

By Frances McKenney, Assistant Managing Editor

Painting a Soul That Is Lost

In March, **San Jacinto Chapter** members visited an art exhibition that pays homage to Texans who have died in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Portrait of a Warrior Memorial Art Gallery in Baytown, Tex., features paintings by Ken Pridgeon, who served as an Air Force electronics technician for a decade until 1963, then became a billboard and sign painter.

In 2010, the organizer of a memorial run-walk for Pfc. Wesley R. Riggs asked Pridgeon to paint a portrait of the Baytown native, who had died in Tikrit, Iraq, in 2005. As Pridgeon sat outdoors, working on the painting, a visitor came up and told him that the funeral for SSgt. Jesse W. Ainsworth was taking place that day; the soldier deserved a portrait, too, the visitor suggested. Creating paintings of the Texas fallen then became Pridgeon's full-time job.

San Jacinto Communications VP Robert Kjar read about Pridgeon in a couple of magazines and last year joined chapter members Tom Short and Mimi Friel in visiting the gallery. It is a former storefront donated by Baytown.

The trio were so taken by the portrait gallery that they arranged the chapter field trip this spring, with Pridgeon conducting a tour and having lunch with the AFAers afterward.

Pridgeon does more than simply paint the service member's portrait; he includes hobbies, favorite moments, and other highlights to personalize it. As he said in a "Texas Country Reporter" TV program, "It brings to life a soul that is lost."

Practicing for Life

West Virginia's **Chuck Yeager Chapter** sponsored its 17th Air Force JROTC drill competition in Parkersburg, W. Va., in March.

Cadets from seven high schools in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia gathered at Parkersburg South High School to compete for awards provided by the chapter. How much hardware would that be? "Wow!" exclaimed Chapter President Herman N. Nicely. He quickly counted them up in his head

San Jacinto Chapter members, and guest Jackie Glass (foreground), take in the oil-painting portraits of Texans killed in the wars in Southwest Asia. Artist Ken Pridgeon (in hat) conducted this tour of his gallery. When he completes this project, he will have painted more than 500 portraits.



and came up with two dozen trophies, nine medals, and the big traveling trophy. Photos of the tables laden with these awards provided proof.

The overall top three winners were cadet units from: McDowell High School in Erie, Pa.; Knox County Career Center in Mount Vernon, Ohio; and Pine-Richland High School of Gibsonia, Pa.

The top three West Virginian units came from: Parkersburg South High School, South Charleston High School, and Jefferson High School of Shenandoah Junction.

Seven AFROTC cadets from Ohio University in Athens judged the event.

Nicely, who spent the entire day at the meet, said the chapter supports it because the drill meet promotes character and gives the cadets practice for "competition in life."

Painting the Big One

Famed aviation artist Keith K. Ferris spoke to New Jersey's **Shooting Star Chapter** in February, describing how he painted one of his most high-profile works.

"Fortress Under Fire," a huge mural in the World War II Gallery of the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum, measures 25 feet high and 75 feet long. It depicts the B-17G bomber *Thunder Bird* returning from a 1944 mission to Wiesbaden, Germany.

New Jersey State and Chapter President Howard H. Leach Jr. said that in

his presentation, Ferris told the audience he used only four colors—blue, red, yellow, and white—to create the piece in 1976. On the other hand, he spent 135 days on planning the mural and 75 days on ladders and scaffolds actually painting it.

Other aircraft in the artwork's background include the B-17G *Bonnie B*.

The chapter bought a Ferris lithographic print, "Slow Timing *Bonnie B*," highlighting the bomber. After the artist's talk, held at the Library of the Chathams, the chapter presented it to the library for display. The library serves both the New Jersey borough and township.

Framed with the print is a plaque dedicating it to Amos L. Chalif, a B-17 bombardier and founder of AFA New Jersey and the Shooting Star Chapter. He died on Nov. 2, 2012, at age 94.

In Local News

Chapter Teachers of the Year in two states earned recognition from their local newspapers—and, in turn, so did Florida's **Hurlburt Chapter** and **Central Florida Chapter**, as well as the **Chattanooga Chapter** in Tennessee.

The *Crestview News Bulletin* quoted Hurlburt Chapter Aerospace Education VP John Jogerst explaining how the chapter singles out science, technology, engineering, and math teachers at the elementary, middle, and high school level. The chapter's Teacher of the Year is Stacy Burlison, a physics and advanced math teacher at Baker High School.

More photos at: airforcemag.com. Choose "This Month's Table of Contents."

Continued on p. 85

How To Get on TV

The local ABC TV affiliate in Minneapolis has covered the awards ceremony of the **Gen. E. W. Rawlings Chapter** every year since at least 2009.

During an evening news broadcast in April, KSTP Channel 5 ran a 32-second video segment on the latest one. The newscaster also told viewers to check its website for a list of awardees. The list encompassed winners from the ANG's 133rd Airlift Wing and AFRC's 934th Airlift Wing; university ROTC units; JROTC units; the Civil Air Patrol; and the chapter's Teacher of the Year, Joshua Kohn of the Farnsworth Aerospace magnet school in St. Paul.

How did this merit sending out a TV camera crew?

Chapter President Jonathan E. Powell—who appeared briefly in the video—said it was due to Harold C. Crump. The chapter member is a VP at KSTP, owned by another chapter member, Stanley S. Hubbard. The CEO and chairman of Hubbard Broadcasting Inc. has been an AFA member for more than 40 years; he is a pilot and founded Hubbard Aviation Technologies in 2009.

Crump, an Air Force veteran, arranged funding for the banquet, held at the Town & Country Club, with the Mississippi River as its backdrop.

The chapter posted on its website an hour-long video of the event.

Involving TV station executives in the chapter is one way to garner attention. Powell lists other methods:

- As a 1998 Air Force Academy graduate, he met potential chapter members through the Association of Graduates and through the academy's parents' club.

Darrell J. Tamosuinas, for example, has three academy daughters. Powell took him to the AFA National Convention and appointed him to the chapter's board of directors. Three Tamosuinas family members joined AFA last year.



Jon Powell (l), the Gen. E. W. Rawlings Chapter president, and Darrell Tamosuinas (c) chat with guest speaker Dick Newton, AFA Executive VP. AFA field leaders at this banquet included North Central Region President Vic Seavers, Minnesota State President Glenn Schull, and North Dakota State President Jim Simons.

- Powell tells parents of cadets that they need to read *Air Force Magazine* and the *Daily Report* to keep abreast of issues to help their young adults navigate a USAF career. "You must be a coach," he told them.

- Powell's fellow academy grads have recruited Community Partners—"avid supporters, year to year," he said.

- A comment that the Minneapolis/St. Paul Arpt./Air Reserve Station should have an Air Force-themed room led Powell to seek permission to create one at the Officers Club. The project starts this summer.

"Our organization has been able to grow in a few ways that attract the Guard and Reserve" without pressuring them to join AFA, Powell commented.

USAF photo via AIC Kari Giles

Are you taking advantage of the Travel Services available to you as a member?

CAR & TRUCK RENTAL DISCOUNTS

Both Avis and Budget Car & Truck Rental companies offer AFA Member discounts ... as well as additional coupon savings.

CONDO RESORT RENTALS

Through an agreement with one of the largest timeshare companies, AFA Members can take advantage of vacant timeshares -- renting them for only \$349 per week! No matter the location or time of year, AFA Member price is \$349 per week. The Veterans Holidays inventory includes condo units that resort owners do not use, which generally means off-season or short-notice travel. Visit www.veteransholidays.com and select Air Force Association from the list of "Installations" when making your reservation.

TRAVEL REWARDS PROGRAM

AFA has partnered with Government Vacation Rewards to provide you with a Best Price Guarantee on travel services and a loyalty program where you earn points that you redeem when you book your travel. Exclusive discounts on cruises, tours and resorts as well as military rates (where available). You will receive the Best Price Guarantee and you won't pay a booking fee! Sign up and receive 2,500 reward points to use immediately ... and earn more points as you book your travel. Visit www.govvacationrewards.com/afa or call 1-866-691-5109.

HOTEL DISCOUNT PROGRAM

AFA is pleased to provide an average of 10%-20% savings on worldwide hotels for our members and their friends and family. Our analysis shows that the AFA rate beats the leading online discount sites 98.6% of the time. See for yourself and book with confidence today at www.afavba.org/hotels.



For full details on all of your AFA member benefits:

Visit www.afavba.org

Call 1-800-291-8480

E-Mail services@afavba.org





Fort Dodge Chapter VP Justin Faiferlick holds up the sky-blue ribbon of the AFA Civil Air Patrol Award. He presented it to Jacob Lewandowski (left). The award recognized Lewandowski as outstanding cadet in CAP's Northwest Iowa Composite Squadron.



Genesee Valley Chapter member retired Lt. Col. Kyle Mullen presented an AFA Outstanding Cadet award to Lauren Forcier at the Military Ball and Awards Ceremony for the Rochester Institute of Technology in New York in April.

Central Florida Chapter's Teacher of the Year for Lake County is Robert Moore, a science instructor at Tavares High School, the *Daily Commercial* reported in April. The chapter will later select one teacher from among five county awardees for its top Teacher of the Year award.

In Tennessee, Chattanooga Chapter President John W. Glass III presented the Teacher of the Year Award to Bryant Haynes at a schoolwide assembly at Girls Preparatory School. According to the online news source Chattanooga.com, Haynes also earned the State Teacher of the Year award, presented at the state convention in Knoxville.

More Chapter News

■ In a Milwaukee suburb, the **Billy Mitchell Chapter** "flew the flag" during one of the city's St. Patrick's Day parades. Chapter VP Ralph Pietruszynski and Veterans Affairs VP Don Adams rode on the Shriners' Legion of Honor float, towed by a truck decorated with the AFA logo and the chapter's name. It was one of some 90 units, according to Pietruszynski. A local business association sponsored the parade. It ran along a mile-and-a-half route on Blue Mound Road. Legion of Honor Shriners' units comprise those who serve or have served in the armed forces. ■

Air Force Magazine

Online Journal of the Air Force Association

For air and space professionals who must stay informed

Visit www.airforcemag.com, featuring the Daily Report and the online AIR FORCE Magazine

The **Daily Report** offers credible, current news about airpower and national security issues five days a week—with coverage of breaking news when it happens

The **online AIR FORCE Magazine** hosts the current issue, providing in-depth coverage of the Air Force, the aerospace industry, and other defense topics and a growing collection of historical articles

www.airforcemag.com also offers:

- **In More Depth** feature reporting—companion pieces to the Daily Report, providing enhanced coverage of key topics
- **Testimony**—a collection of current and past testimony by top Air Force officials.
- **The Document File**—current and historically significant documents
- **Airpower Chronology** (from 1907-present)
- **And more ...** at www.airforcemag.com

Air Force Association

www.airforcemag.com | www.afa.org



Cadets from seven high schools compete in the knock-out drill category at the Chuck Yeager Chapter's Air Force JROTC drill meet in West Virginia.



The Shooting Star Chapter presents a Keith Ferris print to a New Jersey library. L-r: Ferris, Peggy Ferris, Deborah Fitzgerald, Steven F. Kiss, Steven S. Kiss, Peggy Chalif, Howard Leach, and Eric Taylor.

Reunions

reunions@afa.org

1st Fighter Assn. Aug. 15-17, Crowne Plaza Hotel in Hampton, VA. **Contact:** Pete Marty (1stfighter@comcast.net).

72nd Aeromedical Evacuation Sq (1970-1992). Sept. 27-28, Quality Inn, 531 Rt. 38 W, Maple Shade, NJ. **Contact:** David Cushing (908-500-1888) (reunion72nd2013@cs.com).

86th Fighter-Bomber Gp. Sept. 18-22 in Fort Walton Beach, FL. **Contact:** Dallas Lowe (850-319-3047) (fighterbomber pilot@yahoo.com).

340th BW, Whiteman AFB, all units. Sept. 13-15, Lodge of the Ozarks in Branson, MO. **Contact:** Bob Barnhill (501-772-2820) (rjbarnhill@aol.com).

366th Tactical Fighter Wg, all units. Sept. 25-29 in Dayton, OH. **Contact:** Paul Jacob (614-906-4470) (366fga.dayton2013@gmail.com).

444th FIS. Sept. 29-Oct. 1, Sheraton Charleston Airport Hotel in North Charleston, SC. **Contact:** Jon Matthews (jrmattthews05@aol.com).

511th Aircraft Control & Warning Gp Reunion Assn, including the 613th, 847th, 848th AC&W Sq. Oct. 2-6 in Nashville, TN. **Contact:** Don Simmons: (972-231-6518) (dona7112@sbcglobal.net).

526th FIS/Tactical Fighter Sq. Oct. 10-13 in Tucson, AZ. **Contact:** Joe Shambo (520-572-4636) (eshambo618@gmail.com).

815th Troop Carrier Sq, Ashiya, Japan (1954-1960). Sept. 18-22, Marriott in Colorado Springs, CO. **Contact:** Carrie Clausen (720-937-9569 or 303-485-3876) (carrie6585@msn.com).

AC-119 Gunships. Sept. 26-29 in San Antonio. **Contact:** Jerry Hester (210-663-3159) (hester7.satx@gmail.com).

Nuclear Weapons Technicians Assn. Sept. 5-7, Red Lion/Radisson Hotel Denver Southeast in Denver. **Contact:** Bob Welz (502-645-3181) (rwelz@aye.net). ■

STAY IN TOUCH

Update your e-mail address with the Air Force Association today!

The Air Force Association strives to keep in contact with members regularly through a variety of e-mail programs. Don't miss out on great features which include:

- Air Force Magazine's "Daily Report"
- Chapter Newsletters
- local event notifications
- our legislative update "Washington Perspective"
- membership renewal reminders
- and much more.



CONTACT US

Air Force Association
 Attn: Membership
 1501 Lee Highway, Suite 400
 Arlington, VA 22209-1198
 1-800-727-3337
 703-247-5800
 membership@afa.org

<http://www.afa.org/AboutUs/memben/address.asp>

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.