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Prez Prose

Curt Brown, President

To all fellow USAFA Grads in the Minnesota/Wisconsin area: The season is changing and the summer is almost over. The kids are back in school, the State Fair is over, and the leaves are starting to turn. Things have also changed here at your AOG. Due to work requirements and a job change, Jason has stepped down from his role as our President. We will truly miss him in this role but he is still very committed to being a big part of our AOG. I was elected to replace Jason as President by the Board. I'm truly honored to have been elected to fill this role. Jason and Tom Wilson, our two past Presidents, have set the bar very high for me. I endeavor to continue the great leadership that we have enjoyed and will continue to keep the bar high for our amazing Chapter.

So a little about my USAFA history. I started in 1974 in Cadet Squadron 39. It was a big awakening for me, having come from a very small town in North Carolina. After making it through my first year, I moved to Cadet Squadron

36, where I spent my remaining three years. I graduated in 1978 with the class motto "78 IS GREAT". Back then, I had no contact with an AOG Chapter or Parents Club. They did not exist where I was from. I only had my parents, family, and friends to support my endeavor. My parents had no group to help support them either, they were on their own, waiting for my weekly collect phone call to catch up. This is why I believe so strongly in the AOG mission and the Parents Club. At the Academy, I received the education, confidence, and leadership skills for a very successful career culminating in being selected as a NASA astronaut. As Academy Alumni, we earned our rings and now it's time to support our fellow Grads and our future Grads. The way we do this is by getting involved and sharing our stories and experiences. Fellow Grads learn from our experiences whether it's in the Military or our personal careers. We are all family. USAFA laid a foundation from which every Grads' career was forged.

As the new President of our Chapter, I have two goals. First, to continue the outstanding history of our Chapter. We have been recognized as one of the top performing Chapters in the country, and we will continue that performance. My second goal is a little more challenging, as it deals with participation. We have a great Chapter, but what would make it even better is more participation from our local Grads. I was aware of our AOG Chapter years ago but due to my job/schedule, I did not get involved. However, in hind sight, my excuse was lame. I now understand how important it is to participate in an organization like our Chapter. After attending our Heritage dinners, meeting the current local Cadets, and meeting fellow Alumni at our events, I realize now how much I have missed. Recently, we had to cancel out River Cruise event due to low signup. Out of our entire Chapter, we only had 17 folks signed up. I'm not sure why participation is low, but I'm willing to listen, learn and hopefully together we can increase our numbers for future events. And we do have other events coming up soon, so we look forward to seeing you at one of these. If you have ideas, other events, or other ways to get together, I'm open for help and suggestions. The AOG Board is open to hearing your inputs about ways to improve and encourage more Grad participation.

As the saying goes, "My door is always open". My email is curtbrown11@gmail.com and I welcome your emails. I'm sure you have seen our emails from TCA.AOG@gmail.com and we will continue to keep you updated on future activities. Please visit our website at (<http://tcausafoog.org/>) for more info on our Chapter. Finally, as a reminder, our open Board meetings are on the third Tuesday of each month at the Bloomington VFW at 1730, social hour starts at 1700. All meetings are open to Grads and we would love to see you there next month. Thank you for allowing me to lead this exemplary Chapter. We will continue our outstanding Chapter support of our Grads and future Grads. Please get involved, you will be amazed at how quickly you revert to your Academy days!

Curt Brown, President

IMA Airman recognized as community leader



Maj Jason Van Overbeke speaks at TCA AOG 2023 Heritage Dinner

- Published Sept. 15, 2023
- By TSgt Cierra Presentado
- HQ RIO Public Affairs

BUCKLEY SPACE FORCE BASE, Colorado -- An Airman assigned as an individual mobilization augmentee (IMA) to the Air Force Office of Special Investigations, Investigations, Collections and Operations Nexus (ICON) Center, was recently recognized for his hard work and dedication to the veteran community in his local area.

Special Agent (Major) Jason VanOverbeke is part of the IMA program in the Air Force Reserve. While he is recognized as an outstanding agent in his unit, he has also left a great mark in his community as the local chapter Board President of the United States Air Force Academy, Twin Cities Area Association of Graduates (TCA-AOG).

Starting out as a member of the board of directors in 2016, VanOverbeke was always involved with the program. It was not long after, that his fellow board members recognized his contributions and selected him to be the vice president of the program, and soon after, the president.

"I was grateful for the opportunity to be selected as president of the TCA-AOG," he said. "We do a lot for the veteran community and to be the lead of that has been such a great experience."

Under his leadership, VanOverbeke marshals the talents and resources of Air Force Academy graduates to support and serve veterans in the community, distributing more than \$10k to veterans who are injured, ill, or experiencing hardship.

"Throughout the year, we put together events to support our vets," he said. "As a group, we hold social activities such as scotch tastings, river cruises, and we also celebrate the founding of the Air Force Academy which we call our Heritage Dinner. This is one of our larger events where we celebrate the combined heritage of the academy and the Air Force at large where we partner with the parents club for current cadets and we recognize the appointees who will be attending the academy in the next year and

the graduates to celebrate our shared heritage of being in the Air Force.”

During the events, VanOverbeke and his team hosts fundraisers and donates the proceeds to support other veterans causes such as the AFA Foundation and Holbrook Farms who services widowed spouses of service members killed in action. They also stay on the lookout for other volunteer operations to help organize for the local community.

“I provide the leadership to make some of those decisions and I’ll run our business meetings and set the agenda and coordinate the various activities we choose to do,” he said. “We’re just trying to help our fellow veterans and make the world a better place.”

Although VanOverbeke stays busy all year round, his most memorable moment with the program is the heritage dinner.

“One of the things that I am proud of is the heritage dinner,” he said. “Although our local chapter is small, we actually had the largest celebration out of any other chapter in the world for the AFA-AG. Despite not being the biggest the chapter, we have an activity that a lot of people are aware of and want to come to and celebrate. Its nice to be recognized and see the close coordination that we get with the parent’s club to put on what I think is a really great event. Being able to be a part of that and help make that happen is something I am happy and proud to be a part of.”

Not only does VanOverbeke support veterans in his free time, but he also supports the military during his everyday job working for BAE Systems Inc., as a program manager. He works with the vertical launch system making equipment for guided missile ships for the U.S Navy.

“As a defense contractor with BAE, the work that I do directly supports the Navy. I really appreciate the opportunity to continue to serve and have another way of supporting active-duty military and proving them with some of the equipment that is used today. We’re not just making stuff to give to the military, the military are my people so there’s an impact there. I have friends and classmates in the air force that are using the equipment that we’re making. It’s really nice to continue that service in my civilian capacity.”

When asked how he balances being an OSI agent, a board president and a program manager, he shares that with the help of his wife, he has a routine in place and calendar reminders.

“It can be a bit of a challenge, but once you get into a routine, it becomes pretty easy to stay on top of tasks,” he said. “If I’m overloaded or need help, I don’t hesitate to reach out to the great people I work with whether it be with my civilian job or the board or in my OSI Reserve career. Reaching out for help or relying on them for those gentle reminders is always a useful skill.”

VanOverbeke shares that coming out the Air Force teaches a lot of things such as self-discipline, the need to be organized and be aware of what’s going on around you. The ability to recognize and set priorities and address changing priorities. A lot of the success he has can be attributed to the skills and character he developed being in the military. The Reserves is an opportunity for him to continue to give back and use those skills to excel.

“We are incredibly proud to have Maj VanOverbeke on our OSI team,” said Col Jennifer Steel, IMA to the commander, OSI Center. “He is an excellent example of the way in which one total force Airman makes a tremendous impact not only amongst his Air Force family, but also within his community. We look forward to watching Jason’s Air Force career excel and are grateful that the leaders in the Twin Cities also recognize they have such a valuable asset.”

USAFA Parents Club of MN



Parents from MN at the Parents Weekend Football Game

The Parents' Club of MN kicked off their 2023-2024 academic year with an exciting (and hot) **Parents Weekend** in Colorado Springs. Many MN/western WI cadets were involved or featured at Parent Weekend events, including the Parade and the Football Game:

- C1C Georgia Beutler (Wayzata) is on Wings of Blue (WOB) and jumped into both Parade and Falcon Stadium during Parents Weekend and C2C Anika Sather (Chanhassen) is also on WOB.
- C1C Tyson Geerdes (Fairmont) is the enthusiastic Drum Major for the Drum and Bugle Corps, and C3C Dylan Meiners (Owatonna) is also in the Drum and Bugle Corp.
- C1C Kaija Weishalla (Bertha) led CS 13 onto the field as the Squadron Commander for CS 13.
- C1C Evan Komschlies (Minnetonka) and C2C Logan O'Neill (Farmington) are on the Falconry team and performed prior to the Parade and during the football halftime.

We have many football team members from MN including:

- C1C Ethan Jackman (Chaska) who is a starter on the offensive line.
- C3C Samuel Floysand (Cottage Grove)
- C3C Zachary Juckel (Lakeville)
- C4C Charles Gleason (Stillwater)
- C4C Devin Jordan (Eden Prairie)
- C4C Logan Lehrer (Prior Lake)

Currently, there are 83* cadets from MN/western WI who signed the privacy release and who are on the Parents Club list to receive Parent Club support. 22 – C1Cs. 15 – C2Cs. 21 – C3Cs, 25 – C4Cs

* There are additional cadets at USAFA from MN, however if they do not sign the privacy release form, the Parents club does not have their name and therefore they are not included in the count.

Friday September 22 was **Job Drop**, a big day for our firsties! Even though the number of pilot slots was down this year (320), quite a few MN cadets received pilot slots. We know of some other jobs selections for MN cadets in Space Force, Cyberspace Ops, Aerospace physiologist, and we are still learning job drop news from other MN cadets.

Planning is taking place for the annual **All Academy Ball** scheduled for December 29, 2023. More information can be found here: <https://www.mnacademyball.org>



ALO Update

Fellow grads,

We are up to 116 applications for Minnesota and as a team have interviewed 11 applicants from out of state as of today. It's still early for interviews, most will start happening later in October-December with some even extending into the new year. We have new leadership both at the regional level with a new region 3 director LtCol Christopher M. Palacios and we have a new Director of Admissions, Col Candice L. Pipes, Class of 1998. Her mission statement is as follows...*USAFA Admissions seeks, recruits, and delivers a diverse group of young men and women who possess the attributes and drive to become officers of character, ready to lead the United States Air Force and Space Force in service to our Nation.* She has been in the job for 45 days now and is starting to get her feet under her in terms of taking charge of the organization. The three areas she wants to improve are modernization, marketing, drive to completion.

The new regional director, LT Col Christopher M. Palacios is quite interested on continuing to be involved as much as possible with the AOG. Some of the things that the AOG can do is to help enhance/boost credibility within influencer circles ie. Parents, coaches, counselors, pastors etc. Any way grads can help get the word out about the Air Force Academy is welcome. The more applicants we get, the better the appointees will be. One interesting fact that I learned this weekend working with one of the Admissions Advisers (the 2LT's that graduate and serve their first assignment as recruiters and advisors for the Academy) is that even though we post numbers of 10,000 plus applicants for around 1000 appointees in the last few years, typically only around 3500 actually finish the entire application. So the lesson learned is if you have contact with someone that is applying, encourage them to FINISH their application and get their applications in for nominations; the chances may be better than you think if you actually complete the entire process, IE "drive to completion".

Ed Zarembo, ALO

Falcon Stadium Modernization

If you have watched any of the activities at Falcon Stadium this year, you may have noticed the construction on the cadet side of the stadium. This is part of one of the largest upgrade and modernization efforts in the 60 year history of the stadium. The biggest change will be a completely new entrance and upper seating area on the east side. The project is scheduled to be completed by the 2024 football season. Check out the website and see the upgrades being made!



East side upper stands/entrance removed



Planned new East side entrance and stands



<https://falconstadium.org/>

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

By Tom Wilson, '61

I have thought about an article like this for a while now. What convinced me to write it was the recent lack of participation signing up for our St. Croix River Cruise. The end result was that we had to cancel the cruise because only 17 individuals registered – with about 10 grads and some guests plus a very few from the MN Parents Club. Don't get me wrong, I realize a trip like this is not for everyone, especially those with family conflicts and other activities.

That being said, any Chapter activity is an opportunity to either meet other grads or – better yet – to meet with your own classmates that you haven't seen for some time. What a simple way to connect or reconnect. Take advantage of meeting some place other than your home and let someone else do the cooking and entertaining. Not a bad idea.

I just turned 84 a few days ago and decided to take some time to reflect on my life. I was very fortunate to meet and marry my soul mate. We were married for about 58 and ½ years and agreed shortly before Judy died, that if we had it to do all over again, WE WOULD!!! You might have some idea as to how that makes it somewhat easier for me to get through each day without her.

I am telling you this because it was during my "cadet" years that I got to know Judy and we fell deeply in love. We married 10 days after my graduation and began our life together – just as many of you have done.

My point – finally – is that without my education at USAFA, I have no idea how my life would have turned out and who I would have shared it with. I realize that graduating from the Academy had no guarantees. It did, however, give you and me a head start on a terrific career. For those who chose to resign before retirement, it also provided you with an awesome "beginning" resume to pursue whatever vocation you sought.

Did you ever wonder where would you be today without your Academy experience???

With that said, why don't you consider some - or more - participation in our chapter activities and meetings. Every one of you has something to add to helping us meet our mission and goals. I am not asking for money (which, by the way, is always appreciated) but just the opportunity to meet more of you and for you to meet more of your fellow grads. We are "military" brothers and sisters after all.

Over time I hope to expand this "Food for Thought" with some of your ideas, thoughts and opinions. Please do consider sharing those with me or one of our board members. We do encourage that!!!

Cheers and "GO FALCONS!!!" Beat Everybody!!!

Chapter Events: Past And Future

November 14 Veteran's Day and Couples dinner



For the past several years we have been celebrating our service in the Air Force at Mancini's Char House in St. Paul. Mancini's was voted Minnesota's best supper club and Pat Mancini is big supporter of service men and women. He will provide us a special treat this fall. We can have our choice of a grilled steak, chicken, or walleye, accompanied with baked potato or green beans and appetizers too. The family steakhouse is noted for their mouth watering sirloin steak but also for its friendly atmosphere, cheerful servers and comfortable environment. We hope you will join us as we renew friendships and celebrate the past year. You don't have to be a couple to come, just bring yourself! Mancini's has put out a fabulous spread for us in the past.

CVENT sign up soon for head count, look for it soon via email, website and facebook
6:00 P.M. Social- 6:30 PM. Dinner
Cost \$27, cash collected at dinner, covers dinner and tip.

Save the date:

The fall bourbon/whiskey tasting has been postponed but look for our very popular Robert Burns Day-Scotch tasting coming again in January!



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

tcausafaaog.org

or Facebook **Minnesota Twin Cities Area United States Air Force Academy AOG Group**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1573865806263936>

This Newsletter Is Possible Thanks To These Great Sponsors



TCA AOG Key Personnel Roster

Twin Cities Area Chapter - USAFA Association of Graduates October 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