



Air Force Issues Luncheon



Col Brian Vaughn, Commander 187th FW

Colonel Brian Vaughn, Commander, 187th Fighter Wing (FW) invited AFA Chapter 102 to have one of our quarterly luncheon at his base in their dining facility. This was the first time in memory that we have had an opportunity to have a luncheon at Dannelly Field, so it was only fitting to accept his invite and have our AF Issues Luncheon there.

This years lunch was held on Feb 29, 2024. Nearly 100 guests were treated to a lively presentation by our guest speaker, Colonel Brian Vaughn, on the capabilities of the 187th FW especially considering they just received their first three F-35A Lightning II aircraft. It became readily apparent after hearing his comments why the 187th was selected among other competitors to receive this new aircraft. One of the most important being to keep the legacy of the famous Red Tail Tuskegee Airmen alive here in Alabama.

He continued with an unclassified AF Issues briefing about the capabilities of the United States near peer, that being China. He illustrated their ongoing efforts in the East China Sea to affect sea operations in that part of the world. He went on to speak about the growth of their military and space forces that, in time, will rival our capabilities. It was an eye opening briefing that reminded everyone in the audience that we need to continue to support the world's greatest Air Force so that it remains so for lifetimes to come.

After the luncheon attendees were given an up close look at the F-35A Lightning II.



Attendees at the Annual AF Issues Luncheon got a tour of the F-35A



Scott Key, Col (Ret) Win DePoorter and Col Brian Vaughn

We were honored to have special guests at our luncheon, Col (Ret) Win DePoorter and his wife Janice. Col DePoorter flew several types of aircraft but the one he flew the most was the A-1E Skyraider during Vietnam, and to this day he still holds the impressive record of 657 air combat missions.

2024 Chapter 102 Officers

President: Scott Key — Vice President: Bruce Barton

Secretary: Pat "Irish" McCoy — Treasurer: Troy Eastman

To contact any of the Chapter officers e-mail afa.chapter.102@afa102.net



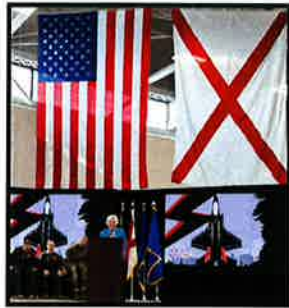
F-35 LIGHTNING II / COMMUNITY PARTNERS



The 187th Fighter Wing (FW), Dannelley Field held their F-35A Lightning II Aircraft Arrival Ceremony on February 9, 2024. Governor Kay Ivey, Air National Guard leadership, local government, military, and community officials and 187th FW personnel were in attendance.

Gov Ivey, Brig Gen Pritchett (Adjutant General of the National Guard), Maj Gen Efferson (Assistant to the Director of Air National Guard) and Col Vaughn (187th FW, Commander) all touched on the impact of the F-35A being assigned here in Alabama. Beginning with the significant roll it will play in our national security, to the impact it will have on the River Region's economy, and finally with the F-35A being assigned to the 100th Fighter Squadron "Red Tails", we continue to preserve and honor the legacy of the World War II Tuskegee Airmen.

After the ceremony the F-35A Lightning II was unveiled for all to see, followed by a fly over consisting of two F-35As, an F-16, and a P-51. Attendees got to see up close, what air superiority looks like! What a day for the River Region and the state of Alabama.



Welcome to our new Community Partners



New York Life - Ms Lisa Ann Williams



Meredith Auto and Tire
Mr. Kevin Meredith



Kings Table Catering Mr. Al Steineker



William Michael Watson

July 3, 1951 - March 22, 2024

It is with heavy hearts that we say good bye to Mike Watson, owner of the Aviator Bar, the Alley Bar and Commerce Beer Works. Mike passed away on Friday, 22 May 2024, after a long illness. He was a valued Community Partner who provided exceptional support to Chapter 102. He will be sorely missed.



GATHERING OF EAGLES (GOE)



SFC (Ret) Clifford Newman



Lt Gen (Ret) David Deptula



Col (Ret) James Harvey III



Captains Bennett and Bakko talk over the day's flying at their home base, Seymour Johnson AFB, N.C. Their Gulf War experience includes the downing of an Iraq helicopter; they are the only F-15E crew with that distinction.

Lt Col (Ret) Tim "Rhino" Bennett



Mr. Gene Kranz



Dr. Natalie Crawford



Capt (Ret) Guy Gruters



Gen (Ret) Jeffrey Harrigan

2024 GOE Luncheon

Mark your calendars! The annual Chapter 102 event honoring this year's Eagles will take place in the Wynlakes Country Club Ballroom on 9 May 2024.

Once again, we have an opportunity to mix and mingle with some of the great Eagles and hear first-hand their stories. Those who have been selected to participate in Air Command and Staff College's Gathering of Eagles 2024 program are: **CSFC (Ret) Clifford Newman**, he served as a Special Forces Team Leader in Vietnam; **Lt Gen (Ret) David Deptula**, he was key in Desert Storm planning and execution; **Lt Col (Ret) Tim "Rhino" Bennett**, flew both F-15Es and F-16s and has the first and only air-to-air kill in the F-15E using an air-to-air ground weapon; **Capt (Ret) Guy Gruters**, was an O-1 and 100 Misty Super Forward Air Control in Vietnam, flew 412 and was held POW for 1912 days; If his schedule allows, **Mr Gene Kranz**, is one of the first and most iconic NASA Flight Directors; **Dr Natalie Crawford**, is a Senior Fellow and Distinguished Chair for Air and Space Policy at the RAND Corp; **Col (Ret) James Harvey III**, is one of the last living Tuskegee Airmen, he flew with the 332nd Fighter Group's 99th Fighter Squadron in WWII; and **Gen (Ret) Jeffrey Harrigan**, was the United States Air Forces in Europe and Air Forces Africa Commander and concurrently served as the Commander of the Allied Air Command and Director of the Joint Air Power Competence Center, he has flown over 4100 hours in several different aircraft. Check our web site for registration information. Sign up early, this event is always a hot ticket sell out!

SAVE THE DATES

9 May 2024: Gathering of Eagles, Wynlakes CC

Sept 2024 Community Partners Luncheon TBD

14-15 Sep 2024: AFA National Convention, National Harbor, MD

2 Oct 2024: 35th Annual Golf Tournament, Arrowhead CC

Nov 2024 Veterans Day Luncheon 908th Airlift Wing TBD

See www.AFA102.net for event information and registration



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President's Corner

F-35s, Eagles, MH-149 Grey Wolves, Blue Angels, Commemorative Air Force, drones, STEM machines, Teacher of the Year Orientation Flight—seems as if hummingbirds are not the only flyers that Spring has attracted to the River Region. Thanks to each member of the Executive Committee who played a part in making these wonderful events happen.

Your EXCOM has been aggressive in searching for ways to expand AFA Montgomery Chapter 102's presence in the area. We are working with the Mayor's staff, Alabama Department of Veterans' Affairs, and the Chamber of Commerce, to help organize and coordinate a Veterans' Day Parade. We intend to have a float!

To make all this happen and keep the momentum going, we need your help. If you are an active duty or retired Air Force member or an interested civilian, please join us. The EXCOM meets at 0700 the 3rd Wed of each month at the Goodwill Office on Air Base Blvd. Call me at 334-717-6476 and we can discuss where you best fit. Let's do this!

Scott Key

Support Our Community Partners

1st Place Trophies (Ms. Barbara Truelove)
 Air University Foundation (Mr. Joe Panza)
 Alabama Information Technology Consulting (Mr. Bob Frye)
 Alabama Power Company (Ms. Leslie Sanders)
 Dr. Allen Peck
 Apropos (Ms. Terri Owen)
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 Ballard Companies (Maj. Gen. A. Ballard)
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The AFA Montgomery Chapter 102 Newsletter is published quarterly by the Montgomery Chapter of the Air and Space Forces Association for the benefit of its members. Comments, suggestions, or questions regarding chapter activities or the contents of this newsletter should be directed to either Joe Panza, editor, at (334)315-0867 or jpanza@knology.net or Maura Barton at (334)314-8538 or brucemaura@gmail.com. Newsletter published on a Macbook Pro. Our thanks to Wells Printing for their outstanding service and support of Chapter 102.