

Minutes
Air Force Public Affairs Alumni Association
Board of Directors Meeting (Zoom)
August 9, 2024

Call to Order: Chairman John Dorrian called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. EST.

Roll Call: Secretary Chuck Merlo called the roll. A quorum was present.

Board Members Present: Chairman John Dorrian, President Eric Schnaible, Vice President Carla Sylvester, Secretary Chuck Merlo, Julie Briggs, Dick Cole, Linda Chick Haseloff, Jim McGuire, Perry Nouis.

Board Members Absent: Chief Financial Officer Phil Ratliff (proxy to Jim McGuire), Cheryl Law (Proxy to Chuck Merlo), Mike Paoli.

Others Attending: Art Forster, Jay DeFrank, John Gura, Christine Queen, Judy Bivens, Lou Timmons, Clem Gaines, John Terino, Jim Hart

Minutes of the Last Board Meeting: Chairman John Dorrian asked for approval of the minutes of the board meeting conducted May 10, 2024.

Jim McGuire moved to approve the minutes. **Linda Chick Haseloff seconded. Motion Passed.**

SAF/PA Update: Colonel Allen Heritage was not present.

Financial Report: Jim McGuire referred the board to the financial report Chief Financial Officer Phil Ratliff sent in advance of the meeting. The end of last month, the balance for the Endowment Fund was at more than \$584K but the market has taken a bit of a hit since then and as of August 8, 2024 was at \$572K which is still good. However, the dollar amount of revenue we have received for meeting registrations is well below where we should be at this time. **Jim McGuire moved** to approve the financial report. **Julie Briggs seconded. Motion Passed.**

SAF/PA Liaison Report: Lou Timmons reported on the informal meeting at Fort Meade between the Army and Air Force public affairs associations (Navy was not able to participate). Twenty people attended; Clem Gaines

was our representative. Clem said a highlight of the Wednesday night reception was meeting with and getting to know the DINFOS leadership. Clem also encouraged AFPAA to continue to identify and highlight the annual Hall of Fame event with attendance by members and streaming on Facebook live. For the DINFOS 60th Anniversary and the Hall of Fame Induction ceremony at DINFOS on August 8th, Jim McGuire put together a handout on AFPAA that was available for all who attended. There was some discussion regarding whether the DINFOS Alumni Association was still active. Julie Briggs said it had been incorporated in Indiana and its president and board were still located there more than a decade ago. Clem Gaines said there was no mention of it at either the reception or the Hall of Fame ceremony.

Committee Reports

A. Organization Transition: Jay DeFrank mentioned he was looking for opportunities that help create visibility for our organization and the value proposition. He wanted to make sure before he offered them to Allen Herriage that we would be able to actually execute them.

- 1) Oral History Program: During the 20+ years of our involvement in Southwest Asia, public affairs officers got deeply engaged in ways that were not traditional public affairs activities such as visiting communities to develop support among local populations. While our traditional oral histories have been focused on careers, this could be focused on the specific experience of deployments in SWA. This could be valuable to Air Force Public Affairs, even DoD to provide lessons learned. We need to do this before participants have retired or the memories have gotten too old. Jay asked John Gura if it was possible. John said it was certainly doable but who would do it and how would the subjects be identified. There was some discussion regarding the difficulties experienced in a previous attempt and if the Oral History program would be the best place for it. Jay said oral histories have an extensive tradition in the military and it allows for us to control the process rather than someone else just writing their thoughts down. Further, these would be focused on one subject rather than a career of service. We could work with SAF/PA to find out what's of value for them to learn from the subject and tailor our questions accordingly. We could then take excerpts of these and publicize them through our Facebook page and video social media to solicit more experiences

and draw attention to our overall Oral History program. The board had no opposition to Jay discussing this with Allen Heritage during their next meeting. If Allen concurred, Jay would get the initial list of subjects and work with John Gura to come up with a standard list of questions SAF/PA considered valuable so John could set up the interviews. Julie Briggs added that as we do the interviews, be sure to focus on what was their greatest challenge and what were the tools they used to overcome it. This was sorely overlooked in Joint Public Affairs Operations 361 (JP-361) which is the bible for people about to be deployed. Anything we could provide as an organization which they could extract from the deployment specific oral history would be of value.

- 2) LinkedIn: Jay discussed the possible advantages of AFPAA having a presence on LinkedIn. LinkedIn is largely business and job search-related which dovetails with some of the value we could provide (mentorship in job searching). It also raises our visibility. Jay said he would contact Beth Horine who is active on the platform to see if she could assist us.

B. Annual Meeting Committee: Perry Nouis reported that as of August 9, there were 61 registrations which included 30 members, 15 guests and 16 partial. That's 20 members less than usual for this time period and the cutoff period is one month from tomorrow before a late fee is added. The newsletter coming out soon will have the registration form included.

- 1) Itinerary: Overall itinerary is pretty well set. Open bar kickoff on Thursday evening. We'll be going out to Lackland. Annette Crawford is working the schedule which includes the President's Lunch. The committee will have to get information from President Eric Schnaible as to who he'd like to recognize during the lunch. Perry is working with Annette to determine if there are local individuals/base supporters the base would like recognized as we did in Tampa last year. P.J. Crowley will give an update Saturday morning similar to the one he gave in Tampa updating the association on world military/diplomatic issues. He will be followed by Retired Maj Gen Ed Thomas talking about the Air Force Aid Society. Retired Maj Gen Alfred Flowers will also speak that morning. Other parts of the schedule (membership and awards meetings, Hall of Fame induction) are in place. Johnny Whitaker will be the MC for the Hall of Fame induction. Perry will

be sending out information later in the month on the River Cruise and golf outing. A memento of the annual meeting hasn't been selected yet but the committee is planning to keep it a surprise. Lou Timmons asked which Hall of Fame inductees are planning to attend. Perry said Jim Hart, Art Forster, General Rand, and a representative for Glenn Miller. Art Forster suggested that events needed to be added to Friday afternoon which was presently empty. He suggested visiting the Air Force Public Affairs Agency, a military working dog demonstration or the flying training wing at Randolph. Dick Cole recommended AETC give us a briefing on the new Air Force flight trainer, the T-7. Jim McGuire and Jay DeFrank said a briefing by the Air Force Public Affairs Agency would have great value. Carla Sylvester recommended against any event which would require going from Lackland to Randolph because the drive times would make it very difficult. Art recommended any units at Randolph requested to brief us be asked to present their briefing at Lackland. Eric Schnaible also suggested we explore the possibility of honoring with a wreath Mike Blassie who was interred in the Vietnam War's Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. He was later identified through DNA testing and moved from the tomb to Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery. Perry stated he would follow up on the suggestions.

- 2) SAF/PA Attendance: Jerry Renne has mentioned in plans to attend the Director's Lunch on Saturday.
- 3) Next year's meeting: Perry stated we are looking at Fairfield, CA for October 2025. John Gura asked about the possibility of moving the annual meeting date back to the Spring timeframe. John Gura said some people have schedule conflicts in the Fall which negatively impacts attendance. Perry Nouis said to do that would require an 18-month delay. John Dorrian asked for a roll call vote of board meeting attendees. All stated they were either for a Spring meeting or could work with either Spring or Fall. Art Forster recommended we survey AFPAA members to determine their preference. Jim Hart suggested we survey attendees of the Annual Meeting over the last four or five years since only a small percentage of the general membership actually attends. Perry will follow up on the suggestions.

C. Membership Committee: Christine Queen referred the board to the report she sent before the meeting. Our membership numbers keep

fluctuating. Some members have passed away but we don't learn about it unless we're contacted by their family. We had five members on the life membership payment plan but now we only have one and she only has one more payment to go. Christopher Gillis had additional payments to his credit and he donated the (\$80) to the endowment fund which was very nice.

D. Communications/Newsletter: Dick Cole said everyone had seen the second draft of the newsletter. He appreciated the input from Jim and Carla on needed corrections. All that was needed was a President's Column to be able to send it to the printer. Eric Schnaible said he would compose one pushing more members to register for the annual meeting. Dick Cole asked Lou Timmons to check with Jerry Renne to determine if he would share with AFPAA members the information he is providing to the Public Affairs field on strategic communications. Jim McGuire asked if it was advisable to publish the voting totals for candidates for the board. There was a discussion regarding transparency versus making the election appear to be a popularity contest. Jim said the board owed Dick guidance regarding publishing the figures. The decision was that no change was necessary for this issue of the newsletter but in the future the vote total would be provided but not broken down by candidate since six candidates are running for six board and officer positions. If someone is on the ballot, they are going to be elected. If there were write-in candidates, disclose how many write-ins there are without disclosing their names. Dick requested input for the next newsletter by October 1st. It will come out sometime in December so information from the Annual Meeting could be included.

E. Website: Jim McGuire said there wasn't much to report since most of his activity lately has been towards Club Express. The home page had been changed to give maximum publicity for the Annual Meeting and registration. Scrolling down from the home page now reveals the previous home page images highlighting the new Hall of Fame class and the Dalton Scholarship recipients. Jim hoped to have a link for the Hall of Fame induction ceremony and Ron Rand's excellent speech on the website.

F. Oral History: John Gura said there were two oral histories in the pipeline. He was also anxious to see how Jay DeFrank's proposal to have deployment specific oral histories included works out.

G. Facebook: Judy Bivens said she pulls material from the AFPAA webpage and newsletter and publicizes on Facebook to people who might not otherwise ever see the information. For example, announcement on Facebook of the Dalton Scholarship recipients would let people see that a friend of theirs was selected and that perhaps they might go the website to apply for a scholarship themselves. They might then look around and see more about who we are and how it might benefit them. Judy was also going to share the Hall of Fame induction ceremony on our Facebook page.

Old Business:

A. Hall Of Fame: Art Forster mentioned that the representative of the Glen Miller family at our induction ceremony was Dennis Spragg who is curator of the Glenn Miller collection. The collection, which is at the University of Colorado which Glenn Miller attended, includes all his professional papers and music. Spragg is also affiliated with the Glenn Miller Museum in Miller's hometown in Iowa. Glenn Miller's granddaughter, Johnnie Miller, who is 80 is aware of the ceremony but would not be in attendance because of health issues.

- 1) DINFOS Display Design: Art said he had received good feedback from the proposal for the wall display at DINFOS which had circulated. He was looking at incorporating the suggestions including featuring the old Air Corps patch worn in WWII by General Hap Arnold as well as the public affairs badge. Art said he thought the cost of the display was modest for the amount of work involved and they have identified a space in the schoolhouse where it would be placed. Art also said they would give the Air Force Public Affairs Agency an opportunity to comment on the display since they had come on board with some questions and concerns of our organization in the past. Chuck Merlo inquired if Art was working with a company on the list of approved suppliers. Art said he had just recently received the list from Jay DeFrank and hadn't gotten a chance to go through it. Art said he had selected a contractor that had already done multiple displays at DINFOS and had all the required security checks and ID badges so it should be a smooth transition. John Gura asked if the display would be permanent or would it change as new members were added to the Hall of Fame. Art said the display was permanent because it will be a standalone and it would need to be

unchanging since DINFOS could not provide any assistance with it. For example, a video monitor was not included because DINFOS staff would not be available to even turn it on or off. That is why a QR code was incorporated into the design which would allow someone to go to the AFPAA website for information on all the inductees, not just the Pioneer class shown on the display.

- 2) DINFOS Display Cost: Art asked if there were additional comments about the cost. Jim McGuire, as Phil Ratliff's proxy, said Phil thought the display was too expensive and if it came up for a vote, he would vote no. Julie Briggs disagreed and thought the cost was on target. She did ask how large is the display. Art said it would cover an entire wall. Julie said for that large of a display, she thought the price was economical. Chuck Merlo said since the display would serve AFPAA and the students of DINFOS for years to come, he would not want it cheapened to meet an otherwise reasonable cost goal. He thought the cost was not out of line. Jay DeFrank said he would advise present board members it was well worth the cost to do it right...anything that doesn't look first-class would not make a good first impression of who we are. Lou Timmons said an artist gave an initial figure on a proposed display came up with a price double what was now proposed. Lou also stated the location, across from the Air Force Public Affairs display, was excellent. Chuck Merlo asked if we should canvass members for donations to defray the cost. Art Forster said that with almost \$600,000 in the bank, we shouldn't have to do that for an \$8,000 expenditure. John Dorrian asked if we should have a vote on the expenditure. Art said we should defer the vote until we have the final design. We should also present this to the Air Force Public Affairs Agency before moving forward. Art said he would work with Lou Timmons to come up with an email to Jerry Renne and Alan Herritage on how best to present this to the public affairs agency. Jay DeFrank agreed saying it would show our good faith in listening to their concerns in the past and it helps build a good relationship. Jim McGuire and John Dorrian both agreed. Clem Gaines mentioned they have built a good relationship with the new DINFOS Deputy Commandant, Colonel Kim Bender, and this should help as we move forward with the display.

B. Dalton Scholarship: Chuck Merlo thanked Julie Briggs and Mike Paoli for their assistance in reviewing and selecting the recipients and to Carla

Sylvester for her advice and counsel. Six recipients were selected this year because a scholarship from the first year was not used. Three of the six had already contacted him and two have been paid. He thanked Phil Ratliff for getting the funds to the recipients in such a timely manner.

C. Logo and Bylaws: Jim Hart reported the logo information has been filed with the U.S. Patent Office. The office has acknowledged receipt of the application. It takes some time to get approved and Jim will notify the board when that occurs. The Bylaws as published on the website and the directory represent the most up-to-date information. There is one small technical change referencing associate members that needs to be made but since it doesn't affect recruitment or membership in any way, it will not be altered until we have another change in the bylaws. Jim McGuire raised a question about updating the registered agent's address on the website, but this issue was deferred for a future board meeting.

D. Club Express: Jim McGuire provided an update on the progress of the Club Express project, detailing the transfer of the membership database from the Excel spreadsheet Christine has maintained, the establishment of a merchant account so we could handle financial transactions through Club Express so we would no longer have to depend on PayPal, and the assignment of three administrators and five coordinators. The administrators are Jim McGuire, Phil Ratliff and John Gura. Administrators can access any part of the control panel for our account. Coordinators will only be able to access the areas of the control panel for which they are responsible. He also mentioned the creation of training videos and tutorials for the coordinators and administrators. Jim stated a lot more work needs to be done before we go public with the members. Since it is Club Express's policy to send out a welcome note to all the members, we want to make sure members are aware of the changes and how they can access the system. There will be an article in the latest newsletter about Club Express and there will need to be training provided at the Annual Meeting in October. John Dorrian thanked Jim for the enormous amount of work he had undertaken to make AFPAA's use of Club Express possible. John said it brings enormous improvements to how we operate our organization and benefits everyone.

E. Archives Project: Jim McGuire said there was an article in the latest newsletter regarding the archives project and soliciting help from members in locating documents/items that might be important to our historical

records. Linda Chick Haseloff is the archives coordinator on Club Express. There will be a document library where we'll be able to store all the archive material Linda is able to collect and categorize. It will be much easier to be able to search for materials once they have been inputted into Club Express and the system is up and running. Art Forster asked if Linda had gotten all the documents Tom Dolney had been storing. Jim and Perry Nouis stated they were aware Tom and Linda had been in communication but didn't know if any documents Linda had received.

New Business

A. President's Report: Eric Schnaible asked Perry Nouis if there were any indications why members haven't registered for the annual meeting in greater numbers. Perry said information and solicitations for the annual meeting registration have gone out on Blast and it's been in the newsletter but registration is lagging by about 20 to 30 members. The only change in the registration this year is by mail vs online but Perry couldn't see how that would have made such a difference to responses.

B. DINFOS Alumni Training Day: Clem Gaines stated he had attended the alumni training day at DINFOS on August 8th. At one of the training sessions, he met a woman whose first boss was Mark Rosenker and she talked about his leadership and capabilities. Clem said his point was that you never know who you will meet at these training sessions and encouraged others to attend the training when offered.

Chairman John Dorrian: John asked for any further comments.

With no further business, **Carla Sylvester moved to adjourn, Jim McGuire seconded and the motion passed.** The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:05 p.m. EST.

Minutes prepared by Secretary Chuck Merlo.