

Thank you for this opportunity, Rich.

To each person here, you each represent something very important.

I work in the community with the Air & Space Forces Association, the AFA. For the past year, I have been part of a team asked to find ways to help military recruitment for our nation. Our team, **AIMS**, stands for **AFA Advocates to Inspire Military Service**.

We believe the most important thing veterans can do is to tell their story.

My story? I am the son of a career Coastguardsman. He was the son of a Coastguardsman. My mother's brother served in the Air Force, and mom's dad served four years in the Navy. School always came easy to me, and college was something my parents inspired me to. But when I attended college, I realized I had no idea of what I wanted to do. So, after two years, I decided to join the Air Force - for four years - to gain skills, make some money, and to take advantage of college funding serving could provide.

Well, I enlisted each time for four years I always wanted to be able to get out as quickly as possible. With help from my wife Pam, we decided to stay 20 years when we were offered a European assignment and would have 13 years of service. Retirement benefits at 20 were worth staying. At 20 years we were offered jobs that kept us in service for just over 30 years. I left military service in 2010. Who knew!

Oh, I did follow through on education. During my service I earned an associate's degree in inventory management, bachelor's in business management, and a master's in organizational management. And benefits after separation? Three certifications, and as of this day, I am seven classes into another master's degree in nonprofit management. All contributed to by military service.

And honestly, I still don't know what I want to do, but I have loved all I've done.

I continue to serve as each of you do.

MSgt Zach Hill. Will you make your way to me please. MSgt Hill represents service in uniform. He also serves with me in AFA. I like to think that Zach realized there were some benefits for his military career for serving in AFA. I also like to think that myself, and others in AFA, continue to inspire him to serve because of the community impact we make and the lives we touch. Zach, I want to present you with the first of our new chapter coins that you made happen and thank you for your service. Thank you for inspiring me to keep serving, to share what others instilled in me, and to help you grow and make things happen.



- Present coin -

Terry Thomas. Please make your way to me. You were an Airmen for nearly 30 years. You served at L3 and continue to serve your community in numerous capacities. You represent every aspect of service. You have inspired me to serve and work harder than I ever imagined I would. Thank you!

- Present coin –

Each person here represents service in some capacity. The dignitaries serve. Each person here chose to attend when you could have been somewhere else.

I mentioned one of our new AFA efforts is to inspire military service. You each represent service at a higher level. You represent **MEANINGFUL SERVICE.**

I believe our nation needs to stress the importance of calling its citizens to serve. Serving in a meaningful way, in our houses of worship, our city governments, in nonprofit organizations working to make a difference in people’s lives, and, in ways that demonstrate to others that **SERVICE is meaningful.**

Flag day was officially yesterday. The word flag is defined as *“a piece of cloth or similar material, typically oblong or square, attachable by one edge to a pole or rope and used as the symbol or emblem of a country or institution or as a decoration during public festivals.”*



Eighty years ago, our emblem of the United States was hoisted up on Iwo Jima by a group of Marines who chose service. They chose faithful service to a set of ideals, to a nation, and to each of us here today.

Fifty years ago, some of you here, served in Vietnam. Some by choice, some chosen, but you served when your nation called.

Others served in Iraq, Afghanistan, or other lands where our nation called them.

We need a strong national defense, and we need to honor those who serve – both our military members and their families.

We must remember and respect our enduring heritage. We must remember those who serve or have served.

Many of you serve here in Greenville. In our community, in schools, in worship centers, and in organizations like the Knights of Columbus.

The ideal of service is something needed from citizens, and **we should not take service lightly.** I call each of you to inspire others, by your service, by telling your story of your service – wherever you serve – and to bring them alongside you.





The flag is used to inspire service and to commemorate the loss of our men and women who have served.

Fathers – tomorrow is Father’s Day. Mine inspired me to college, to success, and to service.

Faith – anything we do requires faith. For me, I worship a God who walks with me in all my human frailties and guides me daily. He gives me hope and I hope yours provides you the same.

Friends – they continue to inspire and encourage me to do the best I can in service.

Rich Holsinger, will you make your way to me. Rich, your leadership while I was at L3, your friendship, your being there to support AFA and the work we do inspires me to keep doing it. Your military service, your community service, your work to respect our flag, well that work inspires many.



Please accept this coin as a token of appreciation for your service.

- Present Coin -

Respecting our flag is the purpose of today’s event.

The flag is our nation’s story. The flag guided my story along with a host of family, friends, leaders, and men and women, serving alongside me.

Many of us go forward because of the people on our left and right.

Choose well who you place by your side.

Go forward with them.

Flag can be an acronym.

I ask you each to remember this acronym and to take it to heart. Many did this before us. It is our time to do the same.

F – L – A – G. We need to continue to

Foster the Legacy of America for Generations to come!