

2017 Armed Forces Celebration Luncheon

by

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Image by Richard Jozefiak

The Greater Huntsville Section participated in the 2017 Armed Forces Celebration Luncheon at the Von Braun Center on June 28. The luncheon was part of the Huntsville community's week long commemoration of Armed Forces Week. This year marked Greater Huntsville's second time to formally participate in the festivities.

The theme of this year's luncheon was *Over There* in recognition of the 100th anniversary of the United States entering World War I (WWI). While Redstone Arsenal did not exist in 1917, the arsenal does have a connection to the Great War. Rideout Road, one of the post's main arteries, was named after US Army First Lieutenant Percy A. Rideout, an officer of the First Gas Regiment who was killed in action in France on Oct. 8, 1918 and was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for "extraordinary heroism in action."

Over 500 people attended the luncheon, hosted annually by the Huntsville-Madison County Chamber of Commerce (CoC). Mr. Joe Newberry, CoC Chair, emceed the event. Dignitaries included Mayors Tommy Battle and Paul Findlay, U. S. Senator Luther Strange, Alabama State Senator Bill Holtzclaw, General Gustave Perna, Commanding General of US Army Materiel Command (AMC), Lieutenant General Larry Wyche, Deputy Commanding General of AMC and Lieutenant General James Dickinson, Commanding General of the US Army Space and Missile Defense Command.



General Perna giving the keynote address.

General Perna gave the keynote address. He told the stories of four heroes from very diverse backgrounds who received the Medal of Honor during WWI. These service members embodied the ethos of service, an ethos that the Armed Forces continue to live by today. General Perna thanked the military members and veterans in the audience for their service. He also enthusiastically thanked the Huntsville community for its support of the military, noting that while many military communities celebrate Armed Forces Day, Huntsville is the only place that devotes an entire week to honoring its military members.

AIAA was represented by section members Dr. Tom Giel, Mr. Richard Jozefiak and Lt Col (retired) Ken Philippart. The Greater Huntsville Section salutes our military members and their families!