

WINTER ISSUE · FEBRUARY 2022

MILE HIGH FLYER

THE LATEST NEWS FOR MILE HIGH
CHAPTER MEMBERS



President's Corner

CLIFF KLEIN

The Mile High Chapter is alive and well! There's not a lot happening in these winter months, but we are gearing up for our 17th Annual Golf tournament, which is just around the corner (June 24th). 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 STEM and 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: <https://explorationofflight.org/>. The chapter worked with Airmen & Guardians on BSFB to support the Colorado Freedom Memorial's Light Their Way Home event Nov 9-13, which was an amazing success. We recently voted in 2d Lt Emily Murray as our Vice President of Airman, Guardian, & Family Programs. Welcome aboard Emily! Lastly, I'd like to invite all to visit our website (<https://milehigh.afa.org>) and join us at our monthly meetings held each 3rd Tuesday of the month at 4 p.m. at the Aurora Chamber of Commerce (3rd floor of the Westerra Credit Union Bldg).



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17th Annual Charity Golf Tournament

The chapter is gearing up for our 17th Annual Charity Golf Tournament, which will be held for the 5th straight year at Spring Valley Golf Course in Elizabeth, Colorado. The tournament, sponsored again by LITEYE, will be held Friday, June 24, 2022 and benefit the AFA Wounded Airman Program as well as the Buckley SFB Airman/Guardian Family Readiness. The event includes lunch, various games to be played throughout the round and a chance to win \$20K for a hole-in-one. Please visit our website if you are interested in sponsoring the tournament and/or participating in this first-class event. The event will be sold out so register soon: <https://defensetournament.golfreg.com/>



***Spring Valley Golf Club
Elizabeth, CO***

Save the Date – Friday, June 24, 2022



**Proceeds for the benefit of the Wounded Airman Program,
Airman/Guardian Family Readiness, and the Air Force
Family!**

**The format is a four-person scramble
Individuals and teams welcome! • Sponsorships available!**

Welcome 2d Lt Emily Murray!

We start the new year very strong with a new Vice President (VP) for Airman, Guardian, & Family Programs, 2d Lt Emily Murray. From the moment she attended her first meeting, Emily has brought a multitude of excitement and energy to the team. In her new role as the VP of Airman, Guardian, and Family Programs, she will work with base services such as the Airman/Guardian, and Family Readiness Center to support Base personnel, the Education Center for awards such as the Pitsenbarger, and the Leadership Development Center to deliver professional development opportunities to the base. We are so lucky to have someone as enthusiastic and passionate as Emily! Welcome to the team!

February is Black History Month

Celebrating the Life of Famed Tuskegee Airman Brigadier General Charles McGee

AIR FORCE
MAGAZINE



Retired Brig Gen Charles McGee, one of the last surviving Tuskegee Airmen and a veteran of 409 combat missions in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, died Jan. 16. He was 102. The son of a preacher, McGee was born in Cleveland on Dec. 7, 1919.

McGee enlisted in the Army on Oct. 26, 1942—one day after his wedding—and earned his pilot’s wings June 30, 1943. McGee flew his first combat mission on Valentine’s Day, 1944, with the 301st Fighter Squadron, 332nd Fighter Group, in Italy. During World War II, McGee flew the Bell P-39Q Airacobra, Republic P-47D Thunderbolt, and North American P-51 Mustang fighters, escorting B-24 Liberator and B-17 Flying Fortress bombers over Germany, Austria, and the Balkans. He had already flown 137 combat missions by the time he was promoted to captain.

Just under a year after deploying to Italy, McGee returned to the United States in December 1944 to teach other aviators how to fly the North American B-25 Mitchell bomber at Tuskegee Army Air Field, Ala.

McGee was promoted to major during the Korean War, flying 100 more combat missions during that time in P-51 Mustangs. In Vietnam, McGee flew another 172 combat missions in the McDonnell RF-4 reconnaissance aircraft. He retired Jan. 31, 1973, having achieved the rank of colonel and accumulated more than 6,300 flight hours.

He would ultimately be ceremonially promoted to brigadier general during a Feb. 4, 2020, Oval Office event and was later honored during then-President Donald Trump’s State of the Union Address.

WINGS OVER THE ROCKIES: EXPLORATION OF FLIGHT

On the first Saturday of every month at Wings Over the Rockies: Exploration of Flight in Englewood, CO, you can watch aircraft fly in and eat a nice breakfast. While you are there, you will have the opportunity to get up close with the planes, talk with the pilots, tour the exhibits, and eat at the breakfast food truck. Here you will see your Mile High Chapter at work. Stop by and have a cup of coffee with us and learn more about how we work with the organizations like Wings Over the Rockies and how you can get involved!

Upcoming Breakfast Fly-Ins:

- March 5th 9:30am - 11:00am
- April 2nd 8:00am - 11:00am
- May 7th 8:00am - 11:00am



Breakfast with Cruz in & Eat Food Truck



Colorado Freedom Memorial | Light Their Way Home

The Mile High Chapter worked with Airmen & Guardians on BSFB to support the Colorado Freedom Memorial's Light Their Way Home event Nov 9-13, which was an amazing success. The Chapter was able to fill 12 volunteer slots from Buckley Space Force Base as well as 7 slots from chapter leadership. Imagine nearly 6000 luminaries glowing under the crisp winter night sky, one for each of the men and women honored on the Colorado Freedom Memorial. A stunning tribute to their sacrifice and a beautiful way to bring their memory home for the holidays. If you'd like to pay tribute to the Colorado fallen, the memorial is located at Springhill Community Park, 756 Telluride St., Aurora, CO 80011 or visit their website at: <https://coloradofreedommemorial.com/>

**A
breathtaking
view of the
6000
luminaries
glowing
underneath
the beautiful
Colorado
night sky.**



**Each luminary
represents
one of the
men and
women
honored at
the Colorado
Freedom
Memorial.**

A Hero's Story: Bill McGinley's Purple Heart

As we celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the creation of our beloved United States Air Force, we take a moment to highlight a truly amazing Airman of the past Staff Sergeant William "Bill" McGinley. One of the latest additions to the American Air Museum in Britain's permanent collection is a Purple Heart that is small in size but has great meaning. It was awarded to Staff Sergeant William "Bill" Connel McGinley after he was wounded—and supposedly killed—while serving as a tail gunner in a B-24 Liberator during World War II.

Fortunately for Bill and his once-grieving parents, the US military was wrong about him dying when his aircraft was shot down over Nazi-occupied Belgium. The mistake was understandable given his B-24 crashed in a ball of flames after being attacked by a swarm of enemy fighter aircraft. And although Bill did indeed survive after helping other crew members get out, and parachuting from the burning bomber, he was rescued by members of the Belgian resistance who kept him safe for eight months—with no one knowing he was still alive.

In 2014, Bill described his harrowing leap:

"The fighters jumped on us. They hit the front end and killed the bombardier and navigator. One knocked out an engine and gas and oil were coming down. I pushed one guy out and started to follow him. But the ball turret gunner was still down there. So I'm laying down pulling him out of the turret ... and I could hear bullets going by my ear."

"The next thing I know, I am flying under the tail. The parachute ballooned out toward the slip stream and I just swung down."

Bill landed awkwardly in a pasture, knocking himself out in the process of being dragged across the ground by his billowing parachute. A farmer signaled him to lie down in the field and stay still so he wouldn't draw the attention of German soldiers in the area.

After nightfall, the farmer returned to get Bill and take him to a barn, where he hid among hay for three days and nights. Members of the Belgian resistance brought civilian clothes for Bill to wear and began moving him to different locations to stay one step ahead of the Gestapo.

From the barn to an automobile repair garage and room above a barber shop, Bill and other downed American Airmen were kept safe by Belgian helpers. One day while eating dinner at a miller's home, someone rushed in to warn Gestapo agents were coming up the street.



Bill McGinley



McGinley's Purple Heart



Bill's host quickly guided him down an alley before returning to his home. "The Germans got him," Bill recounted, "and beat him up. Three or four weeks later, I saw him but didn't recognize him [because] he was beat up so." Referring to all of his Belgian helpers during his time on the run, Bill recalled, "they would do anything for us. I mean they put their lives on the line for us guys that were shot down."

Bill McGinley's Purple Heart was delivered to his parents with a message signed by President Franklin D Roosevelt and hailing Bill for standing "in the unbroken line of patriots who have dared to die that freedom might live." Despite being informed he had been killed in action, Bill's parents clung to a thread of hope. His father felt that if Bill had managed to make it to the ground, then he would manage to make it home safe and sound.

That hope was rewarded with a telegram Bill sent from London in September 1944, following the liberation of Belgium by Allied troops. In rural Arkansas the local postmaster delivered telegrams by hand. When he arrived at the McGinley family home, Bill's parents were picking peas in their garden. "Dear Mom, am safe and well, hope to see you soon, don't worry." Upon reading this miraculous news, Bill's parents danced for joy. So much so, Bill said with a smile, "Mama lost her glasses! It took three days before they found them."

We imagine a few days without her glasses didn't bother Mrs. McGinley one little bit once she knew her son was on the way home. And we know Bill was amused by running into old friends who would ask, "How come you are back here? You are supposed to be dead!"

The Purple Heart is the oldest military award still being presented to members of the US armed forces. On August 7, 1782, George Washington announced the Purple Heart-shaped Badge of Military Merit would be awarded to soldiers who showed gallantry and fidelity during the Revolutionary War. After 150 years without use, the award was revived in 1932 as the Purple Heart. In 1942 it was re-designated as an award exclusively given for death or wounds in combat.



Bill McGinley Receiving the Purple Heart



Get your Volunteer Hours with the Mile High Chapter

Whether you are a college student who needs volunteer hours or an Airman that wants to give back to their community, the Mile High Chapter has a place for you to volunteer. To continue our unwavering support to Air and Space-focused organizations in the local area, the Mile High Chapter is seeking out passionate people who want to make a difference. This is a no-fail mission and we require great minds like yours to ensure it succeeds. Bring your ideas and energy to our next chapter meeting. Monthly meetings are held on the third Tuesday of every month. Visit our [website](#) to learn more. We hope to see you at our next meeting!

Making Agile Combat Employment Real

MATTHEW DONOVAN

"Our adversaries have studied our force deployment and invested heavily in pervasive intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance and all-domain long-range offensive capabilities that put our global footprint at risk. To counter this emerging threat, the Air Force introduced Agile Combat Employment as a method to rapidly deploy across dispersed operating locations within a theater without sacrificing combat capability. The Air Force is already demonstrating an initial ability to bring ACE to the battlespace by focusing on non-material solutions like developing Multi-Capable Airmen. However, to fully mature this concept requires attention to the core elements that enable ACE's operational framework," writes Matthew Donovan, vice president of requirements and capabilities for Raytheon Intelligence & Space, a business of Raytheon Technologies. Donovan previously served as Under Secretary and Acting Secretary of the Air Force.

Space Force Wrestling With 'Digital First' Culture

SHAUN WATERMAN

The Space Force—the only military branch born in the information age—has declared itself a “digital first” service. But its leaders are still wrestling with the challenges of digital transformation and working to build a 21st century service culture, they recently told attendees at an industry conference. “One of our biggest challenges is getting all of our folks’ heads around a new way of doing business,” said Brig. Gen. Kevin G. Whale, a Royal Canadian Air Force officer on assignment to Space Operations Command, or SpOC, to serve as deputy commanding general for transformation.

Homeless-Veterans Measure Advances in Colorado Legislature

ERIC GALATAS

A bill making its way through the Colorado Legislature would make it a lot harder for landlords and home sellers to discriminate against military veterans. Cathy Alderman, chief communications and public policy officer at the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, said House Bill 1102 would still allow preferences to be given for new housing construction and vouchers for veterans. She contended the past few years have made it clear investing in veterans pays off. At least one in 10 people experiencing homelessness has served in the armed forces. Veterans frequently face housing discrimination due to stereotypes, including substance abuse and mental illness. Alderman said access to housing is critical for struggling veterans to recover. The bill, which would add veterans as a protected group under the Colorado Fair Housing Act, has cleared the House and now moves to the Senate.

Our Community Partners are essential to our support to the community!

THE MILE HIGH CHAPTER THANKS YOU!



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- Treasurer: Kenn Bowens
- VP Aerospace Education and Veteran Affairs: Stephen Gourley
- VP Communications: TSgt Damita Stevens
- VP Airman, Guardian & Family Programs: 2d Lt Emily Murray

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 and also on Zoom! All members are welcome. Contact us for Zoom details.

- March 15, 2022
- April 19, 2022
- May 17, 2022



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.