Convention in September.

The award is named in honor of Retired USAF Col. David T. "Buck" Buckwalter, a former Air Force Association executive vice president from 2008 through 2012, who inaugurated AFA's CyberPatriot and StellarXplorers programs.

The citation accompanying the award presented follows:

Buck Buckwalter Distinguished Sustained Aerospace Education Achievement Award

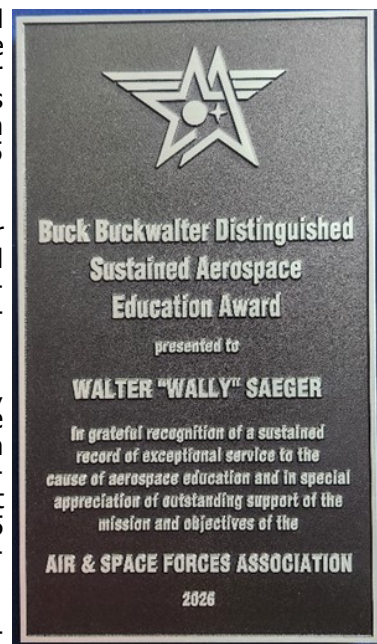
Wally Saeger

Wally has dedicated more than two decades to advancing aerospace and STEM education. Beginning as AFA's Utah State Aerospace Education Foundation VP, he helped raise approximately \$35,000 annually for STEM teacher grants and educator training programs. After joining Tucson Chapter 105, he expanded STEM initiatives statewide, championed support for STARBASE and the AFA Teacher of the Year program and led the chapter to multiple Aerospace Education Achievement Awards and the 2025 Aerospace Education Excellence Award.

As Arizona State President, Wally built on of AFA's strongest Teacher of the Year pipelines, helping Arizona produce three National Teachers of the Year (2019, 2022, and 2024). His leadership fostered lasting partnerships among AFA chapters, educators, military organizations, and STEM advocates, creating a robust statewide network that continues to expand STEM outreach and educator engagement.

A respected leader in both the Tucson community and at Davis-Monthan AFB, Wally has strengthened relationships with military, civic, and education partners while actively supporting Airmen, Guardians, cadets, and educators. Through collaboration with Arizona State University, the Arizona STEM Acceleration Project, and multiple non-profit partners, he helped launch and sustain Arizona's annual STEM Teacher Camp at Davis-Monthan AFB, providing hands-on professional development opportunities to 85 educators from Arizona and across the nation while securing critical funding and resources to ensure the program's success.

AFA is proud to award the 2026 Buck Buckwalter Distinguished Sustained Aerospace Education Achievement Award to Wally Saeger



Air & Space Forces Association National Level Awards - 2026

Tucson Chapter 105 was well represented in the awards presentation during the annual convention this year. Following are the awards won by our chapter and chapter members. Congratulations Tucson Chapter 105!

CHAPTER AWARDS:

Aerospace Education Achievement Award

for outstanding achievement in aerospace education programming

Special Recognition Membership Award

for continued growth in total membership

Jack Gross Membership Award

for most recruited new members

INDIVIDUAL AWARDS:

Buck Buckwalter Distinguished Sustained Aerospace Education Achievement Award

Wally Saeger

Chair's AFA Citation Award

Wally Saeger

Exceptional Service Award

Bryan Foulk
Ed Ryder

Medal of Merit

Alan Berg
Elizabeth Fleming
Bill Goodall

National Convention Awards

Southwest Region President and AFA Tucson Chapter member Alan Berg accepts Wally Saeger's Buck Buckwalter Distinguished Sustained Aerospace Education Award at the 2026 AFA National Convention Awards Dinner.



L-R: Kathleen Ferguson, Chair of the Board, Alan Berg, Gary Copsey, Vice Chair of the Board - Aerospace Education, Chris Canada, Vice Chair of the Board - Field Operations

2026 Chapter's Teacher of the Year Melissa Samsel



Chapter President Wally Saeger presents Melissa Samsel with a check for \$1,000 in recognition for being AFA Tucson Chapter 105's Teacher of the Year and the runner-up for AFA Arizona's State Teacher of the Year. Melissa is an art teacher at Innovation Academy, Oro Valley who teaches PreK through 5th grade students. She uses art to introduce her students to various aspects of real life like phases of the moon, rotation of the moon around the earth, and earth's rotation around the sun to her second-grade students. Her fifth-grade students designed a three-dimensional robot and constructed an LED circuit. These learning activities brought STEM, and its application, to life for her students.

T-7A Red Hawk



A T-7A Red Hawk assigned to the 99th Flying Training Squadron, the first Air Force unit to receive the aircraft, is staged during the arrival ceremony held at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas, Jan. 9, 2026. The arrival of the T-7A Red Hawk marks a historic milestone for the Air Force Air Education and Training Command as it replaces the six-decade-old T-38 Talon, advancing pilot training for the U.S. Air Force. (U.S. Air Force photo by Zelideth Rodriguez)

Air Force Association Heritage Flight 2026



Derek Diehl Photography

P-51, F-16, F-22

After nearly five decades at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, the A-10 Warthog will begin retiring the entire fleet over the next three to five years



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 2026

- 5th: Chapter Executive Committee Meeting, 1200, MXG Conf Rm, Bldg 5500, DMAFB
- 23rd: Chapter Meeting, Subject and presenter TBD, 1130, American Legion Post 36
- 29th: DMAFB Trunk or Treat, Awaiting further details

Nov 2026

- 2nd: Chapter Executive Committee Meeting, Time & Location TBD
- 23rd: DMAFB Dorm Bash, Time & Location TBD
- 27th: No Chapter Meeting, enjoy your Thanksgiving

Dec 2026

- 3rd: Combined Meeting w/Daedalians, ROTC Scholarships Awards, 1130, American Legion Post 36
- 7th: Chapter Executive Committee Meeting, 1200, MXG Conf Rm, Bldg 5500, DMAFB
- 25th: No Chapter Meeting, Enjoy your Holidays

SAVE THESE DATES/DATES TO REMEMBER:

- Jan 4th: Chapter Executive Committee Meeting, 1200, MXG Conf Rm, Bldg 5500
- Jan 22nd: Chapter Meeting, Subject TBD, 1130, American Legion Post 36
- Feb 1st: Chapter Executive Committee Meeting, 1200, MXG Conf Rm, Bldg 5500,
- Feb 26th: No Chapter Meeting, Heritage Flight Weekend
- Mar 1st: Chapter Executive Committee Meeting, 1200, MXG Conf Rm, Bldg 5500
- Mar 26th: Chapter Meeting, Subject & Presenter 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.