

A Word from Willie

Society of Wild Weasels Newsletter
Oct 2025



CINCWW's Corner

Fellow Weasels,

I hope everybody is enjoying the fall weather and getting ready for the Holidays. We put this edition in October but will have a December issue FYSA. In this issue we get a great look at Weasel Happenings, an update on the Reunion (to include the first draft of Annex A for Reunion events). In addition, we have a great interview with Col “Fuego” Tuzel who has been a stalwart supporter of the Society as the 20th OG Commander. He has some really great takes on Command.

We also say goodbye to our Vice Chief in Charge, Maj Gen Abu Gandhi who has been a great friend and superb Wild Weasel. After 3 years plus he will become the Vice Chief Emeritus as he moves to USAFE to take over the A-7 there! Good luck and Blue Skies Abu! I really appreciate your counsel and wisdom the last few years. Our new interim Vice Chief (which we will vote on

for permanence IAW our rules at the Reunion is Peaches Pietras who I have asked to write an introduction for the December issue.

We have a request from Gary Porter for anyone near Fort Wayne Indiana which occurs Aug 5-8, 2026 to present the Wild Weasel Modeler's briefing he built for the one he just gave. Gary is willing to help you but he thought (and I agree) it may be easier for a Weasel near Fort Wayne to give the presentation. Please let me know at Budmanrocketsnow@gmail.com if interested. We also have a chapter below on charitable contributions to either the Wild Weasel Society and/or the Air Warrior Courage Foundation. These are tax deductible and make a great place if you have a minimum distribution going.

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Budman Redmond

Society of Wild Weasels Chief in Charge

YGBSM

FILO

Interview

Col Matthew “Fuego” Tuzel

Editor’s Note: Col Matthew “Fuego” Tuzel just completed his OG CC tour in the 20th Operations Group at Shaw AFB where he was a great friend of the Wild Weasel Society. From ensuring that Shaw Vipers supported flybys for Weasels past - to chairing boards for Grants in honor of Medal of Honor Winner Leo Thorsness over the last few years, he excelled. He has gone on to an assignment in Korea at USFK HQ and we wanted to highlight his experience in Command in this Word from Willie.



The Fuego Family

(1) Tell us a little about yourself

I am coming off a fantastic assignment as the 20th OG/CC and I loved every minute of it. I was born in New Jersey and all my life I wanted to go to the Air Force Academy. I was fortunate to graduate from USAFA in 2001 and then went to Kansas State for an advanced History degree. At K-State I met my beautiful wife Lisa who is from North Dakota. She was also pursuing a Masters degree (in English) at K-State. We are proud parents of Jaxx (a senior) and Elizabeth (a

freshman). From there it was on to pilot training and F-16s. My first F-16 assignment was in the Fiends (HARRUMPH!!!) followed by assignments to the 22 FS at Spangdahlem as a SEAD flight lead and instructor, and to the 422 TES at Nellis AFB as the SEAD lead for Operational Test. I returned to Korea in 2014 as the OPLAN guy for 7 AF. My squadron time was unique - I commanded the 21 FS at Luke, which is Taiwan's F-16 squadron in the U.S. I commanded both Taiwan and US Officers. Most of our support personnel were civilians to include life support. I had the opportunity to go to Taiwan half a dozen times for meetings about the training program and about Taiwan's efforts to convert their Block 20s to Block 70s. The 21 FS flew Block 20 F-16 which incorporated various aspects of both pre-block (Block 32 and prior) and post-block (Block 40-52) F-16. The Block 20 was a light jet and used an analog FLCS. Because of the low gross-weight, it was the only F-16 with a PW-220 that had a good thrust to weight ratio - it was a BFM Machine and tons of fun to fly! (Side note, maybe the most fun I had in that assignment was fighting Hornets at Fallon as part of the Navy's Top Gun BFM Grad Eval). Following Squadron Command I went to the Hoover Institution for a year as a National Security Affairs Fellow for War College - it was a fantastic experience where I met some brilliant and accomplished Americans. Following war college, I completed a few years on ACC staff before taking command of the 20 OG. After my OG assignment I then went to Korea for the USFK staff.

(2) As a fellow USMC School of Advanced Warfighting Graduate what was your paper in the Book a Day club?

I wrote my year-long paper on "Tactics, Technology and the End of America's Precision Advantage" In my post review of my paper I wish I had contacted the money guys in ACC Money as part of my analysis.

Editor's Note: We plan to post this on the website for reading soon.

(3) Tell us about your time as the OG

When I put in my dream sheet for OG, I had been away from the Combat Air Forces (CAF) for quite a while. I desperately wanted to return to the CAF and communicated that to the Colonels Group and the General Officers. I got exactly what I asked for at Shaw - 3 Combat Coded Fighter Squadrons and an OSS.

When I took command on 2 June 2023 my immediate task was to ensure that the 55 FS (Shooters) would be ready to pick up an OPERATION NOBLE EAGLE task on 1 July 2023. The Shooters, commanded by Mach Franks, were well on track and the Wing Commander was confident enough of their preparation that he departed for leave on 25 June. He left me in charge of the wing since the Deputy Wing CC was also going on leave for a few days. (Coincidentally, the Maintenance Group commander was also going on leave.) As he left for leave, the Wing Commander gave me one order: "don't ground the fleet." Two days later, on Tuesday, 27 June, I got a phone call from Deputy Maintenance Commander:

Her: "We might have bad oil in the jets."

Me: "Which squadron?"

Her: "um . . . all of them . . . we think"

I told her I'd call her back and immediately directed the Supervisor of Flying to get all of the airborne jets on the deck and to cancel all takeoff clearances. I then called the Wing Commander to tell him that I violated the one order he gave me.

That was 27 June 2023 at about 1100 EST. All the Shaw Vipers were grounded, we had no estimate for when the fleet would be healthy, and we needed to have 12 combat configured jets ready for NOBLE EAGLE in less than 4 days. I got the wing together, we coordinated with the engineers at Wright Patterson AFB, and built a plan to drain and flush all of the jets and to generate a minimum of 12 jets for the 1 July NOBLE EAGLE mission. Shaw's amazing maintainers worked day and night in the middle of the swampy South Carolina summer to get those jets ready. With no jets to fly, our pilots volunteered to do the engine runs so that the maintainers could focus on fixing (rather than running) jets. The 77 FS (Gamblers) ran a Burger Burn for the maintainers. My Senior Enlisted Leader, CMSgt Justin Schramm, and I ran cold Gatorades to the maintainers on the line. The Shooters finished their NOBLE EAGLE prep in the simulator. By Friday night the Maintenance Group had managed to generate 12 combat configured jets and had many more jets ready to fly training lines as well. On Saturday morning at exactly 0400 EST, Lt Col Mach Franks took off on the first 20 FW NOBLE EAGLE mission. An amazing accomplishment for the Wing given that less than 4 days earlier every F-16 was grounded. I later learned that it was a single airman who had identified the bad oil and that he brought his suspicions to a SNCO who got the oil tested to confirm that it was indeed bad. We also later learned that the root cause of the problem was a mis-labeling of an oil drum at HAZMAT – a simple mistake made by a single airman. This whole event confirmed three things:

- 1) Individual airmen make a huge difference for both good and bad. A single mistake led the entire fleet to be grounded and threatened OPERATION NOBLE EAGLE. A single airman caught the mistake and set us on a path to get well.
- 2) The power of teams. Once we were on the path to get well, every airman in the 20 FW played a part in getting the Wing ready for OPERATION NOBLE EAGLE. From the Maintainers draining and flushing the jets, to the pilots doing engine runs and burger burns, to all of the support personnel, everyone played a part.
- 3) The wing commander will not be happy when you call him on his family vacation to tell him you violated the one order he gave you to not ground the fleet.

(4) What is your leadership philosophy?

First, find the things that make you better and pursue them relentlessly.

We are all both leaders and followers – one of the hardest parts of being a leader is taking the direction from above and figuring out how to make it work inside your organization

Learn from experience. It's fine to learn from your own experiences, but even better if you can also learn from others' experiences – talk to your peers and mentors. And read history. There are very few new mistakes out there.

(5) What did I miss that you want to talk about

Emphasize for the folks out there. Weaseling is alive and well, while we had a lot of other mission, we were keenly focused on the Weasel mission. The Viper community is working with the F-35 on tactics and capability development as the F-35 takes more of the SEAD role but the

Viper will be an important part of the SEAD team for a long time. SEAD remains the toughest mission in the Combat Air Force and our Weasels remain the best trained Fighter Pilots in the World!

What can the Society do to help the people of Shaw? The grants were superb. Membership fees were low, we were able to get memberships for free, integrating you more into our roll calls and heritage events which was great for building on the incredible Weasel history and heritage! We stand on the shoulders of giants like Leo Thorsness and so many other Weasels!

A special Word from Willie salute to Col Fuego! You have done and continue to do America proud! The Society of Wild Weasels is proud to have you as a member!

Weasel Happenings

Our 33rd FW Project Officer

It is with great pride that we introduce Mauricio “Osita” Agudelo as 2026 Reunion Project Officer.

From his words, “Rhode Island-native. USAFA Class of 2018. Flew Vipers in Italy and Korea before transitioning this year to the Panther. Wife, Nicole, and two kids, Luna (7) and Matthias (2). Fired up and excited for the Weasel Reunion. YGBSM!” Osito



Osita with his family and a SAM killer aircraft!

20th Operations Group

The 20 OG has a new Commander, Col Dave Gehrman and we have had a couple of phone calls. I talked to him about the Society support and JohnBoy is working on the annual Leo Thorsness grant for Shaw. We also recently sent a resupply of SAM Killer T-shirts to the 20 OG for their Top Gun program. Link to Col Gehrman's bio: [DANE J. GEHRMANN - Nellis AFB](#)

Col Ed White's ceremony at Arlington.

On 29 September Col Ed White was buried at Arlington. The 77th Fighter Squadron did a missing man formation that was great and I am sure Col White would have been proud! In addition, Maj Gen Gandhi and Brig Gen Drew spoke on behalf of the Weasels at the luncheon. We appreciate this effort very much! We sent SAM killer T-shirts and gave the 4 ship Weasel Society 3-year memberships for their great efforts.

Luke Graduation

Muskrat McNeese attended the Luke graduation and presented the Wild Weasel plaque to a Dutch pilot and of course we presented them with a \$200 grant which they used for the bar! A big thanks to Muskrat and Uke Uken who have built a great network with the 56th OG and everyone to support every F-35 graduation!

AF Academy news and a new Commander

The 35 Cadet Squadron has a new Commander Major Isabel Klingshirn who is coming to the 35 CS from Shaw AFB and is very familiar with the Wild Weasels. Congrats to Isabel and we look forward to working with you. Our 35 CS liaison Mike "Kad" Kadlubowski has touched base with her and will be giving the cadets our Wild Weasel briefing sometime this year. Below are some pictures of the Major with her cadets!



Eglin Graduation

Thunder Thornton was our liaison at the August graduation of the latest B-Course in the 60 FS. He presented the plaque and the \$200 grant. Eglin has a Wild Weasel history briefing which I gave to the students via zoom. We had the honor of having General Chuck Horner there and he talked about his weasel experience. Thanks to both General Horner and General Thornton.



Podcasts

We have Dave Melton and others lined up to record podcasts. We want to ultimately make these available in the History section and for your relatives. Any mission combat or otherwise you believe is important we are ready to support.

New Wild Weasel Briefing

We keep a copy of the Wild Weasel Briefing on the History first page (link below) for people who want to give the briefing. We do ask that you let us know so we can publish it. Stanley Goldstein just updated the Wild Weasel brief and we have a core brief and a faster one if you are limited on time. Please give us feedback.

[Virtual Museum – Society of Wild Weasels](#)

Membership Update

Fallen Wild Weasels

Our Condolences to their families, friends, and brothers in arms. Hand Salute! Rest in Peace!

Gilbert Zamora Jr., WW #1863, EWO, F-4G, 13 Oct 2025

New Members

We welcome the following new members:

Edwin “Rags“ Schultz, WW #2926, Gunner, B-52, Honorary Member

Taylor “Raven” Thornton, WW #2927, Intel

E. Luke “Shagi” Glinski, WW #2928

Crystal Geidel, WW #2929

Patrick “Turf” Haugen, WW #2930

Vincent “Baldanolf” Wisniewski, WW #2931

Jay “Bait” Baugh, WW #2932

Matthew Spotts, WW #2933, Honorary Member

John Kadlubowski, WW #2934

John Piowaty, WW #2935

L.A. Bud

Surviving Family Members

If you know of family members who qualify, have them contact us at:

LABudF4G@gmail.com

L.A. Bud

2024 Funding

Available balance

• Ending balance as of 10/25/25	\$68,841.81
• Corrected Posted Balance	\$74,011.81
• Pending withdrawals/debits	\$0.00
• Pending deposits/credits	\$0.00
• Available balance	\$74,011.81

Why the Wild Weasel Society Would Benefit from Your Charitable IRA Distribution

If you are 73 or older, the IRS requires you to take annual minimum distributions (RMDs) from your IRA. For many retirees, those distributions increase taxable income—even if the funds are not needed for daily expenses. Fortunately, there is a smart way to both reduce your tax burden and support causes you care about: a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD).

A QCD allows you to transfer up to \$100,000 per year directly from your IRA to a qualified nonprofit such as the Wild Weasel Society. The amount given counts toward your required minimum distribution but is excluded from your taxable income. That means you can satisfy the IRS requirement, lower your taxes, and make a meaningful impact at the same time. The Society will use that for grants, support to Weasels in need and other areas. You can earmark your funds for education if you want.

For the Wild Weasel Society, gifts made through QCDs provide essential support for honoring the legacy of Wild Weasel aviators, preserving history, and sustaining educational programs for future generations. Regular IRA contributions from members and friends create a reliable stream of funding, ensuring the Society can carry out its mission without interruption.

By designating your RMD as a charitable gift, you not only receive a tangible tax benefit—you also strengthen the Wild Weasel community and keep its stories and values alive.

Link for Wild Weasel Give Direct

<https://donate.givedirect.org/?cid=15484&n=386259>

Or, please send a check to:

Society of Wild Weasels

P.O. Box 877

Silver Spring, MD 20918

Another great charity is the Air Warrior Courage Foundation; here is their link:

[Donations – Air Warrior Courage](#)

Both organizations will write you a letter receipt for the IRS.

Another great idea is to designate your birthday on Facebook for donations.

Victor and Budman

Medical

MACH—Where We’ve Been, Where We’re Going...

Editor’s Note: Aztec Alazar has been the driving factor in the MACH (Military Aviators Coalition for Health) and we are very proud to be associated with the Coalition and have Aztec as a member of the Wild Weasels. Our proposed roadmap below.

The Project Roadmap That Informs Advocacy Planning

Overview. After passage of the ACES Act in AUG 25, one could ask, “Where are we going?” Here is a proposed lineup of issues and projects:

- **IN EXECUTION.** ACES Act (Aviator Cancer Examination Study): enacted on 13 AUG 25. As of 20 OCT 25, we await notification that VA has established a multi-year study contract with NASEM. This study will, 1) aid DOD in exposure understanding and potentially, mitigation, and 2) provide Veteran flyers with scientifically vetted evidence that links their aviation service to carcinogenic exposures, the often-missing link in successful Veteran flyer service-related cancer claims.
- **IN PROCESS.** Rotary-Wing Operator Toxic Occupational Research (ROTOR Act): H.R. 4704 passed the House FY26 amendment process in late July before the August recess. Sen. Kelly’s slightly modified version of the ROTOR Act did not succeed as an amendment to the Senate FY26 NDAA. As of 20 OCT 25, the Senate/House FY26 NDAA Conference is the best opportunity we have to get this act into final legislation...after government reopens. Note: there may be a brief email advocacy opportunity here.
- **PROPOSED.** The Aviator Equity & Retention Order (AERO Act): this proposed legislation would end two inhumane aircrew pay practices sanctioned by DOD/OSD and each of the services. First, language would end the current practice that with a cancer diagnosis and a flyer incentive pay contract in force, the service could no longer claw back paid monies thereby terminating the incentive pay contract. Second, aviation “fly pay” would remain in force despite a cancer diagnosis or anything medically disqualifying that bars continued flying. Both measures are designed to do away with sudden financial loss to a family already facing a cancer diagnosis or other significant challenge.

- **PROPOSED.** The Military Aviator Spinal Injury Treatment Act (MAST Act): this legislation would task the Defense Health Agency to perform a Phase 1 Study: establish the prevalence and severity of High-G Repetitive Strain Injury (High-G RSI) in DAF & DON fighter aircrews. Congress Phase 2: Congress establishes new 38USC and 38CFR verbiage that removes the burden that aircrew report High-G RSI symptoms within one year of discharge and the associated requirement that aircrews establish a documented treatment history in-service. The bill would also establish “High-G RSI” as the VBA’s term of art for such injury, VA would screen for injuries, and VA would establish a database of affected Veterans irrespective of current disability rating, if any.
- **IN DEVELOPMENT:** Unnamed bill that would identify PROMETHEUS research initiatives eligible for transition out of present research into an operationalization approach focused on active duty and Veteran flyer cancer screening and detection. In conversation with Murtha Cancer Center.
- **IN DEVELOPMENT:** Unnamed bill that would put forward a TBI/CTE and Central Nervous System (CNS) disorder study of all active-duty and Veteran flyers. This concept, in early definition, may focus on high-G flight exposures and other factors CTE causative. A TBI study focused on carrier aviation aircrews may be inserted into the Senate/House conference NDAA version. That study is a named TBI initiative that does not implicate CTE, CNS disorders, or other services flyers.

If you have feedback, please drop us a line at WildWeaselReports@gmail.com
Society of Wild Weasels, P.O. Box 877, Silver Spring, MD 20918
wild-weasels-board@googlegroups.com



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