

## **California Air Force Association Convention Finds March ARB a Winner**

By Colonel Martin W. Ledwitz, CSMR  
President CAFA

**March Air Reserve Base, CA** – The California Air Force Association (CAFA) held its 2009 Annual Convention at March ARB on 28 through 30 May 2009. The AFA is the “Force Behind the Force.” Hosting the event was the CAFA Bob Hope Chapter 257 of MARB and its President Col Nancy Driscoll (USAF Ret.). The attendees experienced a marvelous reception Thursday evening at the Hap Arnold Conference Center.

Friday a Golf Tournament was held to raise funds for the Education Foundation for Aerospace (EFA). EFA promotes aerospace education for the citizen’s of California, especially the school children.. Non-golfers went on morning and afternoon base tours that included the Predator unit, C-17 simulator, the Air and Marine Operations Center (AMOC)., and the F16 Alert Area. The AFA members were amazed at the cutting edge technology and the dedication and skill of the personnel in each area.

On Friday evening the CAFA Member Annual Awards Ceremony was held at the March Field Air Museum. The food and service were outstanding, catered by “Gourmet on the Go.” David T. “Buck” Buckwalter the AFA National Executive Vice President was the speaker. He updated the audience on the current Defense Department policies concerning the Air Force. Col Martin Ledwitz, CSMR, CAFA President, was the MC for the evening. Paul Bell of MARB’s own Bob Hope Chapter received a Sustained Outstanding Performance Award, one of the 31 awards to CAFAs most outstanding members given that night.

Saturday included the CAFA annual business meeting, a tour to the National Cemetery, and elections of the CAFA officers for 2009 -2010. The state leadership elected were Martin Ledwitz ( a former MARB Reserve Lt Col in the 1980’s), as President, George Williams as Secretary, MARB’s own Nancy Driscoll as Treasurer, and three Area Vice Presidents..

In the evening the Military Awards Ceremony was held at the Hap Arnold Conference Center, with MC CMS Norman Marous, (USAF Ret). The speaker for the evening was Brigadier General Eric W. Crabtree, Comander of the 4<sup>th</sup> Air Force, with Headquarters at MARB. He spoke on the Conference theme “Women in Flight History and the Air Force.” Nancy Driscoll of MARB received the CAFA Member of the Year Award, the Bob Hope Chapter nominee Mrs Maureen Houlihan won Area 3 (Southern California) Teacher of the Year, Steve Escalante, nominated by the Bob Hope Chapter won an EFA scholarship, SrA Charles M. Elliott of the 452<sup>nd</sup> Civil Engineer Squadron at MARB won the Air Force Reserve Airman of the Year Award, the CAFA Unit of the Year award went to the 336<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Squadron of MARB, Lt Col James R. Barkley,

Commander. The CAFA Person of the Year was Brigadier General Robert P. Otto, Commander of the 9<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Wing, Beale AFB. Beale AFB will be the site of the next CAFA annual meeting.

For the first time, CAFA recognized members of the Air Component of the California State Military Reserve (CSMR) including CMS Archie Mitchell of the 146<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Support Unit as Airman of the Year, and Lt Col Craig Morris of the State Emergency Center in Sacramento. The CSMR is part of the California Military Department along with the Air and Army National Guard. All Air Component members must have served in the Air Force, Air Force Reserve, or Air National Guard.