

# Air Weather Association News



January 2024

## From the Chairman

Happy New Year! It's hard to believe how quickly time marches on. In some ways it seems like just yesterday we were coming to the DC area for our 2023 AWA Reunion, and in other ways so much has happened that it seems a long time ago. The Air Weather Association continues to live up to the promises we made in Virginia to stay active and to seek ways to continue the camaraderie we all experienced as part of the weather community. This will be the first of our revised quarterly newsletters where we will share information, solicit ideas and comments, and move forward with plans for future AWA activities. Your AWA Board remains committed to you the members of the organization and in this newsletter you'll see reports from the Board members and plans for the future. Others have come forward to volunteer their assistance in keeping AWA alive, and we continue to look for those of you with time and energy to contribute to the organization. On my personal front, I accepted an appointment to become the Senior Pastor of Rapid City First United Methodist Church in Rapid City South Dakota. Rebecca and I left Virginia on 2 Jan and arrived in Rapid City on 4 Jan. I started preaching here on 7 Jan. It has been a whirlwind holiday season for us, but we had an uneventful 1,600 mile drive and are getting settled here. The church is a real blessing for me as I enter my third career serving in full time ministry. The parsonage has plenty of room, so if you are headed out to Mt. Rushmore or the Badlands, please stop by.



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***Your ideas, suggestions, and Newsletter inputs are always greatly appreciated!***

# AWA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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David Wilson, Member At Large

***Interested in helping? Contact a Board Member Today.***



*AWA Members Visit Sterling WSFO*

## ***Air Weather Association—Serving the Present...Remembering the Past.. Air Force Weather***

### 557th Weather Wing

The 557th Weather Wing is a United States Air Force organization and its lead military meteorology center. It reports environmental situational awareness worldwide to the Air Force, the United States Army, joint warfighters, Unified Combatant Commands, the national intelligence community, and the Secretary of Defense.

**Founded:** lineage traces to 1943

**Branch:** United States Air Force

**Current commander:** Col. Bradley J. Stebbins

**Headquarters:** Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska

**Part of:** Air Combat Command: Sixteenth Air Force

## **Board Report—Finance      Don Farrington**

Dear Members of the AWA,

Our financial situation is stable. We have two accounts at Wells Fargo Bank, one is a checking account and the other is a savings account. We have high enough balances in both, so we are not charged any fees for those accounts. I get monthly statements and I monitor them closely online to make sure nothing is happening to them. Who is on the accounts: Jim DeCarufel is authorized user along with my wife and me. With the death of Carol Lavin and Kevin Lavin, who were previously on the account, I felt it necessary to ask Jim to please be a third signatory on the account and he agreed.

My wife and I have managed the account since 1996 and we would like to find someone who would take over the finance/treasurer position for the association. The account sits quietly for most of the time and as new members are added their checks are deposited by Al Mongeon and when we are getting checks for the reunion, they are deposited by Tom Accola. The busy time is during the reunion, to pay vendors and the hotel, or refund attendees, but it is not something that will take much of your time.

Please let me know if you have any questions or would like to volunteer for the Finance/Treasurer Board position.

Donald Farrington



2023 AWA Reunion Washington Dulles Holiday Inn—See [airweaassn.org](http://airweaassn.org) for more photos

## Board Report—2023 Reunion Tom Accola

AWA welcomed 100+ AWA members, spouses and guests to our nation's capital for the long-awaited Air Weather Association reunion, 26 - 30 April 2023. Held at the Holiday Inn, Washington Dulles, AWS Reunion 2023 was a watershed event for AWA—a renewal of our biannual get-together tradition after a nearly 5-year break.

For 30+ years, Col (Ret) Kevin Lavin was our president and chief advocate. This reunion provided an opportunity to honor Kevin's memory; also that of Carol, his devoted wife. Kevin and Carol were the heart and soul of our AWA efforts during those years. With Kevin's passing, Rich Bensinger was elected Chairman of the AWA Board

As usual, our reunion activities included local area tours, an informal Friday buffet dinner and a formal Saturday banquet. Tours included the National Weather Service Baltimore/Washington weather forecast office, Arlington National Cemetery, Udvar-Hazy Air & Space Museum, Breaux Vineyards, and The National Mall.

The acting USAF director of weather, Col Steve Dickerson spoke at our Friday night buffet. Col Dickerson's excellent, far-ranging presentation detailed the current status of USAF weather operational and organizational activities. Battlefield High School's AFROTC honor guard presented/retired the color at Saturday's banquet. Our tribute to Kevin and Carol included comments by their daughter, Karen DeSpiegelaere.

Our AWA website [www.airweaassn.org](http://www.airweaassn.org) provides links to an 84-photo reunion portfolio and several tribute videos. Plans are underway for a 2025 reunion, as we determine a location and we consider options to our standard venue of local area tours and formal/informal dinners.

### AWA Reunion 2025

With 100+ attendees having joined us for AWA Reunion 2023, it's clear the desire and ability are present to continue our reunions in the future. Our past 5 reunion sites: Omaha, Charleston, San Antonio, Colorado Springs, Sterling, VA. We're targeting spring 2025 for our next reunion with location TBD.

Timing: Apr – Jun usually attracts the most attendees and generates the best host hotel prices.

Agenda: It's increasingly difficult to provide cost effective multiple local tour options on successive days. 1-2 tours per day is likely our best option going forward. We'd like to attract active-duty members and involve them in our reunion to the maximum extent possible: a real challenge with the way weather units/people are assigned and an evolving military culture.

Location: St Louis was on our short list last year with competitive bids from several venues. Florida's space coast (Orlando-Cocoa Beach-Patrick SFB) and Omaha (large concentration of active AWA members/Offutt AFB)-Kennedy Space Center) also offer attractive venues.

We intend to move out quickly this Spring to lock in locations and dates for AWA Reunion 2025. Suggestions/comments are always welcome. Please send them to:

Tom Accola, Reunion Director,  
[taccola@cfl.rr.com](mailto:taccola@cfl.rr.com)

## Missing Members

We continue to try and track down status and contact info for members we haven't heard from in a while. If you have any information on the following, please contact Al Mongeon.

NAME	RANK	SPOUSE
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John W. Abbot	Lt Col	Pearl C.
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(John R.) Abbott	Col	Georganna
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Phillip G. Abel	SMSgt	
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John P. Aberg		
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Matthew Addison	2Lt	Ruth
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Ryan Adkinson	E-5	
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Richard B. Agee	SMSgt	Helen
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James D. Agnes	MSgt	Lois
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Wallace L. Ahlborn	Sgt	Jane
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Richard R. Ail	MSgt	Anne
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William W. Aird	LtCol	(Jane)
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George S. Akers	Col	Martha
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Robert T. Akers		Irene
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Walter F. Alex	Lt Col	Charlotte
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Robert M. Allan Jr	Capt	Harriet
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Hugh R. Allen	CMSgt	
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Albert R Allred	Sgt	
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Eugene V. Altman	SSgt	
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Craig A. Anderson	TSgt	Linda
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Clarence R. Anderson	Lt Col	Marie
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Robert J. Anderson	Capt	Connie
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Michael S. Anderson	SSgt	Deborah
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David W. Anderson	Maj	Ute
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William Anderson Jr	SMSgt	Betty
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Robert P. Anthonisen	Sgt	Agnes
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(Bob) Anthony	Col	Judy
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## Reenergized ROWF/AWA Beer Calls Jack Hayes

For years, under the able leadership of John Lasley, CINC-ROWF, Beer Calls were a popular venue for ROWFs and active duty weather folks to meet at a Ft Myers club to share war stories. Over the past couple of years, attendance declined due to the challenge of navigating DC traffic congestion – especially during rush hour. Last Spring, a small group (John Lasley, Dave Pace, Ralph Stoffler and Jack Hayes) developed and implemented a new Beer Call strategy: assemble at a lounge outside the Beltway where traffic is much less congested, and, rotate the locations around the Beltway perimeter so that some times all have easier access.

Ned Devine's in Herndon (about 10 miles west of the Beltway) was the IOC location in June. Over 40 ROWFs attended -- many staying well into the evening to enjoy dinner with friends -- CINC-ROWF drove up from North Carolina. And, Ned's reserved half of the lounge for the event.

In October, a Beer Call, organized by Ernie Dash was held at a brewery near Quantico (about 25 miles south of the Beltway. Over 25 ROWFs enjoyed the local brews (as you can see in the picture) – and Ernie made the trek over from the Williamsburg area. The next Beer Call is planned (thanks to Mike Farrar) for Baltimore at the AMS National Meeting – carrying on a tradition that is over 30 years old. And, Jeff Lentz has already been in touch with the Combined Club at Andrew for a Spring ROWF Call in the May-June time frame.

For ROWFs and Active Duty weather folks in Virginia, we encourage you to join us – especially when they're held in a location close to where you live. For weather folks (retired and active duty) in other areas, we encourage you to organize similar ROWF Calls where you can re-live old war stories and renew friendships.



## Board Report—Web Site Jim DeCarufel

Since I began to maintain/update the AWA website back in the late 90's, not a great deal has changed in the past number of years. Not very long ago, Mike Dwyer offered to help with the maintenance chores and maybe updating the site. That evolved into obtaining a new domain name, [afwx.org](http://afwx.org), where Mike has been honing his skills on a completely revamped Air Weather Association web site which looks absolutely terrific. Please take a look and see what you think. At some point down the road, we may transition the current site, [airweaassn.org](http://airweaassn.org) into [afwx.org](http://afwx.org).

One thing that quite possibly has hampered new membership is the fact that we currently only accept checks in the mail. While that payment method was perfectly fine back in the 1980's, it seems like we need to modernize and take electronic payments. There are some costs involved for the Association but we could incorporate most of that into an adjusted membership charge. We are looking to get your thoughts and opinion on how we evolve into a sustainable organization in the future. Feel free to email me or any other board member with your thoughts. [jimdecarufel@yahoo.com](mailto:jimdecarufel@yahoo.com).

One other topic has been tossed around between some board members recently. While the association remains viable financially at the moment, is there anything we could consider doing to improve our future stability? Ideas have popped up about us marketing Air Weather Service and Air Force Weather Agency lapel pins. What about a combined pin such as shown below on the left?



*Reminder: There will be a ROWF/AWA BEER CALL at the AMS annual meeting, in Baltimore, on January 30, 2024. The beer will flow at the Hilton Baltimore Inner Harbor Hotel, 401 West Pratt St, Baltimore, MD. People typically start arriving at about 5:15 PM, and we are ready for a nap by about 7PM.*

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## Random Thoughts Al Mongeon

We are at a point where the “Greatest Generation” is all but gone and the V-N generation is beginning to go rapidly, that it is more important than ever to remind people to be sure to include some thought and plan as to what the disposition of their various collection military-related or otherwise, is their desire. If it's to be to a museum, it is a good idea to contact the proposed recipient. In spite of how you may see your collection, frequently, it may not fit in their collection but they will be able to point you in a better direction.

The other thing that is needed is to take part in a taped interview of their careers. We have people in our midst that have unique personal connection to numerous operations, studies, or even day-to-day work that, from a historical perspective must be saved.

# Weather—1W0X1

## **Mission**

One factor plays a major role in the success of any military operation - the weather. Weather persons analyze and forecast atmospheric weather and space environment conditions for military decision-makers. They work in a fast-paced, computer-intensive job environment and travel around the world to support Air Force and Army operations. Throughout their training and careers, Air Force weather persons gain an in-depth understanding of the Earth's atmosphere and how to predict changes using satellite, radar and computer models. They also study how to decode weather messages and use automated systems to plot the information on charts.

## **Qualifications**

For entry into this Air Force specialty, applicants must be able to speak distinctly, possess normal color vision as outlined in AFI 48-123, Medical Examination and Standards, have a general score of 66 on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test and be eligible for a Secret clearance.

## **Training**

Training to become a certified member of the Air Force's weather team consists of several stages. New trainees will attend the Weather Forecaster Apprentice Course at Keesler Air Force Base, Miss., and eight-month course that teaches students the basics of meteorology and weather forecasting. Upon graduation from this course, apprentices will be assigned to an Operational Weather Squadron, where they are teamed with experienced trainer for extensive certification, qualification and upgrade training for a period of 18 to 24 months. Following this training, weather apprentices return to Keesler AFB to attend the three-month Weather Observer Course, and are usually then reassigned to an Air Force weather squadron or detachment.

From af.mil Fact Sheet

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