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Prez Prose

Jason VanOverbeke, President

To all USAFA Grads in the Minnesota area:
 A few short months ago I was lamenting the long winter and looking forward to summer, so I think it's safe to say I think we're all enjoying the summer that's here. And just like that, it's another season and time for another newsletter. We held our 2023 Heritage Dinner in May. It was another incredibly successful event. We had over 120 graduates, parents, and guests attend and we recognized over 20 appointees to the class of 2027 from Minnesota and Western Wisconsin. I would like to extend a big thank you to Denny Sultany and Rick Knoll from the TCAAOG side and the Parent's Club committee for putting together a wonderful evening. And for the second year in a row, express our gratitude to Scott Sather for hosting us at their hanger at Flying Cloud airport. It is always gratifying to see so many grads and to meet and learn about the cadets and appointees who will be leading in our Air Force now and for years to come.
 Remember to keep an eye on your emails and the TCAAOG website to stay apprised of current and upcoming events.

We have the St Croix River Cruise coming up this fall (always a great time), and between us and the Parent's Club, there's continually something going on. Finally, as a reminder, our open membership meetings are the third Tuesday of each month at the Bloomington VFW at 1730. All meetings are open to grads, so feel free to stop by and join us.

On a personal note, this will be my last Prez Prose. Back in January, I began a new job that is proving to be very time consuming. Because I'm unable to give the TCAAOG the time you deserve from a board president, I decided not to run again for that position. At our June Board of Director's meeting, Curt Brown was elected President and I have no doubt with Curt's extensive background and dedication to organizations such as ours, he will be a tremendous leader. I would like to thank everyone on the Board of Directors, the Parent's Club and the entire Twin Cities area grad community for all your support and for what you do. It has been a pleasure and an honor to serve you.

I'll be sure to see you all around at our events.

Jason VanOverbeke, President



TCA AOG Chapter Distinguished Graduate award 2023, Zachary R. Turcotte, 2000

Zach grew up in Roseville and was an All-Conference heavyweight wrestler. He flew the KC-135 in Operations Northern Watch, Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom with a permanent base at Grand Forks AFB. He then joined the North Dakota Air National Guard and flew the Predator drone for four years. For the past few years, Zach has been a financial advisor for AXA Advisors – now Equitable Advisors - where he helps individuals and small businesses build, implement and maintain a financial plan which helps them achieve their financial goals. Zach met Jessica while traveling in Europe after graduating from the U. S. Air Force Academy. They married and have a daughter, Zoe and a son, Liam. Zach has an MBA from the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota.

The initial organizational meeting of the Minnesota Chapter was held on May 18, 2011, with a representative of the USAFA National AOG present. Zach was at that meeting and was selected as a "Founding Board Member." He has remained in this role ever since. In addition to that position, Zach volunteered to head the Membership Committee and to be the internet contact person. Once again, Zach has continued to serve as our Chapter contact leader since that date.

For his efforts as a loyal Board member, Committee Chair and strong supporter of our Chapter – as well as a frequent attendee at Chapter events and functions, I proudly announce Zach Turcotte as our TCAAOG Chapter Distinguished Graduate for the year 2023.

Thomas W.C. Wilson, '61

President Emeritus

Heritage Dinner Recap

The 2023 Heritage Dinner was another great evening in a long string of wonderful events celebrating the founding of the Air Force Academy and recognizing graduates, cadets, appointees, parents and families.

As you all know (or at least you should know), each spring we celebrate when President Eisenhower signed the bill authorizing the founding of the Air Force Academy on 1 April 1954. In order to be recognized a Distinguished AOG Chapter, we are required to have an event to celebrate that anniversary. Rather than make it solely about graduates, the TCAAOG board partners with the MN USAFA Parents Club. Therefore, we celebrate not just the founding of the Academy, but our shared heritage of past, president, and future graduates.

Our excellent MC and fellow board member, Pete Swanson '95, used his class connections to get the Commandant of Cadets and MN native, BGen Paul Moga '95 to be our featured speaker for a second year in a row. BGen Moga spoke about how he is training cadets to be the future leaders of the Air Force and in America, as well as current projects and changes at USAFA including the Chapel renovation, Falcon Stadium modernization and new visitor center. We also recognized over 20 appointees to the class of 2027 and had over 120 grads, parents, guests, and families attend.



BGen Moga speaks to cadets



Class of '27 appointees with Curt Brown '78 and his T-6



USAF Commandant of Cadets BGen Moga, '95



Socializing during dinner



Master of Ceremonies Col Swanson '95 with classmate BGen Moga '95

These and other pictures are available on the photographer's website until 24 July.

<https://meghanswansonphotography.pixieset.com/aog2023/>

To view, enter your personal email and use the following password, 1995

To download photos use pin 9540



ALO Update

Here the latest application numbers from our region (ND, SD, Eastern Nebraska, MN, Western Iowa and Western Wisconsin.) Last year for the region (Class '26) we had 308 total applications with 37 accepted appointments, not including blue chip athletes. This year (Class of '27) our region had 315 total applications and 49 appointments accepted not including athletes. We had a slight uptick in applications from our region but had a substantial 32% increase in appointments being accepted.

For Minnesota specifically, we had 145 applications last year (Class '26) with 19 accepted appointments for an appointment percentage of 13%. This year (Class of '27) we had 131 total applications in the state with 23 accepted appointments for an appointment percentage of 17.5%. That is a significant increase in success rate for applicants in Minnesota this year.

As far as ALO staffing, we had a net loss of 5 this year. We currently have 19 active ALO's handling over 950 schools. I know the goal used to be 40 ALOs for MN, so we are operating well below those numbers.

Ed Zarembo, ALO



'99 Grad and the We Defy Foundation

There is always a need for veteran's services, and one of our local grads, TJ "Blitz" Kreutzer '99 is helping meet those needs for veterans nationwide.

We Defy Foundation (WDF, www.wedefyfoundation.org) is a 501(c)(3) that sponsors combat veterans coping with military connected disabilities a long term means to overcome their challenges through Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and fitness training. To date, the organization has provided over 900 one year Jiu Jitsu scholarships to deserving combat veterans, 11 of them in Minnesota. WDF provides these scholarships by vetting and partnering with local small business and providing the veteran's tuition directly to them. The fitness and community aspects of Jiu Jitsu are ideal mechanisms for post traumatic growth and reintegration into civilian life after service. Each scholarship affects not only the veterans themselves, but also their loves ones, as they progress through the program.

TJ “Blitz” Kreutzer, USAFA class of ’99, serves as the Vice President and Director of Operations of WDF and resides in Lakeville. He recently represented WDF at the second annual cadet “Barracks Brawl” tournament at USAFA and trained with the Air Force Combatives instructor team.

We Defy Foundation is currently seeking sponsorships (starting at the \$1,000 level) and auction items for their upcoming Gala for Growth on September 23rd in Dallas. TJ can be reached at tjkreutzer@wedefyfoundation.org if you would like to learn more!



WDF Founder Joey Bozik, injured in Iraq, practicing Jiu Jitsu



TJ “Blitz” Kreutzer and Col Marcus Corbett ’98 from the USAFA Physical Ed program

The meaning of the Flag Draped Coffin

A United States burial casket flag drapes the casket of deceased veterans to honor the memory of their service to the country. The ceremonial folding and presentation of the flag is a moving tribute of lasting importance to the veteran’s family. The flag is placed on a closed casket so the union blue field is at the head and over the left shoulder of the deceased. The flag-folding ceremony represents the same religious principles on which our country was originally founded. The portion of the flag denoting honor is the canton of blue containing the stars representing the states our veterans served in uniform. The canton field of blue dresses from left to right and is inverted when draped as a pall on a casket of a veteran who has served our country in uniform.

“While Public Law 94-344 does not place any significance or meaning to the thirteen folds of the American flag, the sentiments below have been adopted as a tradition by veterans and family members of veterans of our great nation as they reflect what we recognize about our flag and our country. They give meaning and hope to those family members who have lost a loved one who served in our great nation’s military preserving and fighting for our freedoms.

After Taps is played, the flag is carefully folded into the symbolic tri-cornered shape. A properly proportioned flag will fold thirteen times on the triangles, representing the original thirteen colonies with each fold representing a uniqueness of its own. The folded flag is emblematic of the tri-cornered hat worn by the Patriots of the American Revolution. When folded, no red or white stripe is to be evident, leaving only the blue field with stars.

Chapter Events: Past And Future

Upcoming events: You can always check for the latest event updates on our website tcausafaaog.org

or on Facebook [Minnesota Twin Cities Area United States Air Force Academy AOG Group](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1573865806263936)
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1573865806263936>

MN Parents Club

- **Parent's Night Out!** The USAFA Parents Club of MN club would like to invite AOG members to join them for their July 13 get together. See link to sign up.
 - **Thursday, July 13, 5-7pm - Cracked Barrel Winery**, 570 Coulee Trail, Hudson, WI
 - Please RSVP [July 2023 PNO RSVP - Google Sheets](#) (To open from a computer hold CTRL button then click on link

Fourth annual Military Appreciation Family Day at the Farm

Saturday, September 9, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (gates open at 9:30 a.m.)

1500 West 200th Street, Jordan

Every Third Saturday is excited to announce their partnership with Sutton Ridge Farm at the fourth annual “Military Appreciation Family Day at the Farm”.

New this year: A Service Flag presentation ceremony and a Parachute jump by Navy Seals from the Patriot Parachute Team.



This one-day event is set aside to thank and honor our military veterans who continue to sacrifice past their days of active service. Military members (active duty, reservists/National Guard, retired) and their families are invited to come, as well as the general public.

Get more info and register at www.everythirdsaturday.org/familyday

Want to be a sponsor for this event? Contact Jennifer at Profarm@frontiernet.net.

Service Flag Tradition

Calling all immediate family members of active-duty service members in the Armed Forces of the United States (including Reservists and National Guard) and Gold star family members.

During this event you will have an opportunity to accept an American Service Flag on behalf of your active -duty military service member.

Here's what you need to do:

- Email Jennifer at Profarm@frontiernet.net to request a form
- Fill it out and email it back to her. Save it as a .pdf file
- Deadline for application: August 1, 2023 (Do it now, so you don't forget)
- Family members must be present to receive the Service Flag during the presentation ceremony to be held on September 9, 2023 at the Sutton Ridge Farm Military Appreciation Family Day at the Farm event.

Service Flags are provided by a private donor at no cost for military families. Find out more at www.serviceflagtradition.com

Save the date

Fall St Croix Dinner Cruise
Save the date Sunday Sep 17
1200-1500 Details to follow

Annual Fall Bourbon tasting -
Look for time and details later



This Newsletter Is Possible Thanks To These Great Sponsors



TCA AOG Key Personnel Roster

Twin Cities Area Chapter - USAFA Association of Graduates June 2023

If you need to contact the board, please use our new email USAFA.TCA.AOG@gmail.com

Chapter Officers

President	Curt Brown '78
Vice President	Mike Reiss '67
Secretary	Ed "Skip" Wipson, '88
Treasurer	Rick Knoll '65
Legal Advisor	Charlie Nelson '96
President Emeritus	Tom Wilson '61

Board Members (10) with term expiration included:

Name (spouse)	Term Expiration
Denny Sultany '64	2026
Mike Reiss '67	2026
Ed "Skip" Wipson '88	2026
Tom Wilson '61	2024
Bob Hockman '89 (Christine)	2024
Pete Swanson '95 (Angela)	2024
Curt Brown, '78 (Mary)	2024
Terry Flower '64 (Margaret)	2025
Rick Knoll '65 (Kathe)	2025
Zach Turcotte '00 (Jessica)	2025

Committee Chairpersons

Advanced Education	Terry Flower '64
ALO Programs	Ed Zarembo '07
Financial and Budget	Rick Knoll '65/Terry Flower '64
Fundraising	Open
Membership	Zach Turcotte '00
Parents' Club Coord	Bob '89 & Christine Hockman
Newsletter	Tom Wilson '61