

FALL ISSUE · NOVEMBER 2021

MILE HIGH FLYER

THE LATEST NEWS FOR MILE HIGH
CHAPTER MEMBERS



President's Corner

CLIFF KLEIN

The Mile High Chapter is thriving! We continue to support and attend The Wings Over the Rockies – Exploration of Flight monthly fly-ins where we meet potential AFA members and spread the good word of AFA. If you're not aware, Exploration of Flight hosts a breakfast fly-in at the Centennial Airport the first Saturday of each month. If this sort of thing interests you please check out their website [here](#). We recently unveiled the BG J. Hall display Case at COANG (see story on page # for details). The chapter is working with Airmen & Guardians on BSFB to support the Colorado Freedom Memorial's Light Their Way Home event Nov 9-13. Good news/bad news...we say goodbye to a key team member, MSgt Rashelle Dunn (VP of Airman & Family programs), and we welcome aboard SSgt Pauline Robinson. SSgt Robinson was elected Chapter Secretary at the October meeting and will be taking over those duties from TSgt Stevens. Lastly, I'd like to invite all to visit our website [here](#) and join us at our monthly meetings held each 3rd Tuesday of the month at 4 p.m. at the Aurora Chamber of Commerce.



This issue:

New Vice Chairmen of the Board

PAGE 02

State Awards Banquet

PAGE 02

New Chapter Secretary

PAGE 03

Chapter News

PAGE 04

Brig Gen Hall Dedication

PAGE 05

National News

PAGE 06

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Stephen Gourley elected as Vice Chairman of the Board, Aerospace Education

Over the years, Stephen Gourley has dedicated himself to the AFA mission truly showing what it means to be selfless. For those that know him, they know he he has always been passionate about aerospace education. That same passion was displayed brightly at the 2021 AFA National Convention, where he was elected as the new Vice Chairman of the Board, Aerospace Education. In this role he is the volunteer leader guiding the overall direction of the AFA Education Mission and overseeing its Aerospace Education Programs. As one of the principal founders of the Stellar Xplorers STEM program, Stephen has been an integral part of the AFA's education mission for many years. Having led the Mile High Chapter as its President and mentor, our chapter could not be more confident and proud to have Stephen as the Vice Chairmen of the Board for Aerospace Education! Congratulations to a phenomenal Airman For Life!



Stephen Gourley

Gourley earned a bachelor's degree in aeronautical engineering and a master's degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a master's degree in national resource strategy from NDU. He retired from the USAF after more than 26 years of service in the space field, working in science and technology; research, development, test, and evaluation; and operations. He currently works as the president of an engineering and management consultant company.

National Convention and Regional Caucus

In September, members from the Rocky Mountain Region traveled to Washington D.C. where the AFA National Convention was held. There they discussed important AFA affairs and voted on new National level officers and policy, voted to give the board the authority to change the Association's name to include the Space Force identity, and delayed the vote to change the organization structure. At the National Awards Banquet, Mel Harmon Chapter from Pueblo, CO was honored as the Small Chapter of the Year!

At the Regional Caucus, many spirited discussions were held between representatives from Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming. Members noted many similar difficulties across the region such as communication with universities and colleges, declining participation since the start of the pandemic, and technological challenges. One particular member highlighted a potential untapped resource in educators saying "we need to do a better job maintaining relationships with our Teachers of the Year, they're helping to build our future AFA members." These common struggles prompted Rocky Mountain Regional President Linda Aldrich to create a repository of members who are experts in certain fields across the region; this repository will help provide chapters with meaningful resources and contacts.

Farewell to Rashelle Dunn, VP of Airmen, Guardian, and Family Programs

This past September, we had to say goodbye to our wonderful Vice President of Airmen, Guardian, and Family Programs, MSgt Rashelle Dunn as she PCS'd to California. During her time with the chapter, Rashelle worked tirelessly to build our professional development program from the ground up. Together she led a series of sessions to help Airmen and Guardians grow across the base. Rashelle will be missed and her work will not be forgotten. We wish you the best of luck in life and career!

Colorado State Awards Banquet

In August, the Mel Harmon Chapter of Pueblo, CO, hosted the Colorado State Awards Banquet. At this annual event, AFA chapters across Colorado come together to recognize accomplishments and highlight Chapter members. Typically Active-Duty, Guard, and Reserve Air Force and Space Force members are honored as well however due to ongoing COVID restrictions, this was not possible this year. Held at the American Legion, attendees were graced with entertainment from traditional Mexican dancers and were regaled with stories of Medal of Honor recipients by the Director of the Center for American Values. Coming from the Mile High Chapter, the Colorado State Teacher of the Year was awarded to Robbie Ferguson of Westminster High School!

Taking a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) as a Qualified Charitable Deduction

STEPHEN GOURLEY

Will you be 72 or older with a Traditional IRA? Make a tax-wise IRA rollover gift to the Air Force Association. Act now to get 2021 tax benefits – while supporting our 75 years of educating, advocating, and supporting the U.S. Air Force and Airmen and, since its founding nearly two years ago, the U.S. Space Force and its Guardians. For more details on Planned Giving, please click [here](#).



COLORADO STATE TEACHER OF THE YEAR ROBBIE FERGUSON

Robbie Ferguson truly embodies what it means to be an educator. He is passionate and goes above and beyond for his students, literally. Robbie and his class designed an incredible weather balloon launch package. He truly encourages his students to take learning to new heights. Colorado State President Linda Aldrich and Mile High Chapter President Cliff Klein went to Westminster High School to present Robbie with his award. There they met his talented Career Technical Education students. Congratulations to Robbie!

New Secretary Elected! Meet Staff Sergeant Pauline Robinson



In October 2021, a new Mile High Secretary was elected, SSgt Pauline Robinson of the 566th Intelligence Squadron. She replaces outgoing Secretary TSgt Damita Stevens who served as Secretary from 2019-2021. SSgt Robinson brings a wealth of knowledge and willingness to support the Mile High Chapter. A native of New England, SSgt Robinson has a puppy named Kiwi and uses her spare time to dabble in photography and refurbish furniture. Welcome to the team SSgt Robinson!!

October State Meeting

In October, the Mile High Chapter hosted the Colorado State Business Meeting at the Wings Over the Rockies Exploration of Flight in Centennial, CO. Here all the State representatives from AFA chapters across Colorado came together to discuss pertinent AFA issues. They were also joined by representatives from Arnold Air Society and Silver Wings. At this business meeting, Linda Aldrich was elected to another term as State President, Margaret Eichman to another term as Vice President, Rick Peterson to his first term as Treasurer, and Damita Stevens to her second term as Secretary.

Army Air Forces World War II Vet Shares his story with Buckley SFB

Enlisted into the US Army Air Forces in February, 1943, (then) Sergeant Elson was reassigned to the infantry, serving in combat in Mindanao, the Philippines during World War II. A native of Pueblo, Colorado, Mr. Elson delighted Buckley SFB members at the AFA Mile High Chapter sponsored Professional Development Session with stories of his heroic past. He brought tokens from his time abroad including items from the grounds of Nagasaki, Japan gathered just weeks after the bomb had dropped. He currently continues to serve, now as a docent at the Weisbrod Aircraft Museum, regaling visitors with stories about the history the exhibits represent.

Volunteer with Veterans

The Colorado Veteran's Home at Colfax Avenue and Peoria Street has continued to accept new volunteers for visits. Volunteers are essential to the morale and welfare of community residents. Your generosity and kindness make a lasting impression especially as we come closer to the holiday season. You must be fully vaccinated to volunteer at the Veteran's home at this time. If you are interested in volunteering please contact Neil Burroughs at burneil@aol.com for further information.



Mr. Bruce Elson, proudly sharing rich mementos from his storied past

Dedication to Brig Gen Jim Hall (Ret)

Brigadier General James Hall was many things, a leader, a pioneer, and certainly an adventurer, but to us he was an incredibly essential part of the Mile High Chapter where he dedicated himself to countless Airmen across Colorado. In October, the Mile High Chapter honored Brig Gen Hall with a shadow box which is now hung at the 140th Colorado Air National Guard Headquarters building (pictured below). Alongside Gen Hall's wife, Georgeann Hall, Former Colorado Governor Bill Owens, and Former US Ambassador Sam Zakhem helped honor the late Gen Hall.

Brig Gen Hall served in the Army as an airborne radio operator and flight engineer throughout his service in the Pacific theater. After the war, Gen. Hall re-enlisted in the Army Air Corps and was awarded a direct commission in the newly created United States Air Force. He then received his bachelor's degree from the University of New Mexico and became a graduate of the Army Parachute School at Fort Benning, GA, the Advanced School at Fort Bragg, NC, and the U.S. Forest Service Smoke Jumper's School. Throughout his 36 years of military service and in his civilian life, he became a pioneer in the field of parachuting. A Master Parachutist with more than 1,800 jumps, he created the premier parachuting program for the U.S. Air Force Academy, which now trains 600 cadets annually and ranks first in the world. In addition, he created the "Buddy System" for free falling and the "4-line cut" for parachuting emergencies.



Brigadier Gen James Hall

In 1959, Hall and a partner founded the first professional parachuting firm ever. Gen. Hall has been honored numerous times, receiving the Air Force Association's (AFA) Medal of Merit, the Citation of Honor for his MIA/POW program, the Exceptional Service Plaque, the AFA Presidential citation, the AFAs' Colorado Man of the Year, The Leo Stevens Parachute Medal (the highest award given annually for achievements in the field of parachuting) and the Colorado Meritorious Service Medal (the highest award that the state of Colorado can award to a member of the military).



(L-R) Former Governor of Colorado Bill Owens * Georgeann Hall, Jim's widow * Former U S Ambassador Sam Zakhem and Neil Burroughs, Mile High Chapter Vice President



**Check out
Parachuting for
Gold by Jim Hall for
an in depth view
into his life!**

USAF's Three Priorities: China, China, China

JOHN A. TIRPAK

The alarming speed of China's military advance is fueling new urgency in the Air Force to accelerate modernization and deter Beijing from military aggression. American primacy is in jeopardy, service leaders warned at AFA's 2021 Air, Space & Cyber Conference. China's air force is at parity and in some cases holds an edge over the U.S., said Secretary of the Air Force Frank Kendall, noting that China's nuclear forces are "acquiring a first-strike capability." China has the largest air force in the Indo-Pacific and the largest inventory of conventional missiles in the world, said Chief of Staff Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr. It is also advancing its power-projection capability with new bases worldwide.

UN Committee Advances Proposal on Rules Governing Behavior in Space

GREG HADLEY

A United Nations panel overwhelmingly approved a resolution Nov. 1 to create a working group aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space, setting up the measure to pass in the General Assembly. The resolution, introduced by the United Kingdom with the support of more than 30 other nations, including the U.S., would establish an open-ended working group that would recommend "possible norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviors relating to threats by States to space systems."

L3Harris Wins Contract to Upgrade Counterspace Systems

AMY MCCULLOUGH

The Space Force's Space Systems Command awarded L3Harris Technologies Inc. a \$120.8 million contract to develop a "ground-based deployable electronic warfare capability" that can "reversibly deny satellite communications, early warning, and propaganda," according to an Oct. 22 contract announcement. Under the contract, L3Harris will upgrade 16 Counter Communications Systems at Peterson Space Force Base, Colo.; Vandenberg Space Force Base, Calif.; Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, Fla.; and classified locations outside the continental United States, according to the announcement.

Colorado Nonprofit Aims to Help Veterans, Active Duty Service Members through Archery

ASHLEY PORTILLO, KOAA STAFF

A program in Colorado is helping veterans and active service members form friendships and have fun while shooting archery. It's happening at the Archery School of the Rockies in Colorado Springs, where veterans founded a program for fellow vets called Threshold Archery. William Bowman founded the nonprofit in 2016. He said he wanted to create a community for veterans to get better at archery and reduce the cost of shooting. The program is also aimed at helping veterans when they get out of the military. The program is free for veterans, and they'll pay for a coaching certificate for those who want to teach others. The group meets every Thursday evening from 6-8 p.m.

We are thankful for our wonderful
Community Partners!

*Thank!
You!*



Neil Burroughs
HomeSmart
burrneil@aol.com
P: (720) 299-4867 / O: (303) 858-8100

Primary Business Address

Air Force Association Chapter 127
21699 E. Quincy Avenue Unit F, Box 161
Aurora, CO 90107

Chapter Officers

- President: Cliff Klein
- Executive VP, Community Partners: Neil Burroughs
- Secretary: SSgt Pauline Robinson
- Treasurer: Kenn Bowens
- VP Aerospace Education and Veteran Affairs: Stephen Gourley
- VP Communications: TSgt Damita Stevens

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.

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.

Contact Us

- Email Us: CO127.MileHigh.President@afa.org
- Check out our website: <https://milehigh.afa.org/>
- Find us on Facebook: AFA Mile High Chapter 127 or <https://www.facebook.com/afamilehighchapter/>

Upcoming Chapter Meetings

Held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 4pm at the Aurora Chamber of Commerce. All members are welcome

- November 16, 2021
- December 21, 2021
- January 18, 2021



Newsletter Editor: TSgt Damita Stevens is an Active Duty Guardian serving on Buckley Space Force Base. She has been with the Mile High AFA for three years and was elected as Secretary in 2019 and VP of Communications in 2021, she also serves as the Colorado State AFA Secretary. Recently, she was one of seven members accepted to the National-Level AFA Emerging Leader Program. Damita uses her intimate knowledge of information systems to build the Mile High Website and create the Quarterly Newsletters. Damita is happily married, has one rambunctious Akita named Kana, and loves to cook.