



# AFA National Report

natrep@afa.org

By Frances McKenney, Assistant Managing Editor

## AFA's Teacher of the Year

Florida teacher Leo F. Murphy was honored as the 2008 National Aerospace Teacher of the Year at the Air Force Association's Air & Space Conference and National Convention in September.

The **Hurlburt Chapter** and AFA Florida nominated Murphy, who received the award at a ceremony on the conference's opening day. The award recognizes a classroom teacher who encourages students in grades kindergarten through 12 to study science, technology, engineering, and math.

A retired Navy commander—and naval aviator—Murphy today directs an aviation program for Choctawhatchee High School in Fort Walton Beach and at nearby Crestview Vocational Technical Center. The program allows students to earn high school and college credits and industry certification. Murphy teaches flight physiology, management science, and information systems in the program.

In 2006, Murphy began to walk his students through every step of the col-



*AFA's National Aerospace Teacher of the Year is Leo Murphy, who directs—and teaches in—an aviation program for two Florida schools. He was nominated for the award by the Hurlburt Chapter.*



*Wearing a lei, in keeping with the luau theme, MSgt. Ramon Barajas, the Frank Luke Chapter president, prepares to serve food at a chapter-organized dinner. Helping him are (l-r) chapter members Ray Rodes and Bob Curry and an unidentified volunteer from the First-Term Airman Center at Luke AFB, Ariz.*

lege application process, to boost the numbers who would go on for further formal education. He developed programs to encourage them to attend local junior colleges and universities. He worked with Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University-Daytona Beach, where he is an associate professor, to offer his students a VIP campus visit and a flight in a small airplane. The Okaloosa County School District reported that Embry-Riddle accepted 24 of his seniors in 2008.

Murphy is the 23rd recipient of AFA's National Aerospace Teacher of the Year award.

## Luau at Luke

At Luke AFB, Ariz., in August, the **Frank Luke Chapter** invited families of airmen on deployment to a luau dinner.

MSgt. Ramon E. Barajas, the chapter president, explained that the base chapel sponsors a family dinner once a month for those who have a spouse on deployment. Each month a different group takes on organizing it. He volunteered the chapter for the August gather-

ing because when his wife, Elena, had been deployed for six months to Qatar in August 2007, he had attended one of these dinners with his two daughters and had enjoyed the night out.

About 20 chapter members pitched in to carry out the luau—a theme chosen by Barajas simply because it sounded fun. Community Partner Vice President Beverly Gately took charge of decorating around this theme, using colorful tablecloths, pineapples and coconuts, and lei garlands.

Chapter members set up the tables (and cleaned up afterward). They served pulled pork, Hawaiian-style meatballs, fruit salad, and other dishes to some 80 guests. The chapter collected donations from the community and raffled off dozens of prizes, including two kids' bikes.

Barajas, a munitions production chief at the 56th Equipment Maintenance Squadron, arranged for entertainment by a Filipino-American group that performed folk dances from the Philippines, Hawaii, and Guam. The audience, he said, was "very surprised by the entertainment—how good it was."

Barajas added that word spread about this luau, and the next month, an even larger crowd showed up for the chapel dinner.

#### Welcome, AFJROTC

In September, **Red Tail Memorial Chapter** members in Ocala, Fla., helped support a new school that wants to start an AFJROTC program.

Francis Marion Military Academy—a charter school that had opened only



**Brig. Gen. Roy Uptegraff II (far left), commander of the 171st Air Refueling Wing, and Eric Taylor (far right), then Pennsylvania state president, present Eagle Chapter's Susanna Gyger and Jaclyn Lacy Gyger with AFA awards at the Pennsylvania State Convention.**

three weeks before—hosted a program on Sept. 5 to show its classrooms to area AFJROTC administrator Col. John Vick, USAF (Ret.).

Chapter President Michael H. Emig reported that among the guests joining him at this open house were county officials, parents of the students, and several Red Tail members: John E. Clark, aerospace education VP; Fern M. Rhodes, communications VP; Paul

A. Blystone; John R. Edsall, a teacher at the school; and Joe Lacey.

Emig spoke to the gathering, describing AFA's support for aerospace education.

The school opened with students in grades nine and 10, and, in the following years, intends to add grades 11 and 12. It is named after Brig. Gen. Francis Marion, a Revolutionary War soldier from South Carolina whose ability to slip away into the woods and river areas earned him the nickname "the Swamp Fox."

#### Eagles in Alabama

The **Montgomery Chapter's** annual Gathering of Eagles brunch in Montgomery, Ala., in June filled a local country club with more than 200 guests.

This was nothing new, reported chapter member Joe Panza. "The brunch is a first-class affair that is very popular," he said.

The Eagles are notables in aviation and aerospace who, since 1982, have visited with students at the Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, Ala., to describe their role in history.

The Montgomery Chapter traditionally hosts a brunch for these Eagles, giving members an opportunity to meet the legends.

This year, the 14 Eagles were: Retired Brig. Gen. Harry C. Aderholt, air commando; Roscoe C. Brown Jr., Tuskegee Airman; Iris Cummings Critchell, Women Airforce Service Pilot; Kenneth H. Dahlberg, World War II triple ace; retired Col. George E. Day, Medal of Honor recipi-



**At the Montgomery Chapter's Gathering of Eagles brunch, chapter member Charles Cleveland (l) meets a new "Eagle," Kenneth Rowe. A North Korean pilot in the Korean War, Rowe defected in September 1953, flying his MiG-15 to Kimpo Air Base.**

ent; retired Col. Charles B. DeBellevue, Vietnam War ace; retired Gen. Charles A. Horner, Gulf War air boss;

Retired MSgt. Edwin W. Horton Jr., Doolittle Raider; Eugene F. Kranz, NASA mission director; Chief Warrant Officer 5 Lance McElhiney, Army Cobra and Apache pilot; Alfred Paul Metz, F-22 test pilot; Dolph Overton III, Korean War ace; Kenneth H. Rowe (born No Kum-Sok), North Korean MiG-15 pilot; and

retired Col. Walter T. Stewart, Ploesti mission pilot.

At the brunch, the guests watched a video biography of the Eagles. Chapter officers, led by then-Chapter President Thomas W. Gwaltney, presented each Eagle with a commemorative medalion. Panza said the Eagles wore their medallions to the ACSC graduation that evening—even Day, who wore it along with his Medal of Honor.

### More Chapter News

■ The **Long Island Chapter** in New York set up an AFA display at the American Airpower Museum's Labor Day air show. Led by Chapter Treasurer Fred DiFabio, chapter members manned the display and spoke to visitors about AFA's mission. The AFA volunteers were Lorraine A. Birnbach, William Birnbach, David E. Boone, Robert Braverman, Frank T. Logan II, and Alphonse A. Parise. Vintage B-17 and B-24 warbirds from the Collings Foundation, a living history-educational nonprofit based in Stow, Mass., brought crowds to the show. A World War II P-40 and P-51 and several North American Aviation SNJ trainers also performed.

### Have AFA News?

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■ As it has since 2001, the **Chuck Yeager Chapter** in West Virginia co-sponsored the annual Mountaineer Cadet Officer Leadership School in June. AFJROTC cadets from five states spent a week at Concord University in Athens, W.Va., both in the classroom and on the drill field. Central East Region President Mason S. Botts attended the leadership school's final pass in review and the awards ceremony. The chapter provided trophies and plaques for the cadets, with the top award going to Alexander Hargrave from Dobyns-Bennett High School in Kingsport, Tenn. Retired Maj. Phillip Suydam, the senior aerospace science instructor from the same school, led the MCOLS as commandant, this year.

■ At the Pennsylvania State Convention's awards dinner held in State College in August, a mother-daughter team from the **Eagle Chapter** was among the recipients of AFA national-level awards. Susanna B. Gyger, chapter president (and state VP), and Jaclyn Lacy B. Gyger, who serves as VP for communications as well as government relations, each received a Medal of Merit. State President Eric P. Taylor and ANG Brig. Gen. Roy E. Uptegraff II made the presentations. Uptegraff is commander of the 171st Air Refueling Wing at Pittsburgh Arpt./ARS, Pa., and was guest speaker for the awards dinner. Robert Rutledge of the **Lt. Col. B. D. "Buzz" Wagner Chapter** was elected as the new state president.

■ The new president of the **San Jacinto Chapter** has the distinction of being voted into office in a ship-board election. The chapter elected ANG Col. Rodney L. Horn during its annual Harbor Lites dinner cruise in August, as M/V *Sam Houston* plied the port of Houston's ship channel. Horn is vice commander of the 147th Reconnaissance Wing at JRB Ellington Field, Tex. The chapter's other officers elected were Richard P. Campbell, William J. Rothschild, and William T. Humphries.

#### **Joseph A. Zaranka, 1925-2008**

Joseph A. Zaranka, an AFA National Director Emeritus, died in Connecticut on Sept. 21. He was 83 years old.

A native of Nanticoke, Pa., Zaranka was a corporal in the Marine Corps during World War II, serving in the Pacific Theater. He then earned a bachelor's degree from the Teachers College of Connecticut and a law degree from Western New England College in Springfield, Mass.

Zaranka enlisted in the Air Force for the Korean War, serving until 1953. In his civilian career, he was an insurance adjuster. ■