



APRIL 2026 NEWSLETTER

Greetings Fellow Daedalians,

Our next gathering will be on Thursday, April 9th, at the Phoenix/Mesa DoubleTree Hotel. The address is 1011 W. Holmes Ave., Mesa AZ 85210. The social hour starts at 1700 and the meeting will be called to order at 1800. Dinner will be served after the opening remarks and toasts. The menu will be herb roasted chicken, garden green salad with ranch and/or balsamic dressing, rolls and butter, Yukon Gold mashed potatoes, roasted vegetable medley and cookies for dessert.

Our after-dinner speaker will be Mr. Rex Ginder. Mr. Grinder is the Director of Flight Operations for the University of North Dakota Aerospace Program in the Phoenix-Mesa Undergraduate and Accelerated Programs.

We remain in desperate need of volunteers to step up and fill leadership positions. We still need a vice flight captain. Gary Schooler has stepped down from the treasurer position, and Ron Perkins has assumed that role. Keith Betsch has volunteered to take over the scholarship program and needs volunteers to present Daedalian medals and certificates to JROTC high school cadets selected to receive that honor.

The deadline for paying local 2026 dues by March 31st to remain on the Willie Flight 82 roster is rapidly approaching. It appears at this time that we will only have 33 members remaining in the chapter. If you have not paid your 2026 dues and wish to remain on the roster, please mail a check made out to Willie Flight 82 for \$50.00 and send it to Willie Flight 82, P.O. Box 11261, Chandler, AZ 85248.

Please contact me not later than Sunday, April 5th, with a 'yes' or 'no' answer concerning attendance at the April 9th gathering. You can send me an e-mail at rickdrown@msn.com, or call or text me at 480-518-7665.

Stay safe and be well,

Rick

Williams Air Force Base , originally known as Mesa Military Airport, then Higley Field and other temporary names, was officially established on July 1, 1941. The base was renamed to Williams Field in February 1942 and formally became Williams Air Force Base in 1948, serving as a key flight training facility until 1993.

AFC

Key historical details for the site:

- Construction Start: Groundbreaking occurred on July 16, 1941.
- Name Changes: Initially called Mesa Military Airport, it was renamed Higley Field (October 1941), then Williams Field (February 1942) to honor 1st Lt. Charles Linton Williams.
- Final Designation: It was redesignated Williams Air Force Base in 1948.
- Closure: The base closed in 1993 and is now Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport.

This is a local newspaper article from July 1941 regarding the opening of the airfield.

Turns out that my Father (Staff Sgt H.A. Follette in the article) was one of the first 20 men assigned to open the base. They left after a couple of years and he retired from Davis Monthan in 1952, moved to Chandler and my mother ran the Base Exchange stockroom from 1952-1993. Also, I graduated from UPT at Willy in Class 69-08.



March
2026
Meeting
Photos

