

HISTORY OF KITTY HAWK HONOR SOCIETY

During Academic Year (AY) 1971-72, AFJROTC NC-023 initiated a Junior ROTC Air Society to further academic achievement. Lt Col E. H. Cryer, USAF (Ret), Senior Aerospace Science Instructor (SASI), noted a need for a cadet organization to function as a club within the high school activities program. Lt Col Cryer designed the Constitution for the high school level organization in such a way that it would be an academic society with the following board objectives:

1. An incentive for academic excellence Develop an interest in a college education
2. A means for cadets to participate as a club in school activities
3. To provide additional areas for leadership experiences and development

The name Kitty Hawk Air Society (KHAS) was chosen for the organization since it, like AFJROTC, relates to the beginning of aerospace activities. Thirteen above average cadets, from AE-II and AE-III were identified during the first semester and were ready to identify and invited new AE- I cadets to join. Sixteen of thirty cadets invited to join completed a pledge program under a "Big Brother" leadership assistance system. The sixteen successful pledges became active members at a formal "Dining-In" held in April 1972. The Dining-In was extremely popular with the group and it has become an annual affair.

During the organizational phase of development, benevolence, as well as leadership growth, were established as aims of the group. As an example, each year a needy family in our community was given support.

Since initial organization the membership criteria, the objectives, and the aims of the Kitty Hawk have remained basically the same. Headquarters AFROTC was advised of the establishment of KHAS by letter dated 25 July 72. Annual membership exceeded 40 cadets each year since the first year.

During the AFJROTC Workshop in conjunction with the Air Force Association Annual National Convention 16-20 September 1973 in Washington DC, a briefing regarding the KHAS was given by Lt Col Cryer to the JROTC group. All participants indicated an interest in the organization and detailed information was sent to them following the workshop.

During an AFJROTC workshop held at Pope AFB in August 77, Lt Col Cryer gave a briefing regarding KHAS and all participants indicated a sincere interest in forming a similar organization. Each unit represented at the conference was given a detailed information packet.

Announcements regarding KHAS in the AFJROTC Newsletter prompted information packets to be sent to units nationwide

Enthusiastic support for the organization displayed by Lt Col Robert Tickle and Maj Joseph Cafazzo of the Middle Atlantic Area of ROTC was largely responsible for eleven active chapters in the area.

As new units were formed it became appropriate to identify groups as chapters of KHAS. During AY 76-77, the members of the unit at Southern Wayne Senior High School selected "Kill Devil Hill" as the Chapter name to continue the relationship with the origin of powered flight. Also using the letter symbol of the organization, the motto "Keep Honor Above Self" was adopted.

Colonel Lindy C. Gunderson, Commandant, Middle Atlantic Area, AFROTC, contacted Colonel William Bowden, USAF (Ret), President, North Carolina Air Force Association and Colonel Bowden was most agreeable to place it on the agenda of a meeting of North Carolina AFA chapter representatives to be held at Seymour-Johnson AFB on 11 Feb 78.

On 9 Feb 78, Colonel Gunderson organized a luncheon meeting with high school administrators involved with the charter chapter (Kill Devil Hill Chapter) of KHAS. Dr. John K. Wooten, Superintendent of Wayne County Schools, and Mr. Walter G. Fulcher, Principal of Southern Wayne Senior High School attended the meeting and repository for records of the organizations. Also in attendance at the meeting were Lt Col Robert Tickle, Major John G. Rylee of the middle Atlantic Area office and Lt Col Cryer, SASI, Southern Wayne Senior High School.

Colonel Lindy Gunderson introduced the matter of interest of AFJROTC Honor Societies to the North Carolina AFA Executive Council assembled on 11 Feb 78 and Lt Col Cryer presented a detailed briefing on the topic. Mr. Bob Gill, President of the Scott Berkley Chapter of AFA, presented a motion for affiliation with the KHAS. The assembled group was unanimous in their response to a motion to help organize and support a statewide KHAS. Dr. Daniel F. Cathan, National Vice President of AFA, noting the enthusiastic support, suggested that a briefing be prepared for the National Board of AFA. He suggested that national AFA support be solicited stating that the time had arrived for national consideration. Dr. Cathan forwarded a letter to National Air Force Association. Colonel Gunderson confirmed telephonic approval had been received from Brigadier General David B. Easson, Commandant, AFROTC, to proceed in planning a national KHAS.

In January 2023, it was decided to change the name to the Kitty Hawk Honors Society.