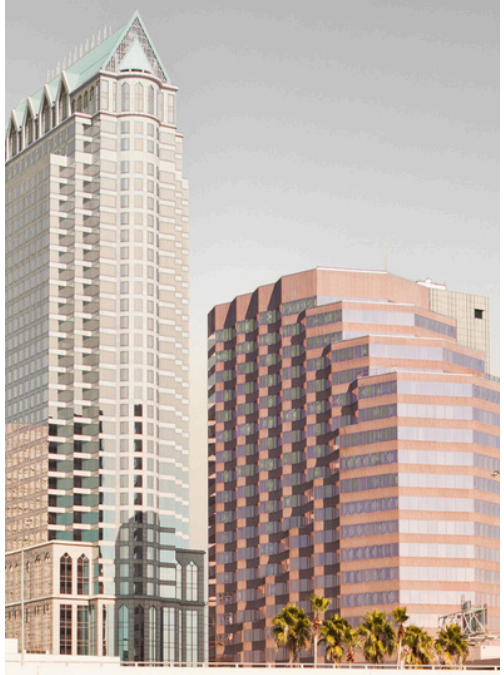


WATERMAN-TWINING CHAPTER #316

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2026

AFA MISSION

"Promote dominant U.S. Air and Space Forces as the foundation of a strong National Defense; to honor and support our Airmen, Guardians, and their Families; and to remember and respect our enduring Heritage."

AFA hopes to have 1 million members in the next 5 years. In March 2026, AFA began Stage 1, which is called Mission Membership. If AFA had contact information, that individual was given a free 1-year membership as a Mission Member and assigned to an AFA Chapter. As a result, the AFA total membership grew from 150,000 to 370,000 and the Waterman-Twining Chapter membership jumped from about 1,200 members to over 2,100 members. If you are receiving this Newsletter, you might be a new Chapter member and not even be aware of that. If you are a new member, welcome. If you were already a Chapter member, I hope you are doing well.

To find out what our Chapter does for the local community, go to our Website at **waterman-twining.afa.org** and look under the Chapter Activities Tab. Under the Latest News Tab, look at the AFA National Convention and the Waterman Chapter Meeting to find out more useful information.

If you see an area which interests you and you want to help the Chapter, I can guarantee I will only ask you for help in that one area.

Bill Yucuis
Waterman-Twining Chapter
President



WATERMAN-TWINING CHAPTER #316

NEWSLETTER

CHAPTER OFFICERS

President: Bill Yucuis

VP: Edward “EJ” O’Brien

Treasurer: Emily Farkas

Secretary: Mike Lezaun

VP for Education: Teri Weide

VP for Communications: Gage Spencer

WEBSITE

HTTPS://WATERMAN-TWINING.AFA.ORG/

FACEBOOK

HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/PROFILE.PHP?ID=61575065742335#

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CHAPTER NEWS

REMEMBERING DESERT SHIELD AND DESERT STORM

The Waterman-Twining Chapter and Veterans Council of Hillsborough County held a heritage event March 6 commemorating the 35th anniversary of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. More than 150 veterans attended at Hillsborough County Veterans Memorial Park, where five veterans representing the Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Special Operations were recognized. Lt. Gen. David Deptula, USAF (Ret.), served as keynote speaker. The event also brought together representatives from MacDill Air Force Base, U.S. Central Command, U.S. Special Operations Command, Hillsborough County and the local veterans community. The event received local recognition and state and national AFA awards for the Chapter. Following its success, the Chapter plans to make the commemoration an annual event.


Lt. Gen. (Ret.) David Deptula speaking


Audience at ceremony

WATERMAN-TWINING CHAPTER RECOGNIZED WITH MULTIPLE AFA AWARDS


Bill Yucuis accepts the Unit Exceptional Service Award for Heritage at the 2026 AFA Field Awards Dinner

The Waterman-Twining Chapter and several members received state and national recognition during the 2026 AFA award cycle. At the national level, Mike Lezaun and Joe Muhlberger received Medals of Merit, Emily Farkas received an Exceptional Service Award, and the Chapter received an Aerospace Education Achievement Award. The Chapter also received the Unit Exceptional Service Award for Heritage for its March 2026 event commemorating the 35th anniversary of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. At the state level, Waterman-Twining members received several individual and Chapter awards, including recognition for the Desert Shield and Desert Storm commemoration. The awards recognize Chapter members' work in advocacy, education, community outreach, military support and heritage activities.

ADVOCATE

BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITY AND MILITARY CONNECTIONS



Tampa Chamber of Commerce Military Appreciation



Emily Farkas receiving an award

Advocacy remains an important part of the Waterman-Twining Chapter's mission. The Chapter participates in organizations throughout the Tampa Bay community, including the Tampa Bay Defense Alliance and the Tampa Chamber of Commerce.

Emily Farkas serves on the Tampa Chamber of Commerce's Military Affairs Committee and is preparing to take a leadership role with the committee. The Chapter is also working to establish stronger connections with the South Tampa Chamber of Commerce.

At the national level, AFA's current advocacy priorities include Air Force readiness and recapitalization, Space Force resources, military family housing, counter-unmanned aircraft systems, base defense and support for the Defense Civilian Training Corps.

The Chapter's goal is to connect these broader priorities with the needs of the local military and aerospace community.

EDUCATE

EXPANDING STEM AND EDUCATION OUTREACH

The Waterman-Twining Chapter continues to support STEM education throughout the Tampa Bay area.

Chapter activities include support for AFA STEM programs such as StellarXplorers and CyberPatriot, participation in school events, support for AFJROTC and Civil Air Patrol, and the Chapter's annual Teacher of the Year program.

During June, Bill Yucuis presented at the Hillsborough County Leadership Mini-Conference at Wharton High School. His presentation covered NASA's Artemis mission as well as AFA STEM programs, including Educator Grants, Teacher of the Year, StellarXplorers and CyberPatriot.

The Chapter also presented its 2026 Teacher of the Year award to Edie Dorrel of Florida College Academy.

Looking ahead, the Chapter hopes to reach all 12 AFJROTC units within its area and increase its contacts with local Civil Air Patrol units.


Bill Yucuis presenting


Teachers at Mini-Conference


Teri Weide at Henando HS AFJROTC Awards


Edie Morrell, TOY

SUPPORT

SUPPORTING MILITARY FAMILIES IN TAMPA BAY


Talking with MacDill Airmen


MacDill Spouses Event


Blue Star Families Event

The Chapter continues to support Airmen, Guardians and military families in the Tampa Bay area.

One of the Chapter's community partners is Blue Star Families, which provides support to military families throughout the Tampa area.

Waterman-Twining members have volunteered at Blue Star Families events in the past and plan to continue supporting upcoming events at MacDill Air Force Base.

The Chapter also works with MacDill organizations to support newcomers, families and Airmen through activities such as monthly newcomer briefings, professional development and family events.

Chapter officers recently met with the 6th Air Refueling Wing commander, Col. Eley, and Command Chief CMSgt Ottenwess, to discuss additional ways the Chapter can support MacDill personnel. Plans include quarterly professional-development events and expanded support for military spouses.

ARNOLD AIR SOCIETY

WATERMAN-TWINING CHAPTER AND USF AAS STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIP

The Waterman-Twining Chapter is continuing to strengthen its relationship with the Arnold Air Society Gen. James V. Hartinger Squadron at the University of South Florida. Arnold Air Society (AAS) is a professional, honorary organization for Air Force ROTC cadets focused on leadership, professional development and community service. AAS members are also Chapter members, and the Chapter provides financial and organizational support for AAS activities. Moving forward, the Chapter hopes to increase two-way participation, with members supporting AAS activities and cadets assisting with Chapter events and volunteer opportunities.

USF AAS AT NATCON

Ten USF Air Force ROTC Detachment 158 cadets attended the 2026 Arnold Air Society National Conclave (NATCON) in Dallas, April 3-7. The conference brought together AAS and Silver Wings members for leadership development, professional networking and discussions with military and aerospace leaders. Nathan Grafton received the AAS Commander's Award for his service as Region IV commander. The Waterman-Twining Chapter supported the cadets' participation through financial assistance.

USF AAS BEGINS NEW SEMESTER

The AAS Gen. James V. Hartinger Squadron at USF has started the semester with approximately 30 new candidates on track to become AAS and Air & Space Forces Association members. Waterman-Twining Chapter officers plan to visit an AAS meeting later this semester to support and strengthen the partnership.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Great American Teach-In
Nov. 19, 2026 | Hillsborough County
Chapter members will have an opportunity to participate in the Great American Teach-In and share their professional and military experiences with local students. The Chapter plans to use the event to highlight AFA STEM programs and aerospace education.

Blue Star Families Event
Nov. 19, 2026 | MacDill AFB
Blue Star Families is planning a military-family support event at MacDill AFB. The Chapter expects to participate as volunteers. Final time and location information will be posted when available.

AAS Region IV Conclave
Nov. 20-22, 2026 | Orlando
The University of South Florida Arnold Air Society will participate in the Region IV Regional Conclave. Waterman-Twining will continue its support of the USF squadron and its activities.

Blue Star Families Event
Dec. 17, 2026 | MacDill AFB
Another Blue Star Families event is tentatively scheduled for December. These events provide food, household goods and toys to military families before the holiday season.

Desert Shield and Desert Storm 36th Anniversary
March 5, 2027 | Hillsborough County Veterans Memorial Park
The Waterman-Twining Chapter plans to again partner with the Veterans Council of Hillsborough County for its annual commemoration of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

GET INVOLVED

The Waterman-Twining Chapter covers Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco, Hernando and Sumter counties, providing opportunities for members throughout the Tampa Bay area to participate.

The Chapter is particularly interested in volunteers for STEM and education programs, military-family support, MacDill activities, community outreach, AFJROTC and CAP engagement, and AAS activities.

The Chapter is also looking for community partners to help support specific programs and activities. Members who know of businesses or organizations interested in supporting local Air and Space Force initiatives are encouraged to contact the Chapter.

For the latest information, visit:
Waterman-Twining AFA Chapter
https://waterman-twining.afa.org/

Advocate. Educate. Support.