

# CHAPTER NEWS

By June L. Kim, Associate Editor

## LONG ISLAND CHAPTER

The Long Island Chapter (N.Y.) marked the 75th anniversary of the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor by dedicating a three-panel plaque during its annual “Dropping of the Roses” ceremony in Farmingdale, N.Y., in December.

Chapter President Fred DiFabio organized the event held at the American Airpower Museum and nearly 300 people attended, said William G. Stratemeier Jr., chapter VP for leadership development.

Among the crowd were Pearl Harbor survivors Gerard Barbosa and Seymour Blutt, New York state officials, military officers, representatives from military organizations, and AFA Northeast Region President Maxine Rauch.

In previous years, a pilot dropped red roses—and more recently, one white rose for 9/11—around the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor at 12:55 p.m. (the exact East Coast time of the attack) on Dec. 7, but due to inclement weather, the actual dropping of the roses took place the following day.

At the end of the ceremony, Rauch presented DiFabio with an AFA Exceptional Service Award for 2016, said Stratemeier.

## SALT LAKE CITY CHAPTER

Members of the Salt Lake Chapter (Utah) had the privilege of sending off local Gold Star children at the Salt Lake City Airport in December. The chapter partnered with Snowball Express, a nonprofit organization that serves families of fallen American soldiers, to greet them as they flew to Dallas for a retreat, said Robert George, Rocky Mountain Region president.

Chapter President Edward Felleeson coordinated the event along with Chapter VP John Wagoner and Aerospace Education VP Patti White, arranging times, security passes, and parking passes with airport police, said George.

The chapter purchased 100 teddy bears so that the children could have “something to take with them on the flight,” he said. Felleeson asked members of the Utah Air National Guard and Army National Guard to present the teddy bears on AFA’s behalf, while AFA members distributed copies of *Air Force Magazine* to the chaperones of the flight.

Felleeson learned about the opportunity when his friend, American Airlines employee Carl Sonderstrom, asked if the chapter would be interested in participating.

## GOLD COAST CHAPTER

The Gold Coast Chapter in Florida hosted an open house last fall for members new and old, said Chapter President Virginia Montalvo.

Held at a local flying school at Pompano Beach Airpark in Pompano, Fla., the gathering of more than a dozen and a half listened to chapter member Milton Markowitz speak about his experiences flying 40 different aircraft throughout World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. “The younger members listened intently,” said Montalvo. “They ... were not disappointed.”

The chapter even donated a mini drone as a door prize, said Montalvo. The drone was suggested by chapter VP of aerospace Virginia Knudsen, who is a science, technology, engineering, and math teacher at Parkway Middle School of the Arts in Lauderhill.

Chapter VP for Membership Bob Morris provided refreshments.

Photo courtesy of Bill Stratemeier



Former and current military officials salute during the Long Island Chapter’s Dropping of the Roses ceremony in December. Chapter President Fred DiFabio is at left and Chapter Treasurer William Stratemeier is at right.

## Martin H. Harris, 1932-2016

Former AFA Board Chairman retired Col. Martin H. Harris died Dec. 9. He was 84 years old and resided in Longwood, Fla.

Harris was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., and after graduating from New York University joined the Air Force. He retired from the Air Force Reserve. He worked for Lockheed Martin for 40 years before retiring in 1997.

Harris had served as AFA’s Chairman of the Board (1986-88), National President, and



National Secretary (1972-76). He was Florida’s first AFA state president and chapter president. He also served as vice president and a trustee of the Aerospace Education Foundation and was instrumental in getting the Air Force Memorial constructed without using public funds.

He was named AFA Member of the Year for 1972 and was awarded the Exceptional Service Award by the Secretary of the Air Force.

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## AFA Emerging Leader

### Christopher J. Hinds

**Home State:** Wisconsin

**Chapter:** Thunderbird Chapter (Nev.)

**Joined AFA:** 2013

**AFA Office:** Past member, AFA e-Membership committee

**Military Service:** 2002-current, Active Duty

**Occupation:** Security forces

**Education:** A.A.S., Criminal Justice, Community College of the Air Force; A.A.S., Instructor of Technology and Military Science, Community College of the Air Force

### How did you first hear of AFA?

In 2013 while I was stationed at JBSA-Lackland [Texas]. CMSgt. [Kathleen M.] McCool, [one of the Air Force's 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year in 2011] had put out an all-call for motivated individuals who wanted to be part of AFA and help stand up the first AFA e-sub council.

### What do you enjoy about AFA membership?

All the knowledge that is out there in AFA. It is such a diversified group with a wealth of knowledge and experience, I honestly learn something new every time we meet. It has also given me the opportunity to lead and be part of something much bigger than [myself].



Chris Hinds trains Pprada, a military working dog, at Nellis AFB, Nev., in January 2017. Hinds is the NCOIC of the military working dog section.

Photo by Susan Hinds for Purest Light Photography

### How can AFA create more awareness about what it does for airmen and their families?

We could bring the information from the chapter meetings to the base and get more of the younger enlisted involved without the hassle of having them trying to get off work or find a ride to the chapter meeting. ... There is so much that AFA fights for and does for the Air Force family, but it always seems to go unrecognized. I believe that putting ourselves out there, educating, advocating, and supporting, we will be able to grow our numbers and support for the organization.