

By Frances McKenney, Assistant Managing Editor

Work With Us! Please.

How's this for young talent just begging to help AFA?

In June, University of South Carolina AFROTC cadet Savannah G. Knight spoke to a **Columbia Palmetto Chapter** meeting in Columbia, S.C., and told them that the local Arnold Air Society cadets want more involvement with AFA.

Knight spoke as the incoming AAS commander of the squadron centered around the university's AFROTC Det. 775.

Arnold Air Society is a professional, honorary service organization of AFROTC cadets and is affiliated with AFA. Knight said in a phone interview after her chapter presentation that the idea of working with AFA came right out of the AAS list of objectives: "To encourage increased communication with Air Force officers and leaders in national defense, government, and industry" and to demonstrate "the close relationship between civilian and military institutions."

Knight said she had been surprised that no connection with the local chapter seemed to exist, so she took the initiative to hunt down email addresses and make the contact.

She invited fellow cadet Grant Brannon to join her at the chapter meeting. Both are rising juniors and public relations majors, with Knight hoping to become an intel or personnel officer and Brannon pursuing a career as a pilot, reported Chapter VP Nelson McLeod. The cadets spoke to the chapter about the summer field training they would receive, beginning in July, at Maxwell AFB, Ala., and the fierce competition to earn a slot.

As for combining forces, they suggested a joint AAS-AFA dinner and volunteered to work with the chapter on service projects. They also talked to chapter members about the possibilities of cadets taking nighttime flights and shadowing Air Force personnel at nearby McEntire Joint National Guard Base or Shaw Air Force Base in Sumter, Knight said.

Cadets can learn about Air Force careers through meeting AFA members, she pointed out. "It's important for young people to hear their stories." Knight continued, "We saw the Air Force Association as a great first step" in helping cadets plan their careers.

Run, Spot, Run: The Goddard Chapter's Half-Marathon

The first road race organized by the **Robert H. Goddard Chapter** in California raised more than \$1,400 for AFA's Wounded Airman Program.

Seventy-two adults, seven children, and at least five dogs turned out for the Kids Run, 5K, and Half-Marathon held on a foggy Saturday morning in June at Vandenberg Air Force Base. "Not bad for an event that was word-of-mouth, put on by a core team of five individuals, all within a 10-week period," commented Chapter President Juan E. Cruz.

An AFA Emerging Leader, Cruz said he got the idea for this fund-raising run after hearing AFA presentations on the Wounded Airman Program and its goal of providing equipment, care, and quality of life items for seriously ill, wounded, or injured airmen.

Several chapter members pitched in to carry out Cruz's project. MSgt. Jill Higgins, who is also state AFA secretary, headed the event, securing approvals and support from base agencies such as the medical and security forces squadrons.

SSgt. David Livoti (left), Kalani Livoti, Nola the German Shepherd, and Homey the Husky ran the Goddard Chapter's inaugural half-marathon in California. They all finished in just under two hours. Jennifer Tribble (green T-shirt in photo below) came in first among women in the 13.1-mile race, at one hour, 53 minutes.



Photos by TSgt. Tyrone Lawson



New chapter member A1C Stephen Spor rounded up sponsors from the base, a movie theater, sport and health clubs, and the San Luis Obispo Marathon. SMSgt. Mitchell Overton and MSgt. Craig Rispoli spread word of the event and collected food and donations from several local enlisted organizations. On race day, chapter member A1C Jessica Muñoz managed nearly 60 volunteers, whose ranks included Community Partners and family members and friends of the runners.

Who won the big race? Who knows?

Cruz said, "We did not get the name of the gentleman who finished at one hour, 37 minutes because he kept on running a few more miles" past the finish line.

Memorial Day

Palm Springs Chapter members helped observe Memorial Day in California by attending a service at Desert Memorial Park cemetery, along with some 200 other guests.

Chapter officers William L. Bramer, Shirley Powell, and Daniel Lieberman were among those at the annual Cathedral City event, hosted by a local veterans group.



At the Rochester Institute of Technology, N.Y., 2nd Lt. Philipp Wittmaack and 2nd Lt. Robert Barns (far right, respectively) show off commissioning certificates. Wittmaack and Barns launched the CyberPatriot team at a Rochester high school last year. (See "CyberPatriot," June "AFA National Report," p. 72.) The other new lieutenants are (l-r): Lauren Forcier, Christopher Boise, Paul Grossi, and Raymond Zheng.

In past years, Chapter Treasurer Powell and others helped decorate the cemetery with 300 burial flags donated by families of deceased military veterans. But these days, Powell lets the local Boys and Girls Clubs and JROTC cadets hoist the flags, on 20-foot-tall poles, into in-ground holders. Instead of physical labor, she keeps a hand in this activity by spreading the word to recruit these young volunteers.

As has been the case every year, the guest speaker came from Twenty-Nine Palms Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, north of Palm Springs. Col. David J. Eskelund, commanding officer of the Marine Corps Logistics Operations Group, had

the honor. And as it does every Memorial Day, the 60-member Palm Springs High School band provided the music.

Powell said she continues her involvement in this ritual "to represent our group and the military." She is a veteran of 38 years on Active Duty and in the Guard and Reserve, primarily in medical air evacuation.

Maryland State Convention

The Maryland State Convention took place in June at a Hilton hotel in Linthicum, the **Baltimore Chapter's** home turf.

The business session featured year-in-review presentations by Baltimore Chapter President CMSgt. Jorge Laurel, **Central Maryland Chapter** President MSgt. Neil Stege, and John L. Huggins Jr., president of the **Thomas W. Anthony Chapter**.

Maryland State President E. Miranda Hernandez presented Huggins with the AFA Maryland Chapter of the Year award. Laurel received the AFA Maryland Member of the Year award. Huggins and Stege also were honored with excellence in leadership awards.

Central East Region President F. Gavin MacAloon spoke to the group about AFA developments, including eMembership, offering reduced-price AFA membership with access to the digital edition of *Air Force Magazine*.

Convention attendees elected 2nd Lt. Frank Scalfani III as state president; Hernandez as VP; MSgt. Beth Stribley as treasurer; and for his third term, Terry Bass, who is a second-generation member of the Anthony Chapter.

Icelandic Rescue: How We Can

Texas State President and **Alamo Chapter** member Gary L. Copsey unveiled a commemorative plaque in Iceland in May, memorializing an ocean rescue that happened 20 years ago.

In 1994, Copsey was part of two 56th Rescue Squadron HH-60 crews stationed at NAS Keflavik, Iceland. In January that year, they set out to rescue the crew of an Icelandic tug, *Godinn*, stranded some 300 yards off the coast of

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Vodvllavik, Iceland. The helos faced extreme weather conditions: a storm of snow, sleet, and rain, 30-foot breakers, 35-degree water, and “almost hurricane-force winds,” Copsey recalled in a July phone interview.

The Pave Hawk crews considered aborting the mission. Then they learned that the local rescue forces had already done so and that one of the *Godinn*’s crew had died.

“We quit even thinking about turning around,” Copsey told the ceremony’s audience. “It went from why we shouldn’t to how we can.”

The helo crews reached *Godinn*, where the remaining six crew members had lashed themselves to the roof of the wheelhouse, the only part of the vessel not underwater. The Pave Hawks flew the survivors to shore. Two needed immediate critical care, however, so the rescue crews transported them to a hospital, by this time having to use night vision goggles in the darkness.

Airmen deployed with the 48th Air Expeditionary Group, RAF Lakenheath, UK, attended the commemoration ceremony, traveling to its rugged coastal site via all-terrain vehicles.

Afterward, Copsey, *Godinn* survivors, and rescue team members received an invitation from Iceland’s President Olafur Ragnar Grimsson to a reception at his home. The country’s foreign minister, Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson, had earlier also hosted a reception for them.

Why memorialize this particular rescue with a large plaque mounted on a pedestal? According to a 48th AEG press release, veteran Icelandic search and rescue volunteer Skuli Hjartson explained: “This is one of the greatest done ever here—as simple as that.” ■

Below: In a Memorial Day weekend display at the American Air Power Museum in New York, Long Island Chapter’s VP Al Parise (l) and Chapter President Fred Di Fabio (r) highlighted the Vietnam War and a commemorative medal the chapter has made for Vietnam vets.



Off Iceland’s coast in May, a helicopter lowers a USAF pararescueman during a commemoration ceremony. Alamo Chapter’s Gary Copsey unveiled a plaque at the event, memorializing a 1994 ocean rescue.



At left: CMSgt. Mark Thomas, command chief from the 70th Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Wing at Fort Meade, Md., speaks to the Maryland State Convention. He gave his perspective on new areas of interest, the challenges of maintaining aging equipment, and force management actions. Maryland State President E. Miranda Hernandez said Thomas was tapped to be keynote speaker because of his track record as an enlisted leader and mentor.

Lauren Brett (center) received the Minuteman Chapter and Massachusetts State Teacher of the Year award from (l-r) William Thomas, Charlestown High School headmaster; Yvonne Thurston, Minuteman officer and New England Region aerospace education VP; Joe Bisognano, Massachusetts state president; and US Rep. Michael Capuano (D-Mass.). Brett teaches physics and engineering at Charlestown High School.



New York’s Genesee Valley Chapter President Al Smith (second from left) awarded the Chapter Teacher of the Year honor to Logan Newman (center). Newman teaches optics at East High School in Rochester, N.Y. With them, left to right: Adam Urbanski of the Rochester Teachers Association, chapter member Kyle Mullen, and East High School teacher Paul Jonasse.

