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**"PETE" KNIGHT
CHAPTER SAYS
"THANKS" TO
IT'S
COMMUNITY
PARTNERS**

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Knight's News



Words From the President

So you think you've been busy the last 90 days? Let me tell you about your vice President, Mr. Rex Moen. In addition to working for an aerospace contractor and being the liaison for a California Legislator, Rex was out stomping around campaigning for supporters for the 60th Anniversary Air Force Ball. Rex single handedly chartered and started a new organization, "The Friends of Edwards AFB", ran it, and influenced (read convinced, cajoled, shamed, arm-twisted) over \$37,000 from our community partners to help sponsor the September 2007 Edwards AFB Air Force Ball commemorating the 60th anniversary of the USAF. Was it a success?? I don't know—read for yourself in the next column, guest written by the Commander of the

USAF Air Force Flight Test Center, Major General Curtis Bedke. (I know it's lame getting a "G.O." to contribute, but Curt has "a way with words", had already written a report to all the members or Edwards AFB, and it was a shame to waste them. I figured, "what the heck, ask the General if we can use his words in the newsletter?" Simply—we had a blast. More succinctly though—read General Bedke's account. (It's not often you get a "2 button" to write for you, so I'm giving him as much space as he wrote with no edits!)

Elsewhere in Southern California this last quarter, our sister Chapter 146, the High Desert Chapter has been floundering. At the 2007 CAFA convention, the state voted to move 146 to Area 2, and Frank Waltersheid (Area 2

VP) with our promise to help vowed to try to reinvigorate 146. Frank, Rex, Col Dave Miller (the AFFTC Vice Commander) and I visited a small group of 146 members on Saturday 20 October. This initial meeting was very hopeful and we have a second meeting planned for November 10th where we hope to garner enough members to staff a board and get the paperwork started. "High Desert" and "Pete Knight" may be teaming on future endeavors (such as our newsletter) to help "kick start" the system, so don't be surprised to see items next issue from "the other end of the valley". Here's to success!!!!
Randy

USAF 60th Anniversary "We Had a Ball!" , Guest Editor, MGen Curt Bedke

Wow!!

That's my main reaction every time I think back on our 60th Anniversary Air Force Ball last Friday night (21 Sept 2007).

If you missed it, you really missed it! This wasn't one of those "once-in-a-lifetime" affairs (you know, the ones that seem to happen about once every couple of years), this was a no-kidding "ain't ever gonna happen again, ever, and you were there to see it!"

We planned to have 800 people, but in the last two weeks demand was so overwhelming

that we pushed it up to 1,000...and in the end we managed to cram in a few more (with the caterer begging for mercy!), and we still had hundreds trying to get in.

It's like a rock concert, gang...ya gotta get your tickets earlier next time!

And it WAS like a rock concert in many ways...only much cooler. Did we have an important Keynote Speaker? How about the Secretary of the Air Force himself, the Honorable Michael W. Wynne? Yep, that qualifies as the Top! And this wasn't just an "obligatory gig"

for him, either...he brought his wife, Barbara with him and she was the same combination of elegance, class and "just folks" friendliness we'd seen when she was here before.

Did we have solemn recognition of our past? How about a slide show narrated by Yours Truly, of photos of Edwards and our aircraft from 1947? How about a movie of Capt Chuck Yeager's flight breaking the sound barrier (also celebrating 60 years as of 14 Oct 07)? How about a POW/MIA table, and a silent toast to those still MIA? It was very moving, and it reminded all of us of the sacrifices people before us have



LA County Board of Supervisors

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Devonshire Inn and Motel, Rosamond CA.



Air Force 60th Anniversary Ball continued

made...and the obligations we have to continue to do the work they can no longer do for us.

Did we have awesome entertainment? How about the Honor Guard tossing bayonet-tipped rifles around, inches from CMSgt Lewis' nose? (He stayed cool, and he came away with all parts still attached!) How about Mylin, our favorite "Air Force brat home-grown-rock-star fan-of-Edwards," back at Edwards to help us celebrate by singing "American Girl" and "Grateful"?!

And how about John Ondrasik, aka "Five For Fighting", sitting at the piano and performing "100 Years," "Freedom Never Cries," "Superman (It's Not Easy)" and "Two Lights"?!



CH294 "First Lady" is not to be outdone



Ch294 President rubbin elbows with the stars

Both of them were not just singers, but showed their warmth and personality by telling us between songs what the lyrics meant to them. (Best line of the night--from ANYONE on stage--was from John Ondrasik, who opened "Superman"

with "First of all, I sorta have to apologize for this song, because the opening line is "I can't stand to fly"--and frankly that seems like a pretty stupid thing to sing in a crowd like this!")

Speaking of "Superman," Did we have inspiring heroes? How about Chuck Yeager being presented a proclamation by Governor Manchin of West Virginia (Yeager's home state), and Yeager graciously thanking all the Air Force people in his life who had helped him become the person he is today? How about the former World War II POW, Ship's Cook Second Class Lester James Hildreth, and the families of several others who are still MIA? How about recognizing Edwards' greatest supporter and friend, Mrs Aida O'Connor, for being the Air Force's nominee for the Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher Distinguished Civilian Humanitarian Award? She is such a charming lady and so loving of the Air Force and espe-

AFFTC Dedicates Brig. Gen. Yeager Statue



Breaking barriers

Retired Brig. Gen. Chuck Yeager (right) unveils a life-sized statue of himself at Sound Barrier Park here. The statue was constructed to recognize his accomplishment of breaking the sound barrier over Edwards Oct. 14, 1947. Along with the dedication of the statue, the park was rededicated after receiving landscaping renovations for the event.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Woodbury

Chapter 294 member Cindy Phillips represented AFA at the 14 October ceremony where AFFTC members and dignitaries dedicated a statue of Brig. Gen. (Ret) Charles (Chuck) Yeager commemorating the 60th anniversary of supersonic flight. Located at the intersection of Yeager Blvd and Rosamond Blvd, the life size statue is amazing life-like and caused numerous "double takes" by passers-by over the next several days, who wondered who the airman was at the corner waiting for a ride home.

SPIDERMAN WANTED ALIVE by WJPK Chapter

Got talent taking pictures, writing story lines and spinning webs? Have we got a job for you! We really really need a volunteer to feed us pictures and stories for our newsletter and website. Call or Email Randy if you're interested.

Air Force 60th Anniversary Ball continued

cially our base! And how about the reading of the poem "High Flight" by none other than Maj Gen Joe Engle, the only person to become an astronaut both ways--by flying into space in the X-15, and by rocketing into space by the Space Shuttle? His reading was all the more appropriate because his throat was still dry from sucking on the oxygen hose from his F-16 flight just hours earlier!

And of course, while it's hard to pick a "favorite part," mine certainly has to be the Grand Opening Act--leading a four-ship formation of 2 T-38s and 2 F-16s, with four true Edwards AFB Heroes in the back seats: Col David Scott (Gemini 8, Apollo 9 and Apollo 15--one of only 12 men to have walked on the moon!; Lt Col Fitz Fulton (B-58, XB-70, YF-12 and about 240+ other aircraft!); Brig Gen Chuck Yeager (WWII ace, first to break the sound barrier!); and Maj Gen Joe Engle (X-15 and Space Shuttle!) We taxied and took off as a formation, joined up and did some fingertip formation wing-work around the puffy clouds as we climbed to altitude; then split the formation as the two F-16s "boomed" the base (and the party!), while the two T-38s did our own boom east of Randsburg; practiced some extended trail maneuvering as we descended back below the clouds, rejoined the four aircraft over the Borax mines, and flew 500' above the ground past the crowd outside the hangar. Then we pitched out, landed, taxied in and shut down engines as a formation, climbed out and had our escorts put bowties on us (under our flight suit collars!), and we proceeded into the Air Force Ball looking kinda like dapper Space Cowboys (only better looking and having ACTUALLY flown our jets to the party!)

The Secretary of the Air Force met us at the planes and fortunately found the uniform modification ("formal flight suit") to be suitable and appropriate for the Ball!



MGen Bedke taxis up in a T-38

The four front-seaters--me as lead, Lt Col Carl Schaefer, Lt Col Bernie Cassidy, and Maj Scott Heritsch--were of course thrilled to be part of this package. So we had to laugh and shake our heads when, at the end of the briefing, Brig Gen Yeager himself thanked us on behalf of the four of them for allowing them to participate in this event. We all had a great time--and I know the heroes' enthusiasm was clear as they chatted throughout the evening with so many of our airmen and guests!



LtC Cassidy and Maj Heritsch delivering flight test legends!

Ladies and Gentlemen, you'll not see THAT kind of assembly again! And now, don't you DARE "touch that knob" as I thank just a few of the many people who made this event a success. I know you want to skim, but I'm telling you that you ought to KNOW who did all the work, and you ought to thank them the next time you see them--because organizing a show like this can be problem after heartache

after crisis...and they deserve to hear from you that you really do appreciate their great efforts. AND they need to hear from you that it was a rousing success--because many of them were so busy, even during the show, that they didn't get to sit and enjoy it the way you did--so YOU need to TELL them!

The two Air Force Ball Committee co-chairmen: Lt Col John Lopardi, 95th Medical Group deputy commander, and Lt Col Terry Stotler, 95th Medical Operations Squadron commander. These guys were the ones with the weight on their shoulders...the ones in charge of putting the whole thing together! More than anyone else, these two deserve heaps of praise and our sincere thanks!

Our "adult supervision," there to help these two "grease things" when they needed support and to provide their experience when asked...Col Dave Miller, AFFTC Vice Commander, Col Nancy Wharton, 95th Air Base Wing Vice Commander, and Lt Col Ed "Bernie" Cassidy, 412th Operations Group Deputy Commander. Bernie was in charge of putting the Flight of Heroes together, and got to fly with Brig Gen Yeager as a reward.

>
>To all of you who helped do your part--from Protocol to Invitations to Hangar Preparation to Table Set-Up to Communications Support to...you get the idea...--there are more of you than I can possibly recognize in print. Just know that

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AFA Mission

- To **advocate** aerospace power and a strong national defense.
- To **support** the United States Air Force and the Air Force family.
- To **promote** aerospace education to the American People.



"The Last Word"



No Sir, you can't take the centerpiece home with you!

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Air Force 60th Anniversary Ball continued

we are grateful and your work was indeed worth it--this was a fantastic event!

Thanks to all the sponsors who "bought tables" to help fund this event (Editors note: the Air Force JAG is sensitive about the General showing favoritism—but thank all the WJPK community partners for this one. rhk) and allowed us to adjust the prices so our younger airmen could attend at reduced prices...thank you, Thank You, THANK YOU. I hope you enjoyed the Ball--our airmen certainly did, and they very sincerely appreciate your generosity!

Finally, I want to recognize a special individual who made this evening possible. Mr Rex Moen has truly been "a friend of Edwards Air Force Base!" He was our Air Force Ball's chief fundraiser and made the financial support of our sponsors happen. I know he spent many, many hours on the phone and personally working the community to get their support. If

Aida O'Connor has been our Community Support Group's "team coach," Rex has certainly been Edwards AFB's biggest "cheerleader" for a number of years.

As Ina and I near the end of our time at Edwards AFB, we want to thank all of you personally for a most wonderful capping event that we will always remember. We hope you, too, will never forget the night you saw some of our Air Force's greatest heroes, listened to first-rate heartfelt performances, and shared with us the conviction that What We Do Matters and the realization that we live and work in one of the finest organizations in the world--our United States Air Force: "Zero to Sixty...and Still Accelerating!" --CMBedke

CURTIS M. BEDKE
Major General, USAF
AFFTC Commander

AFA Veteran Benefits Association (AFAVBA) was created as a result of the consolidation of the Air Force Association and the Aerospace Education Foundation to provide benefits to military Veterans and to AFA Members. AFA's programs will continue unchanged, but under the AFA Veteran Benefits Association name.

All AFA members are eligible to participate in these AFAVBA Programs. The Life and Accident Insurance Programs, however, require that you meet one of the following requirements: Served or serving in the U.S Military; Spouse or Widow (er) of someone who served or is serving in the U.S. Military; Ancestor or Lineal Descendent of someone who served or is serving in the U.S. Military. (You qualify if you're the child, grandchild, great grandchild, etc., or the father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, etc. of someone who served or is serving in the U.S. Military.)

"PETE" KNIGHT CHAPTER UPCOMING EVENTS

November 27, 2007 -- WJPK Holiday Party at Casa Roma's, Lancaster CA @ 6:00PM

Secretary Wynne comments on drawdown. Even though the plan to fund recapitalization of the Air Force by cutting 40,000 personnel "isn't working," there's no plan to either stop the drawdown or go even deeper, Air Force Secretary Michael Wynne said yesterday afternoon. Wynne, at a press conference held during AFA's Air & Space Conference in Washington, said it's clear that 316,000 active duty personnel is the rock bottom number the service needs to function. Wynne said he'll be making a "forceful" argument to Congress to add funds for modernization in future supplemental spending bills, but he said he doesn't see any help coming in the Administration's upcoming formal budget proposals. And there is the issue of the growing ground force-

total of 92,000 soldiers and marines-that could require USAF to add up to 2,000 more forward air controllers and other battlefield airmen to embed with them, Chief of Staff Gen. Michael Moseley told reporters at the joint press session. Moseley had previously quoted an Air Combat Command estimate of 1,000. However, the Army and Marine Corps have yet to firm up whether the new troops will all be combat oriented, so he said the number of airmen is still in play. Moseley said he's in discussions with both services to try to keep the number of extra USAF troops required as low as possible.

AFA Member "Good Deals" :-) and Other News

Member Benefit Magazine Highlights

\$50 Cash Back AFA Member Reward on Sprint/Nextel

Whether you are an existing Sprint/Nextel customer or looking to switch to Sprint/Nextel, AFA members get a \$50 Cash Back Reward when you order or renew Sprint/Nextel through the AFA Wireless Center. Visit www.afawireless.com or call a wireless solutions expert at 866-281-0004.

Many Vets May be Missing Out on Special Compensation

Just because an Air Force veteran was not injured storming the beaches at Normandy does not mean he or she may not be entitled to receive combat-related special compensation, or CRSC. Many Air Force veterans may be missing out on hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars every month because they have not applied for the compensation. Go to <http://www.tricare.mil/> for more information.