



## *A Message from the President*

### **Reflecting on 2024 and Charting Our Course for 2025**

2024 has been an incredible year for the Wright Memorial Chapter, marked by significant achievements in advocacy, education, and support for our local Air Force and Space Force communities. Through impactful STEM initiatives, outreach programs, and an unwavering commitment to our mission, our members have made a lasting difference. Under the outstanding leadership of our outgoing president, Dave Babcock, our chapter was honored as the AFA Chapter of the Year—a testament to the dedication and hard work of Dave and our entire team. I am grateful for his wisdom, vision, and leadership, and am confident he will have continued success as he takes on his new role as Ohio's AFA State President.

As we look ahead to 2025, our focus will be on building upon these successes while expanding opportunities for more members to get involved in our education and support efforts. It is a privilege to step into the role of chapter president, and I look forward to serving alongside each of you. I am eager to meet as many members as possible and welcome your feedback on how we can continue to grow and better serve our Air and Space Forces community. Together, we will carry forward the legacy of excellence that has defined our chapter and ensure an outstanding year ahead.

## *Advocacy-In-Action*

### **Professional Development & Networking Events Made A Difference**

AFA WMC Professional Development & Networking Luncheons provided valuable opportunities for members to engage with key industry leaders, exchange ideas, and build connections. These events foster advocacy by promoting policies that benefit the Air and Space Forces and defense community, enhancing members' understanding of defense strategies, trends, emerging



technologies, and operational challenges. Over 600 military, civilian, defense industry, and community leaders heard from the following Air Force senior leaders:

February	Dr. David Tillotson (National Museum of the United States Air Force)
March	Major General Scott Cain (AFRL Commander)
May	Dr Chuck Ormsby (AFRL Manufacturing, Space Systems, and Hypersonics)
July	Mr. Jeff Glover (AFMC/A2 – Unclassified Intelligence Briefing)
August	Brig General Jason Voorheis (PEO, Fighters and Advanced Aircraft)
September	Ms. Alexis Bonnell (AFRL CIO on the Importance of AI)
October	Brig General Jeff Schreiner (Director, Air , Space, and Cyber)

## AFA Speaks to AFRL Scientists and Engineers on Adopting AI



AFA WMC teamed up with Nexus Blue in speaking to over 200 Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) scientists, engineers, and analysts on the importance of “*Navigating Artificial Intelligence’s Adoption*”. The discussion centered on AI’s pros & cons, its positive impacts, challenges, risks, and lessons learned in how to incorporate AI into their AFRL directorate or organization.

## AFA WMC Reveals To Recruiters How to Soar with AIMS

At the Annual 338th Air Force Recruiting Squadron Conference in Sandusky, OH, AFA WMC spoke to 77 recruiters from five states about AFA’s AIMS (Advocates Inspiring Military Service) program.

Mixing facts, experience, and humor, the presentation covered the origins of AIMS, an AIMS 101 overview, and specific strategies for recruiters to

leverage the program to their advantage. We also emphasized the value of active AFA membership and engaged the audience by soliciting their input on how to implement, modify, or measure AIMS to better support their recruiting goals.



## AFA WMC Supports the 88ABW AF Ball

The 88ABW, assisted by AFA WMC and other Wright-Patterson AFB non-profit organizations hosted the local Air Force Ball – which offered a glimpse into the professionalism and dedication of Air Force personnel, the diverse career paths available, the challenges and rewards of serving, and the vital role the Air Force plays in national security. Thus, ‘the Ball’ aroused interest in what the Air Force does and the kind of people it attracts - and AFA was there to nurture those thoughts and answer questions.



## AFA WMC Addressing Workforce Issues

AFA WMC is working with local colleges and universities, the State of Ohio, Wright-Patterson AFB, and local organizations to address critical workforce needs in the defense sector. Maintaining our military’s and nation’s competitive edge requires a skilled workforce; investment in research and development (R&D); rapid fielding of enhanced capabilities; and

rapid development of operational tactics, techniques, and procedures. As such, we work to promote the STEM skills and expertise that are so critical across the entire range of activities and processes associated with the development, fielding, and employment of operational capabilities.

### **AFA WMC Advocates for Aerospace at the Dayton Air Show**



Our WMC provided a front-row seat to the awe-inspiring power and precision of modern aircraft for over 200 members, sponsors, community partners, and senior Air Force leaders. The excitement provided an opportunity for industry and community engagement with our military leaders while promoting our organization and our STEM outreach programs.

### **Other AFA WMC Advocacy Activities, Efforts, or Initiatives**

As part of our core mission of supporting the Air & Space Forces, the Wright Memorial Chapter actively engaged in a variety of advocacy efforts to strengthen our military community. Below is a list of key advocacy activities, efforts, and initiatives that reflect our ongoing commitment to service and excellence.

- Participated in numerous forums, workshops, and conferences related to Air, Space, Aerospace, Workforce, Data Transformation, and Cyber. This enabled us to advocate for enhanced readiness and modernization, support warfighters and their families, drive technological advancements, shape policy and strategic priorities, as well as build public awareness and support across federal, state, military, and community leaders
- Selected to serve on the Regional National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA) Executive Council, enabling a more direct channel between the Air & Space Forces and the Defense Industrial Base in order to shape industrial policy; collaborate on technology transfer, innovation, and resource sharing; and inform cutting-edge defense trends
- Addressed a traveling group from the Intelligence Community supported by the HAF A2/6 ISR/Cyber initiative and discussed the integration of the acquisition community, NDIA, and AFA to meet the needs of the Air & Space Forces



### Soaring & Innovating: WMC Empowering Next-Gen STEM Leaders

The Wright Memorial Chapter (AFA WMC) continues its commitment to fostering STEM education through targeted grants that create meaningful change for students. These initiatives, led by Carl “Shof” Shofner, the Chapter’s Vice President for Aerospace Education, are advancing individual development, workforce readiness, and national progress by equipping young learners with essential skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.



SShof authored a more detailed accounting of what each school accomplished with their STEM grant. To learn more, click on the links for each of the following schools: [Xenia](#), [Northridge](#), [Beavercreek](#), and [Spinning Hills](#).

### Air Masters: Taking Flight in the Miami Valley



The National Aviation Heritage Area (NAHA) approved a grant by a consortium of Greater Dayton aeronautics-focused organizations (AFA WMC, AFIT, AFRL, Air Camp, NMUSAF, Sinclair, Univ. of Dayton

and Wright State Univ) to fund a STEM-aviation-focused competition across high schools in NAHA’s eight county area. With the help of AFIT and AFRL, we developed a competition scenario involving electric vertical takeoff and landing vehicles (EVTOLs) flying from Dayton to Cleveland. The inaugural competition will be held on 22 Feb 2025 at the National Museum of the United States Air Force.

### WMC Scholarships Propel Cadets Toward Aerospace Careers

AFA WMC is also active in providing aerospace education to military members or cadets in approved Armed Forces programs, such as Junior ROTC and ROTC. For example, the Chapter works with their educational partners and selects:

- Two CCAF graduates to receive AFA WMC-funded Pitsenbarger \$1,000 scholarships (out of a class of ~110) when they pursue STEM-focused Bachelor degrees. A Chapter representative also sits on the Selection Board (hosted by the Base Education Office) to determine the most deserving graduates to receive AFA WMC Pitsenbarger scholarships.
- Four ROTC cadets (out of ~90) from AFROTC Detachment 643 to receive AFA WMC funded STEM scholarships of \$1,000.
- Two exceptional JROTC cadets (from the 15 JROTC H.S. programs supported in the area) to receive \$1,000 scholarships to begin their collegiate STEM-focused degrees. Multiple others receive AFA recognition, and to see these up-and-coming cadets receive their award, you can access [this link](#) for some great photos.



## *Support-In-Action*

### **AFIT & AFA WMC Honor Outstanding Faculty**

The Air Force Institute of Technology and AFA WMC joined forces to recognize exceptional AFIT faculty members who advance aerospace power and technology through innovative efforts in education and research. This year's honorees include:

**Dr. Scott Nykl (General Bernard A. Schriever Award)**

- . This award is given in recognition of a person who advances aerospace power, technology, doctrine, or the Air Force as a profession.



**Maj. Dane Jansson (Colonel Charles A. Stone Award)** - This award is given in recognition of an individual who has made outstanding contributions to furthering the AFIT mission through new and innovative efforts involving demonstrated personal leadership.

**Capt. Jonathan Sicurella (Professional Continuing Educator Award)** - This award is presented to the individual who made the most significant contribution to AFIT as evidenced through excellence in teaching in order to maintain the excellence of AFIT's professional continuing education academic programs.

**Lt. Col. Hiren Patel ( Professor Ezra Kotcher Award)** - This award is given in recognition of an individual who made significant contributions to curriculum or instructional development within AFIT.

**Dr. Adam Reiman (Crocker Outstanding Professor Award)** - This award is presented to the individual who made the most significant contribution to the AFIT mission through

excellence in teaching, research, and service in order to maintain the excellence of AFIT's degree-granting academic programs.

## AFA WMC Salutes Military & Civilian Leaders for Their Impact

AFA WMC honors four outstanding individuals for our AFA Annual Awards recognition program, which were presented to the selected honorees at the Wright-Patterson Air Force Ball.



The honorees were:

**Ambassador Award - Mr. Michael Gesell**, (Dayton Development Coalition). This award recognizes a community leader who has been an effective ambassador for the Dayton/Miami Valley Military Community in the areas of economic development, military, and Air Force support.

**Heritage Award - Major General Frankl Verdugo** (HQ AFMC). This award recognizes an Air Force military individual who made a positive, significant impact on the military aerospace community at Wright Patterson Air Force Base.

**Legacy Award - Ms. Alexis Bonnell** (AFRL). This award recognizes an Air Force Civilian who has made significant contributions to the mission of Wright Patterson Air Force Base, and to the prestige of the Dayton/Miami Valley Community.

**Enlisted Award - TSgt Nia Curry** (88ABW). This award recognizes an Air Force Enlisted member who has made significant contributions to the Air Force mission at Wright Patterson AFB and/or Springfield ANGB and has carried the Air Force message beyond his/her primary duties into the surrounding communities through participation in various community activities.

## Honoring Heroes: AFA WMC's Work at the Dayton VA & Beyond

AFA WMC supports our veterans at the Dayton VA Center and the Wright State University Veterans Center. We sponsor picnics and holiday parties, and we honor our veterans during the National Salute to Veterans Week by visiting and serving treats at the Dayton VA. Our committee members also volunteer their time at the Dayton VA as ambassadors, assisting visitors and patients to enhance their visitor experience, and support special events like the Homeless Stand Down and the Veterans Parade.



Special thanks go to Ms. Vita Eonta, AFA WMC's Vice-President for Veteran Support, who has donated hundreds of hours to veterans in the area. Vita received an Outstanding Service Award from the Dayton VA Medical Center, recognizing her outstanding support.



## Other AFA WMC Support Activities, Efforts, or Initiatives

- Rafi's Golf Outing – Our chapter volunteered at and financially supported the golf outing. The proceeds enabled JROTC Cadets in Greene County to attend an exclusive 1-Day Air Camp adventure including flying with an instructor pilot.



- AFIT Student Association Shindig – As AFIT's military students have a tendency to overwork and neglect socializing, the AFIT Student Association coordinated a block party to pull the students and their families "out of their shell". AFA WMC, as well as the Miami Valley Military Affairs Association and Blue Star Families (Southwest Ohio Chapter) joined forces to support this "mental health break" event. Complete with a Commander's dunk tank, bouncy house, food, and music, it was a resounding success and they truly appreciated our support.



- Support of Cadets – Our Vice President for Junior ROTC and Civil Air Patrol (JROTC/CAP) provides amazing support to sixteen JROTC school programs and seven CAP regional organizations within central and southwestern Ohio (Dayton, Cincinnati, and Columbus) and Northern Kentucky. More specifically, she served as a leader, trainer, and mentor to over 300 cadets, supported them in planning and executing Community Service projects, assisted at regional Drill meets.



With the support of AFA WMC, she...

- Supplied Airman Battle Uniforms (ABUs) to a high school JROTC units in some of the poorest areas of Ohio; enabling more students benefit from the program – at her own expense
- Provided service blues coats, blues jackets, and blues shirts for Ohio and Kentucky CAP cadets.

- Coordinates orientation flights on C-17s with the 445th AW at Wright-Patterson AFB, OH (WPAFB); a highlight and motivational factor all participating JROTC and STEM-focused cadets.
- Supported multiple JROTC units in a Bataan Death March Commemoration
- Supported JROTC units in manning a watering station at the Air Force Marathon

## *Chapter Recognition*

### **AFA WMC Shines! President's Club of Dayton Honors Two Incredible Leaders**

The 'President's Club of Dayton' Selected two *amazing* AFA WMC Leaders as Outstanding Volunteer of the Year!

At a special ceremony, the 'President's Club of Dayton' honored Anna Schulte and Joni Ahlers for their extensive volunteer contributions to both AFA and the Greater Miami Valley community.

Anna serves as AFA WMC's VP for JROTC/CAP programs and earned her selection for her support to fifteen regional Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) and eight Civil Air Patrol units where she mentors cadets and provides critical resources (time, funding, uniforms, etc.). She was also recognized for her remarkable contributions to the Wright-Patt USO and Airman's Attic.

Joni serves as AFA WMC's Special Event Coordinator, where her superior thought leadership, extensive planning, and attention to detail are key to making the Air Force Balls a resounding success. She also earned recognition for her incredible contributions to the Dayton-area Chapters of AFCEA and Women in Defense (WID).

We are so proud of these two incredible professionals and wonderful volunteers!



### **Wright Memorial Chapter is AFA's Outstanding Chapter of the Year**



AFA National recognized AFA WMC with the Most Outstanding Chapter Award – across 200+ Chapters. Chapters are judged on accomplishments in the following areas: new member procurement, community relations, aerospace education, overall programming, best single program, and communications. Outstanding Chapters are selected from top chapters in each size category.

AFA WMC's programs consistently translate into tangible results focused on having a positive impact on the Air & Space Forces and the military organizations in the Dayton, OH region.



## The DBJ Recognizes AFA WMC as a “Business of the Year” Honoree

On November 7, 2024, the *Dayton Business Journal* (DBJ) formally recognized the AFA WMC as a Business of the Year Honoree in the Non-Profit Organization category.

Key factors resonating with DBJ included how AFA WMC exceeded expectations of management and the Dayton community by developing robust partnerships, providing significant financial support, and dedicating volunteer time to various initiatives. It was an honor for our chapter to be recognized for our members’ contributions toward military, veteran, military family, community, and education support.



### In Summary

Looking back, this year has been one of remarkable achievements and dedicated service for the AFA WMC. From major initiatives to countless behind-the-scenes efforts, our Chapter has made a lasting impact in support of our mission. While this newsletter highlights many key moments, it only scratches the surface of the dedication, collaboration, and hard work that have made this one of our most successful years in recent history. We extend our deepest gratitude to our members, volunteers, and partners who continue to make a difference.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JPOR".

Jake Porter  
President

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*If you have any questions or comments, please contact Jake Porter at [president@afadaytonwright.org](mailto:president@afadaytonwright.org)*

For more information on AFA WMC, go to our [webpage](#), [LinkedIn](#), or [Facebook](#) pages!