

News and Notes

April-September 2025



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**Air Force Public Affairs Association
Annual Meeting & Reunion
April 30 - May 2, 2026
Travis AFB • Fairfield, CA**

Fairfield: Where Sweet Adventures Await Members in April

By Perry Nouis
Annual Meeting Chairman

“Sweet!” It is the reaction a lot of people have when they learn they will be visiting Fairfield, Calif.

Tucked between the bustling cities of San Francisco and Sacramento, and near California’s famous wine regions, Fairfield is the site for the Air Force Public Affairs Association’s 29th Annual Membership Meeting. The meeting is scheduled for April 30-May 2, 2026.

The host facility for the gathering is Fairfield’s Hilton Garden

Inn, the same hotel used when the Association last met there in 2011.

Bud Ross, the local meeting coordinator, has developed a full itinerary that includes a visit to Travis Air Force Base, the “Gateway to the Pacific,” on Friday, May 1.

Strategically located in California’s Solano County, Travis is well known for its pivotal role in the U.S. Air Force as the largest air mobility hub on the West Coast. It is home to the 60th Air Mobility Wing. The Wing handles more cargo and passenger traffic than any other military air terminal in the

(cont’d on p. 3)

From the President's pen...



It's an honor to serve as your Air Force Public Affairs Association president for the coming year, alongside our new chair, Eric Schnaible, vice president Chuck Merlo, chief financial officer Phil Ratliff, and secretary Julie Briggs. Following this year's election, we welcome returning board members Jim McGuire, Perry Nouis, Mike Paoli, and Phil Ratliff. Linda Haseloff resigned to attend to family matters; we thank her for her service and wish her all the best. To serve out the remainder of her term, we are pleased to welcome Annette Crawford to the board.

I continue to be impressed by how much good our organization accomplishes. In just the past few years, we've seen some amazing achievements: our name change and transition, the creation of the Dalton Scholarships, and the installation of a permanent Air Force PA Hall of Fame display at the Defense Information School at Fort Meade, Md. — just to name a few. Meanwhile, behind the scenes, our various committee chairs and project officers are working tirelessly.

With all these people doing so much, we still have more to do, and that's where you come in. We can never lose sight of the need to attract and retain members. One of our primary benefits is maintaining the camaraderie we enjoyed when we served together. With that in mind, now is a great time to reach out to colleagues who might not yet be members and encourage them to join.

We're also looking for members who can step in to some of the leadership responsibilities, particularly as more tenured (I didn't say "older," haha!) members prepare to hand over the reins. Our board of directors and our committee chairs need help and, eventually, successors. From membership to oral history to the newsletter and more, AFPAA offers you opportunities to serve.

And mark your calendar for our next annual meeting and reunion April 30 - May 2, 2026, in Fairfield, Calif., the same location as in 2011. As you know, following the COVID-19 pandemic, these events took place in the fall. Beginning in 2026, we're returning to a spring schedule. Perry Nouis and local California contact Bud Ross are working hard to confirm plans and will have additional information soon, so stay tuned.

Thank you for your membership and support. If you have ideas or thoughts to share, don't hesitate to contact me at carlasylvester@afpaa.org.

Carla

Air Force Public Affairs Association News and Notes, Dick Cole, editor, is published quarterly for members by the Air Force Public Affairs Association, P. O. Box 2446, East Peoria, IL 61611-2446. On-line subscriptions are available at www.AFPAA.org **Membership Information:** Those who have served or are currently serving in Air Force Bands, Broadcasting, Multimedia, and Public Affairs career fields, as either military or civilian, are eligible for Full Membership. **Membership Rates:** Lifetime \$300 (payable in four quarterly \$75 installments); Full, Adjunct and Affiliate Memberships, one year at \$25 or three years at \$50. Membership applications are available at www.AFPAA.org. **Officers and Board of Directors:** Chairman, Eric Schnaible; President, Carla Sylvester; Vice President, Chuck Merlo; Secretary, Julie Briggs; Chief Financial Officer, Phil Ratliff; Annette Crawford, Dick Cole, Cheryl Law, Jim McGuire, and Mike Paoli. **Committee Chairpersons:** Annual Membership Meeting Coordinator, Perry Nouis; Communications, Dick Cole; Development, Joe Purka; Elections, Kathy McCollom; Finance, Phil Ratliff; Membership, Christine Queen; Oral History, John Gura; Website, Jim McGuire; SAF/PA Liaison, Lou Timmons.

“Annual Meeting (cont’d from p. 1)

country. The base hosts a versatile fleet of cargo and air refueling aircraft from the C-5M Super Galaxy, and C-17 Globemaster III, to the KC-46 Pegasus.

Visitors to Fairfield can wander through the uncrowded wine country ambiance and rolling vineyards of nearby Suisun Valley.

“The hospitality offerings have greatly expanded in the 14 years since the last annual meeting here,” Ross noted. “You will find more high-end wineries, distilleries, craft breweries, olive tasting venues and dining options at more reasonable prices than in the nearby wine country.”

Filling out the itinerary will be the customary annual meeting activities—the membership meeting, guest speakers, receptions, luncheons, and the concluding awards banquet and Hall of Fame induction ceremony on Saturday evening.

Among the optional events that will be offered to members will be Fairfield’s most iconic destination, the Jelly Belly factory. Visitors to the factory can take a self-guided tour to see how the famous jelly beans are made. The experience includes interactive exhibits and plenty of sweet, wild-flavor samples.

The other optional events will include a golf outing at Rancho Solano Golf Course Thursday morning and complimentary wine tasting at the hotel Friday evening. Details about those events will be provided separately to those who register.

You will also find the American Armory Museum, which showcases military vehicles and memorabilia from World War II, the Korean War, and beyond. Highlights include

News and Notes



Maintenance crews service a C-5M Super Galaxy during sunrise at Travis Air Force Base AFB, Calif. Aircraft maintenance specialists ensure that every component of these aircraft is maintained to the most exacting standards. These experts ensure that the aircraft in their care are ready to fly at a moment’s notice so that pilots can safely and effectively complete their mission. (U.S. Air Force photo by Heide Couch)



For a small entrance fee, Jelly Belly offers self-guided factory tours and a museum experience from 9:15 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily, seven days a week. (Photo courtesy of Jelly Belly Visitor Center)

General Patton’s command jeep and a rare World War II Achilles tank.

Fairfield has much to offer. We encourage members to take advantage of it. To register for the meeting, look for the registration form that is available in this issue

of *News and Notes*, or check the Association’s website at <https://www.afpaa.clubexpress.com> for online registration which is now open .



Ken Raimondi addresses participants at the 2025 DINFOS Training Days at Fort George G. Meade on Sept. 10, 2025. Raimondi was the 2022 Best of the Best awardee by AFPAA. (Photo by Mass Communications Seaman Jessica Hall)

Information schoolhouse holds “Training Days”

By Clem Gaines

The Defense Information School hosted its 2025 Training Days, Sept. 10-11, at the schoolhouse on Fort George G. Meade, Md.

The two-day event supported the professional development of DOD public affairs and visual information personnel under their motto of “Strength Thru Truth.”

The training days kicked-off with a five-person panel of experts offering updates, with questions and answers, on artificial information use in Public Affairs.

The military and civilian experts included Ken Raimondi, a former Air Force civilian now with Adobe. Ken was AFPAA’s 2022 Brig. Gen. James W. Hart “Best of the Best” winner.

The second-day presentation highlighted Defense Media Activity services and products with a heavy emphasis on video sharing across the department.

Multiple breakout sessions were available for the more than 100 attendees. Subject-matter experts hosted

briefings on podcasting, writing for video, Defense Visual Information Distribution System, visual storytelling and more. The Adobe team, including Raimondi, presented a briefing on rapid content creation.

In addition, the schoolhouse highlighted Pavilion, its online learning capability, as well as its mobile training team designed to keep communicators in the field up-to-date in communication capabilities.

Representatives from the Army, Air Force and Navy associations met students and staff during lunch and between classes.

DINFOS officials stated that they plan to host this event annually. Retired and separated military and civilian personnel are eligible to attend to update their awareness of the ever-changing technologies and process in communication.

DINFOS is the premier learning institution for organizational communication across the Department of Defense, the United States Government and the international community.



The T-6A Texan II is a single-engine, two-seat primary trainer designed to train Joint Primary Pilot Training, or JPPT, students in basic flying skills common to U.S. Air Force and Navy pilots. Produced by Raytheon Aircraft, the T-6A Texan II is a military trainer version of Raytheon's Beechcraft/Pilatus PC-9 Mk II. (U.S. Air Force photo)

Once a PA, always a PA eager to tell the Air Force story

By Bob McCullough, APR
Fellow PRSA

At a recent community gathering, I mentioned to a local newspaper editor that Air Force aircraft use the airspace over our ranching community in the Texas Hill Country northwest of San Antonio to carry out an important national defense mission—training highly-qualified instructor pilots.

Intrigued, the editor asked me to obtain details and submit an over-the-transom news feature story about the frequent visitors seen in the skies above.

My research indicated the swift, highly-maneuverable aircraft—T-6A Texan IIs—launched from the 559th Flying Training Squadron at Randolph AFB, the unit that provides T-6 Pilot Instructor Training (PIT) for the Air Force.

With assists from a trio of PAs at Randolph, I obtained current information about PIT and interviewed the commander of the 559th, the articulate Lt. Col. Benjamin Peacock. Those helpful PAs were Sean Worrell of the 12th Flying Training Wing, Benjamin Faske of the 19th Air Force and Christa D’Andrea of Air Education and Training Command.

The news feature story about flying training over Kerr County ran on the front page of the *Hill Country Community Journal* and included an eye-catching photo of two T-6s in flight. This turned out to be a successful collaboration between current PAs and one “vintage” PA who hung up his blue uniform more than two decades ago. It also underscored my belief that once a PA, always a PA eager to tell the Air Force story.



Read a good book lately that your colleagues should read?

Feel free to submit a review for publication in News and Notes! Send your submissions to editor Dick Cole at dickcole1853@verizon.net. Ideally, reviews should be 500 to 700 words.

Sholtis named SAF/PA Deputy Director

Dr. Tadd Sholtis, a member of the Senior Executive Service, was named Principal Deputy Director, Secretary of the Air Force Office of Public Affairs, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va., Aug. 22.

He is responsible for supporting the Director of Public Affairs, Brig. Gen. Allen Herritage, in creating and executing strategies to build informed public support for the Air Force and Space Force. He provides guidance and policy oversight for internal information, community and media relations and security review programs during peacetime and war, as well as resources and readiness oversight for nearly 4,500 active duty, Guard and Reserve Airmen and civilians. Dr. Sholtis also develops and integrates Air Force and Space Force staff-level strategic communication plans supporting major policy and programming initiatives.

Over the past three decades, predominantly as an active duty Airman, Dr. Sholtis served as the personal public affairs officer for the commander of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan; the director of public affairs for U.S. Air Forces Central Command; the director of public affairs for Air Combat Command; the chief of the Air Force press desk at the Pentagon; and a communications planner and adviser for NATO, the Coalition Provisional Authority and the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Prior to his current position, he served as the chief of strategy and assessments for the Secretary of the Air Force's Office of Public Affairs at the Pentagon.

Dr. Sholtis was a 1993 distinguished graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy with a B.S. in English. Additionally, he holds two masters degrees—a 1994 M.A. in



Dr. Tadd Sholtis, a member of the Senior Executive Service, was named Principal Deputy Director, Secretary of the Air Force Office of Public Affairs, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va., in August.

English from Penn State and a 2007 M.S. in Strategic Intelligence from the National Defense Intelligence College, Washington, D.C. He completed his doctorate in Philosophy (Military Strategy) at Air University, Maxwell AFB, Ala., in 2011.

He is the author of *Military Strategy as Public Discourse: America's war in Afghanistan*, a part of the Cass Military Studies, published in 2013.



The News and Notes is your publication!

We encourage your submissions! Tell us your professional news, share a professional book review, express your thoughts and comments. Got an interesting career story? Share! Have interesting photos from your PA days? Share! Send submissions to Dick Cole, editor, at dickcole1853@verizon.net!

AFPAA Communications Chair records a song about the American Legion Riders

COLONIAL HEIGHTS, VA (Legiontown) — Richard M. "Dick" Cole, a 72-year-old member of The American Legion, Sons of The American Legion and American Legion Riders, was moved to write a song after participating in June's Virginia Legacy Run.

"I thought a rock song about participating in motorcycle rides with my Legion brothers and sisters would be a great way to bring attention to ALR and the efforts of the organization, nationwide, in fundraising for veterans' causes." Cole is a veteran of performing with several Virginia rock bands including "Point Blank," "OTR," "Riptide," "Fastrac" and "Four of a Kind."

His call sign while flying in the Air Force was "Cozy." "I sat in on the drums with a band performing at the Mather AFB Officer's Club while I was in undergraduate navigator training. One of my instructors knew of a famous drummer named Cozy Cole and gave me Cozy as a call sign. Now, I use it as my motorcycle road name with the American Legion Riders and the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association," Cole said.

"Ride With the Wind" is being distributed by CD Baby and was made available to YouTube Music, Spotify, Pandora, and Deezer on Sept. 8. It is downloadable from Spotify [here](#). It will soon also be added to Apple Music and iTunes.

"I thought it would be something great that could be used under videos from ALR events. Any monetization that comes from playing or downloading the song will be donated to the American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation through the Legion Riders at my Post," Cole said.

Cole has been a musician, photographer and writer since high school. He served 20 years in the Air Force in a variety of jobs, retiring as a major in 1992. He also served as a government supervisory public affairs specialist, retiring in 2013 as a GS-15.

"Writing music and serving as my post's public relations officer and historian allow me to continue to be creative and keep me pretty busy," Cole said. "I'm not in gigging bands any longer but do get together



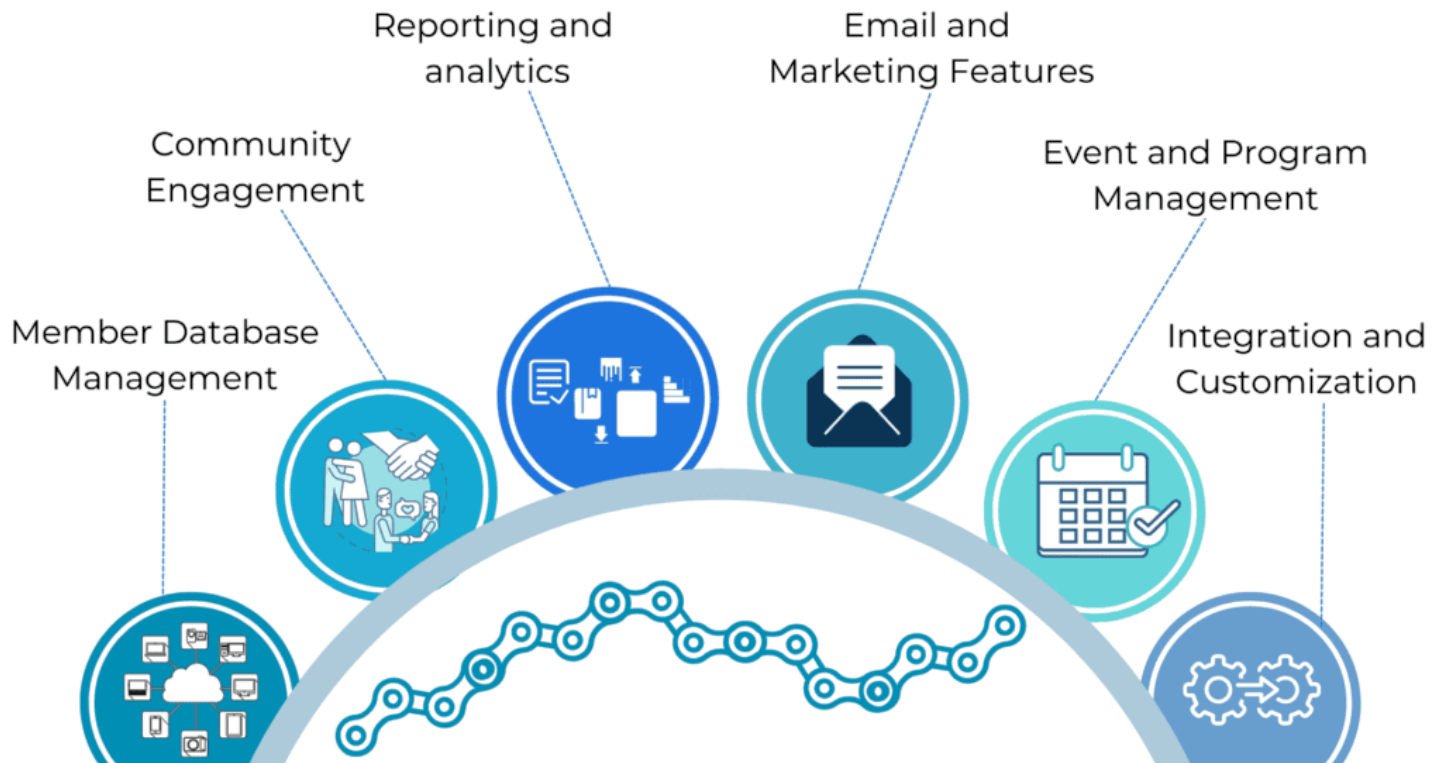
AFPAA Communications Chair Dick Cole serves as American Legion Colonial Heights Post 284's public relations officer and historian, and as the Southern Virginia American Legion Riders' historian. He's also currently the editor of the American Legion Department of Virginia's newsletter, Virginia Legionnaire. He also previously served as his post's third vice commander.

weekly to jam with friends in the Richmond area, and they assisted with getting this song recorded."

This is Cole's first original song, but not his last. "My friends and I have recorded other songs, including one about my Vietnam experience, which are presently working their way through the CD Baby distribution process."



Cole at his kit performing with the Northern Virginia classic rock band, "Riptide."



AFPAA Partners With Club Express

By Jim McGuire
AFPAA Board Member

AFPAA is rolling out a series of updates to its website to consolidate the association's administrative functions and enhance the security of our members.

The updates have been developed in partnership with Club Express, an organization that specializes in developing the technology and administrative systems that veterans' and non-profit organizations need to more efficiently manage their operations.

At the end of September, members received a welcome email from Club Express that, after they

logged in with their new password credentials, enabled them to use a new, password-protected platform to interact with AFPAA.

With this new platform, members can now engage in financial transactions, like registering for the annual meeting, renewing their membership, or ordering a challenge coin, with far more security and safety than before. For prospective members, the platform enabled the development of a new, more user friendly, step by step membership application process.

Club Express also provides members the ability to view an enhanced online membership directory with a simple but pow-

erful search function, personalize their own directory listing with graphics and additional information, and control how much of their contact information is publicly visible. There is a new events calendar that highlights upcoming association events and facilitates signing up for an event directly through the calendar.

Additional features are on the way, including a simple way for members to make a charitable donation to the association and a searchable document library to store association records.

While the September welcome email was the first exposure to Club Express for most members, the association's board of directors has been working with Club Ex-

press for some time on a series of projects to prepare for the transition. The first project was the development of, and transfer to, a technologically advanced membership database to replace the outmoded system AFPAA had been using to keep track of the association's almost 500 members.

With that project in place, the next step was the development of a secure and more cost-efficient financial transaction system, closely integrated with the new database, to safely handle membership applications and renewals, annual meeting registrations, donations, and challenge coin purchases.

While all that work happened behind the scenes, it provided the backbone for a new centralized management system with stand-

ardized processes, making it easier for future AFPAA leaders to master the complexities of managing a dynamic organization.

Club Express has a lot of capability to offer, but for new users and system administrators alike, there's a lot to learn. With that in mind, AFPAA will be providing orientation sessions to help members learn how to make use of the site's many features. Be on the lookout for emails announcing the schedule for orientation sessions soon.



Deadline for submissions to the October-December issue of *News and Notes* is December 1!

Send your submissions to Editor Dick Cole at dickcole1853@verizon.net!

AFPAA Accepting Nominees for Hall of Fame 2026 Class Until Oct. 31

If you are a member of the Air Force Public Affairs Association, the Combat Camera Association, the Air Force Musicians Association, or the Air Force Broadcasters Alumni group, and know of a deserving candidate for induction into the Hall of Fame, you can submit a nomination to the Hall of Fame Committee at <https://afpaaa.org/halloffame.html>.

Selections for induction into the

Hall of Fame are made on an annual basis. The deadline for submitting a nomination is October 31st of each year.

The Hall of Fame Committee consists of representatives from AFPAA, the Combat Camera Association, the Air Force Musicians Association, and the Air Force Broadcasters Alumni group. The committee reviews all nominations received and makes recommendations for each year's class of induc-

tees. The committee's recommendations are then shared with the SAF/PA Director for his or her input, prior to a final selection decision by the AFPAA Board of Directors.

If you need additional information about the Hall of Fame or the nominating process, please send your questions to the committee via email to: hof@afpaaa.org or contact Committee Chair Art Forster at aforster67@gmail.com.

LORD GUARD AND GUIDE



**THOMAS FRANCIS
FITZPATRICK**

Thomas F. Fitzpatrick, 83, of Warrensburg, Mo., passed away peacefully at his home April 9.

Fitzpatrick was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., on June 26, 1941. He attended Xavier High School in New York City and graduated from Fairfield University, Conn., in 1964 with a bachelor of arts degree in history.

In 1978 he earned his master of science in public services and safety from Central Missouri State University.

He enlisted in the Air Force in April 1965, and was first assigned to the 319th Bombardment Wing office of information, Grand Forks, N.D., where he served primarily as a historian for the 319th Bombard-

ment Wing and the 321st Strategic Missile Wing.

He was commissioned as a distinguished graduate of Officers Training School, Medina AFB, Texas, in November 1966.

During OTS, he met his future wife, Joan. They married on September 9, 1967. Over their 50 years of marriage, they raised three children, and an assortment of dogs, cats, and horses.

His first assignment as an officer was as the deputy director of information for 19th Air Force, Seymour Johnson AFB, N.C., from December 1966 through June 1967.

From July 1967 to September 1968, he was the director of information for the 1st Fighter Wing of Selfridge AFB, Mich.

In October 1968, Fitzpatrick became the director of information for the 327th Air Division, Taipei Air Station, Taiwan.

In 1971, he was assigned to Headquarters, Aerospace Defense Command, Peterson AFB, Colo., where he served as the deputy chief of the public information division; chief of the internal information division; special assistant to the director of information for social actions activities, and finally as the chief of the community relations division. In addition, he co-founded and directed the activities of the

Aerospace Defense Command headquarters human relations traveling team which evaluated the human relations climate within the command.

He was next assigned to Turkey where he was the director of public relations for the Central Treaty Organization—CENTO.

Upon his return to the U.S. he was assigned to Maxwell AFB, Ala., as the national director of public relations for the Civil Air Patrol.

In 1974, he volunteered for a career broadening assignment with the 351st Strategic Missile Wing, Whiteman AFB, Mo., as a Minuteman missile combat crew commander.

Following the Whiteman assignment, he returned to the information career field as the director of corporate communications for Headquarters Strategic Air Command, Offutt AFB, Neb.—a position he held until he retired as a lieutenant colonel in 1985.

One of Fitzpatrick's proudest accomplishments was producing the Strategic Air Command's 40th anniversary film narrated by Charlton Heston. The focus of the film was on SAC's people and mission.

Fitzpatrick graduated from the basic information specialist course, Defense Information

School, Fort Slocum, N.Y., in 1965; Air Force Graduate Studies Course in Public Communications at the University of Oklahoma in 1972; Squadron Officer School at Maxwell AFB, Ala., in 1973; Air Command and Staff College by correspondence in 1977; and the Air University National Security Management Program in 1982.

His awards and decorations include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with one oak leaf cluster, Air Force Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Combat Readiness Medal, Air Force Good Conduct Medal, Air Force Overseas Short-Tour Ribbon, Air Force Overseas Long-Tour Ribbon, Air Force longevity service award with four oak leaf clusters, Air Force Marksmanship Award, and Air Force Training Ribbon.

After Tom retired from the Air Force, the family returned to their Spring Ridge home in Warrensburg, Mo. He was assistant director of public relations for Central Missouri State University; was an agent and broker for Principal Mutual Life Insurance Company, and retired a second time as the director of public affairs for Wentworth Military Academy.

Fitzpatrick was a fourth degree knight in the Knights of Columbus, and a lifetime member of The American Legion.

He was preceded in death by his wife, parents, grandparents, and in-laws. Fitzpatrick will be missed by his children, daughter Jeni, granddaughter Jia Li, and Jeni's husband Matt; daughter Katie and her husband Cody; Michael; brother, niece, nephew, cousins,

and extended family members and countless friends across the globe.

His interment was held April 16 at the Missouri State Veterans Cemetery.

Make memorial donations to the Air Force Public Affairs Association.

Tom Fitzpatrick was my second boss at my first Air Force duty assignment—Headquarters, Strategic Air Command, Offutt AFB, Neb.—where I was a second lieutenant in the Internal Information Division. Tom was my division chief.

When I think of him, I can't help but smile. I remember him as a humorous guy and a bit of a character. He drove a snazzy red Honda Prelude. He used a tool to etch the car's VIN number into all the glass windows, assuring me it would deter any potential thief. I guess it worked?

When it came time for me to change duty stations, his farewell gifts to me were a series of gags, including a license plate holder because I had been stopped at the front gate for not having a license plate on the front of my car. (I thought the second plate was a spare. Ha ha.)

We shared a fondness for Turkey; he had been stationed in Izmir, and I had been a dependent at Incirlik. He gave me a book titled Scotch and Holy Water, by John Tumpane—a memoir of amusing anecdotes that captured the unique experience of living in that country. I look forward to another entertaining read of it in honor of Tom. He had a good heart, and I know he will be missed.

—Carla Sylvester



MARY E. MCHALE

Mary E. McHale, 62, passed away peacefully March 22, 2025, in Panama City, Fla.

A proud veteran, Mary honorably served more than 20 years in the Air Force, retiring with the rank of master sergeant. Her service was marked by dedication, strength, and unwavering commitment to her country.

Mary had a warm spirit and a gift for making friends wherever life took her. Her sense of humor, loyalty, and compassion touched the lives of many.

She was preceded in death by her beloved parents, Thomas and Gertrude McHale; her brother, Richard McHale; and her cherished nephew, Clint McHale. She is survived by her loving niece, Chelsey McHale, who carries forward her legacy of love and strength.

A funeral service with full military honors was held September 19, 2025, at the Delaware Veterans Memorial Cemetery.

(cont'd on next page)

Mary worked for me at Air Forces Northern. I know she worked in the United Kingdom, New Jersey and Washington state as well. Sorry I don't know the years. She was a great PA and an even better friend.

—**Leslie McCoy Brown**

Mary was on my PA team at Shaw. Super NCO and a great person. Rest in heavenly peace my friend.

—**Bob Williams**



**PATSY JEAN
BRAGG**

Patsy Jane Bragg, 93, a long-time resident of Williamsburg, Va., died peacefully July 25, 2025.

A proud Arkansan by birth, she embraced her love for Virginia, making the state her home for more than 50 years.

She was the daughter of Tomlinson Newton Means, a farmer, teacher, and county elected official, and Martha Barris Jorgenson Means, a homemaker from

Woodberry, Ark. She was the last surviving of twelve children born to Tom and Marthy Means, with long-standing family roots in Calhoun County.

After graduating from Hampton High School, she attended Henderson State Teachers College in Arkadelphia, Ark., leaving school early to join her older sisters living in Washington, D.C. after World War II. She completed her education at the University of Maryland, College Park, earning a bachelor's degree in business administration.

She spent most of her career working for the federal government as a civil service employee proudly serving nearly all branches of the armed forces.

She spent five years with the Navy's Military Seas Transportation Service with a temporary assignment to the Army Corps of Engineers, and thirty years with the office of the Air Force Surgeon General where she rose to the position of Director of Congressional and Public Affairs.

She was most proud of her advocacy for salary and health benefits for military doctors, dentists, and their dependents as well as championing the establishment of military physician assistant and midwifery programs.

She received many honors and awards including the highest military medicine civilian award, The Association of Military Surgeon Medal, for her advocacy and health policy support for military survivors of Operation Ranch Hand, the gov-

ernment program that air delivered defoliants during the Vietnam War. She was past First Vice President of the Virginia Press Women and a past Regional Director of the National Federation of Press Women.

After her retirement from government service, she embarked on a second successful career as a real estate agent with Long and Foster, rising from top rookie to one of the top selling agents in the Tidewater region. A second retirement well into her 70's allowed her more time for her many other passions including grandchildren, her precious dog Frisky and golf as a long-time member of the Williamsburg Country Club.

She is preceded in death by her son, Kevin Bragg, and granddaughter, Patricia Collake. She is survived by her children Sherrie Lessans (Douglas), Debra Bragg, Sandra Mills (Jeff) and Michael Bragg (Sheena). Also survived by grandchildren Harrison Lessans, Robyn Lessans (Dani), and Alexandra LaPrevotte (Robert Dumville), as well as one great-grandchild, Daniel Swinson.

Her funeral service was held August 5, 2025 at Bucktrout Funeral Home with interment at Williamsburg Memorial Park.

Pat was my former boss, mentor and friend. She was the reason I became a PAO.

—**Gerda Parr**



Dalton Scholarship recipients named

Congratulations to the six recipients for the 2025 Brig. Gen. H.J. Dalton Scholarship Program. They are:

- **SrA Renee Blundon**
Public Affairs Specialist
432nd Wing, Creech AFB, Nev.
- **GS-11 Adrian Cadiz**
Assistant Director of Operations
4th Combat Camera Squadron,
Joint Base Charleston, S.C.
- **TSgt Lucretia Cunningham**
Public Affairs Specialist
926th Wing, Nellis AFB, Nev.
- **A1C Malia Heemsoth**
Content Strategist
Air Force Production,
Defense Media Activity,
Fort Meade, Md.
- **Capt Jymil Licorish**
Public Affairs Advisor
33rd Fighter Wing,
Eglin AFB, Fla.
- **A1C Charles Merk**
Jazz Trumpet,
Band of the West,
Joint Base San Antonio–Lackland, Texas

Normally, five \$1,000 scholarships are awarded each year, but extra funds were available this year. Payment will be made to the scholarship recipients

upon successful completion of approved course work.

Chuck Merlo, chairman of the association's Dalton Scholarship Committee, said "Fifteen applications were received this year. Each applicant was recognized by their supervisors as outstanding performers. AFPAA wishes we could have provided each a scholarship. However, with the funds available our priority was to select recipients based upon their course of study and what would provide the greatest possible return to the Air Force."

The scholarship program honors the legacy of Brig. Gen. H.J. Dalton, the first career Public Affairs officer to be promoted to brigadier general and lead SAF/PA.

"General Dalton worked tirelessly throughout his military and civilian careers to promote the advancement of the Public Affairs profession. He was absolutely committed to mentoring and encouraging the professional development of Public Affairs personnel" said Merlo.

Any enlisted, officer or civilian Air Force member, whether active, guard or reserve, working in one of the specialties of the Public Affairs career field – Band, Broadcasting, Visual Information/Combat Camera and Public Affairs – is eligible for a Dalton Scholarship.

The 2026 application window is March 1 - May 31.



International Association
of Business Communicators

To earn the trust and confidence of the American people, the Air Force needs talented public affairs professionals who have the knowledge and expertise required in today's information environment. Programs offered by the [Public Relations Society of America \(PRSA\)](#) or the [International Association of Business Communicators \(IABC\)](#) can help Air Force PAs develop the advanced public relations skills that will enable them to provide expert communications counsel to commanders at all levels.

That's why AFPAA strongly supports membership in PRSA or IABC and urges PAs to earn the credentials these organizations offer. As part of its commitment to support the active force, AFPAA has established a stipend program to help PAs offset the costs involved in applying for accreditation by PRSA or certification by IABC.

Up to four stipends of \$250 each per fiscal year are available to Air Force personnel who successfully complete one of the PRSA or IABC credentialing programs. For more information, go to <https://afpaaa.org/prsa.html>. If you have any questions, contact us at scholarship@afpaaa.org.



Defense Information School

Hall of Fame

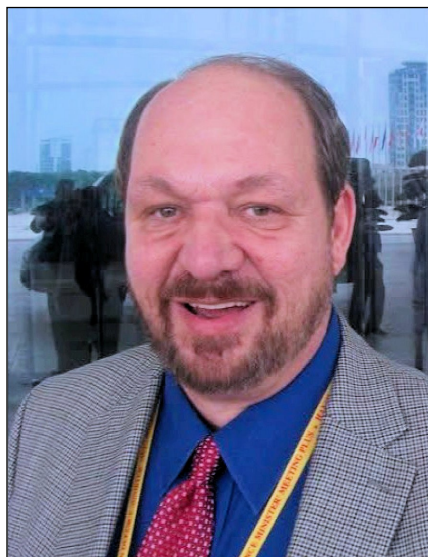
The Defense Information School Hall of Fame honors distinguished alumni, living or deceased, who have made extraordinary and lasting contributions at the highest levels in public service, industry, the military or academia for at least 20 years.

Nominees come from the fields of public affairs, public relations, print journalism, photojournalism, broadcast journalism, visual information, photography, videography, multimedia, or broadcast maintenance engineering and other related fields.

The 2025 HOF selectees were inducted into the hall in a ceremony at the schoolhouse, Sept. 4.

Three Air Force veterans were among the inductees this year. The 2025 DINFOS HOF class included Dr. Joseph V. Trahan III, Army Lt. Col. retired; John D. Banusiewicz, Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Retired; Sarah L. Hood, Air Force Master Sgt., retired; Ken Hackman, Air Force veteran and Amelia L. Robertson, Air National Guard Senior Master Sgt. retired.

It is notable that Banusiewicz and Hackman were previously inducted into the Air Force Public Affairs Hall of Fame. Banusiewicz was inducted into the Air Force PA HOF in 2023 and Hackman was inducted into the "pioneer class" in 2020.



John D. Banusiewicz

Banusiewicz is a native of Lynn, Mass. He enlisted in the Air Force in 1974 with the goal of attending the Defense Information School; however, the Air Force had already filled all its DINFOS seats for fiscal year 1975. So, he was sent to computer programming training and spent most of his first enlistment developing and maintaining programs for the Military Airlift Command's aircrew resource management system at Scott Air Force Base, Ill.

In 1978, he became eligible to retrain and graduated as the distinguished honor graduate of his DINFOS class. He returned to Scott as a member of the base newspaper staff, then moved to MAC Headquarters where he served in multiple public affairs roles from 1978 to

1985. His service included a 15-month tour as base newspaper editor at Lajes Field, Azores, followed by a two-year tour as non-commissioned officer in charge of public affairs at Lajes. In 1984, he received an on-the-spot promotion to technical sergeant through the Stripes for Exceptional Performers program, presented by the MAC commander in chief.

From 1987 to 1991, Banusiewicz served as Tactical Air Command's newspaper consultant and internal information superintendent at Langley Air Force Base, Va. During Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, he was managing editor of the *Desert Defender*, a weekly Air Force newspaper for forward-deployed airmen. The publication earned a Department of Defense Thomas Jefferson Award for special achievement and a Blue Pencil Award from the National Association of Government Communicators.

He later returned to DINFOS, first as a public affairs instructor and then as a journalism instructor. In 1994, he joined the Air Force News Agency at Kelly Air Force Base, Texas, serving as the Air Force newspaper consultant until his retirement as a senior master sergeant on 1996. Immediately afterward, he began his Defense Department civil service career at DINFOS, which was then located at Fort Meade, Md.

There, he served as lead instructor and course coordinator for the Editor's Course, later becoming journalism division chief and the Public Affairs Department's academic director.

In 2008, Banusiewicz joined the American Forces Information Service in Alexandria, Va., as managing editor of the American Forces Press Service, a role that included traveling worldwide with senior Department civilian and military leaders to report on their activities. When AFIS transitioned into the Defense Media Activity, headquartered at Fort Meade, he remained managing editor of the renamed DoD News until his retirement from federal service in 2020.

Upon his retirement, he received the Office of the Secretary of Defense Medal for Exceptional Civilian Service.



Sarah E. Hood

Sarah Hood—a third-generation California girl—was born in San Francisco on Feb. 16, 1956, 12 minutes after her sister, which

came as quite a shock to her father, who had requested one child, not two.

Hood joined the Air Force in 1975, graduating from basic training Dec. 19. She went to Keesler Air Force Base, Miss., for 20 weeks of air traffic control school and some time as an associate instructor before reporting to Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas.

In the first three years of her Air Force career, Hood channeled Goldilocks and the three bears, trying on two jobs before finding the right fit. From the radar approach control facility, she moved to the entomology shop. Following advice from a civilian coworker whose wife was the secretary in the base public affairs office, Hood applied to retrain. And, just like Goldilocks, that third job was the charm.

Hood went to Fort Benjamin Harrison, Ind., in August 1979, graduating from the Defense Information School Information Specialist Course in October 1979.

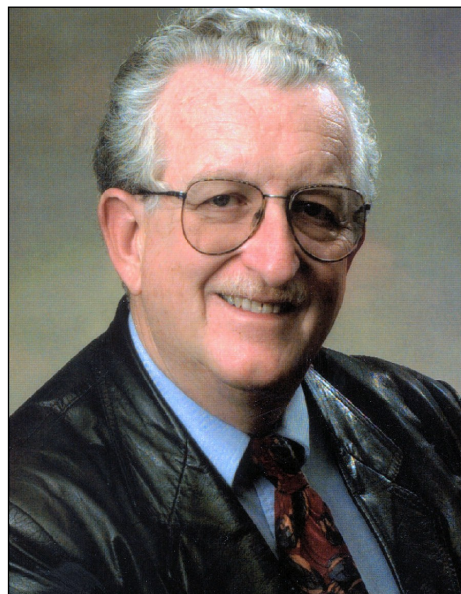
Next came assignments to Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.; Mather AFB, Calif.; Kunsan Air Base, Korea; George Air Force Base, Calif.; Air Force News Service at the Pentagon; and Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany.

Then Hood landed at what is now known as Baltimore-Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport at about 11:30 p.m. March 31, 1997, to teach journalism at DINFOS.

She retired from the Air Force on Dec. 1, 1999, went home to

change clothes, and reported back to the classroom in civvies. In January 2004, she took over as the Public Affairs Department academic director. But when the Journalism Preparatory Course instructor, Faye Jones, was planning her retirement, she insisted that Hood apply for her job, Jones was right. Another good fit.

But, as they say, all good things must come to an end, and, in 2020, Hood retired.



Kenneth "Ken" Hackman

They call Ken Hackman "the Godfather" of military visual information. The first part of this distinguished title comes from his founding of the Air Force photojournalism program in 1971 and shaping it into what it has become.

The program showcased his ability to mentor young photographers and give them the training and expertise they need to be successful. During his Air Force career, and after his retirement, he was known and respected for his many "photojournalism seminars"

(cont'd on next page)

he conducted across the military

The second part of this title comes from Ken's own photographic portfolio including: photographing the Vietnam War; five summer and three winter Olympic games; and the final atmospheric atomic bomb testing in the Pacific. During his career he photographed multiple military contingency exercises as well as humanitarian and news events around the world.

Hackman's love of photography propelled the Lancaster, Pa., native into an Air Force photography career at the age of 17. He left the service after his first enlistment and, in 1960, he became a civil service photographer with the Aerospace Audiovisual Service until his retirement in 1995.

Ken took the official photographs of Air Force One from 1975 to 2000 and most Air Force aircraft from 1960 to 1995. For his final Air Force One official photograph he flew to South Dakota to photograph the President's aircraft overflying Mount Rushmore.

From 1998 to 2010, he photographed the annual Holiday Notes from Home Tour to overseas bases with the AF Reserve Band and guest artists including Lee Greenwood, Blues Traveler, Kid Rock, Hootie and the Blowfish, Dick Hardwick, Melina Leah and Jamie O'Neal.

Hackman's photographic and management achievements have been recognized most recently by the National Press Photographers Association where he was given the 2013 Joseph A. Sprague award. Established in 1949, it is the highest honor in the field of photojour-



nalism.

Hackman was nominated in 1996 as one of six Air Force civilians for the DoD Distinguished Civilian Service Award.

In June 2011, he was awarded the Department of Defense's Exceptional Public Service Award for his years of coordinating,

directing and conducting the Military Photographer of the Year, the Military Videographer of the Year and the Military Graphic Artist of the Year competitions and as co-founder and director of the DoD Worldwide Military Photographer workshop. For this service he was awarded The Office of the Secretary of Defense Medal for Exceptional Public Service.

He is a veteran of the "film age" of photography; however, he has thoroughly embraced the new "digital age." He feels strongly that, although technology has changed drastically, the need for creative visual communications has not.



The stars come out to shine...

Three flag officers attended the dedication of the Air Force Public Affairs Hall of Fame display dedication at the Defense Information School, April 22. Joining AFPA Board Chairman Eric Schnaible, far right, were (l. to r.): retired Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder, new SAF/PA Director Brig. Gen. Allen Herritage, and retired Brig. Gen. Ron Rand. (Photo courtesy DINFOS)

AFPAA ANNUAL MEETING REGISTRATION FORM

Name: _____ First Annual Meeting? Yes ___ No ___

Address: _____ Are you a new member? Yes ___ No ___

Email: _____

Phone: _____ (Do you accept texts? Yes ___ No ___)

Guest(s) (Please indicate how you want names reflected on name tags)

How many in your party will go on the bus tour to Travis AFB? _____

Do you want to play golf on Thursday morning, April 30th, 8 am-1 pm, at Solano GC (Extra cost: \$69*): Yes ___ No ___



Full Registration - Includes all events, except golf on Thursday.

Member Attending _____ x \$250 = \$ _____
 Guests Attending _____ x \$250 = \$ _____
 Non-Member _____ x \$300 = \$ _____

Individual Event Registration

Icebreaker Reception – Hotel, Thursday, April 30, 5-7 p.m.

Member Attending _____ x \$40 = \$ _____
 Guests Attending _____ x \$40 = \$ _____
 Non-Member _____ x \$45 = \$ _____

Breakfast – Hotel, Friday, May 1st, 6-7:30 a.m.

Member Attending _____ x \$40 = \$ _____
 Guests Attending _____ x \$40 = \$ _____
 Non-Member _____ x \$45 = \$ _____

President's Luncheon – Travis AFB, Friday, May 1st
 (Includes bus transportation from the hotel to Travis AFB
 for Friday's tours)

Member Attending _____ x \$70 = \$ _____
 Guests Attending _____ x \$70 = \$ _____
 Non-Member _____ x \$75 = \$ _____

President's Luncheon Only– Travis AFB, Friday, May 1st

Member Attending _____ x \$50 = \$ _____
 Guests Attending _____ x \$50 = \$ _____
 Non-Member _____ x \$55 = \$ _____

Breakfast – Hotel, Saturday, May 2nd, 6-8 a.m.

Member Attending _____ x \$40 = \$ _____
 Guests Attending _____ x \$40 = \$ _____
 Non-Member _____ x \$45 = \$ _____

SAF/PA Director's Luncheon, Hotel, Noon Saturday, May 2nd

Member Attending _____ x \$60 = \$ _____
 Guests Attending _____ x \$60 = \$ _____
 Non-Member _____ x \$65 = \$ _____

AFPAA's Annual Awards Reception & Banquet, Hotel
 Saturday, May 2nd, 6-9:30 p.m. Please indicate your meal choice(s) :
 *Beef _____ *Fish _____ *Chicken _____ *Vegetarian _____

Member Attending _____ x \$105 = \$ _____
 Guests Attending _____ x \$105 = \$ _____
 Non-Member _____ x \$110 = \$ _____

(*Use M for Member Choice/G for Guest(s) & Non-Member Choices)

Please make checks or money orders payable to: **AFPAA**

Centurion Donation - \$100 \$ _____

Mail form and check/money order to:

Total Remitted \$ _____

Phil Ratliff, Treasurer
868 Trevino Terrace
Lady Lake, FL 32159

Optional Events:

Free Wine Tasting, Friday, May 1st, 6-8 p.m., Hilton Hotel, Number Attending _____
 Jelly Belly Factory Tour, Friday afternoon, May 1st, Number Attending _____

Meeting Registrations are **Due NLT Midnight April 1, 2026**. Registrations received after this date will be charged a \$25 Per Person Late Fee.

Hotel Reservations: AFPAA has a block of rooms at the Hilton Garden Inn Hotel in Fairfield, CA, at the rate of \$110.00+tax per night (single or double). The rate is valid April 30-May 2, 2026, while rooms are available. Make reservations at: <https://afpaaa.org/hotel-2026.html>, or call the hotel at (707) 426-6900. The reservation code is "AFPA25". Deadline for hotel reservations is April 9, 2026. A very limited number of rooms will be available at this rate up to three days prior and three days post the established meeting dates: Check-in April 30, 2026/Check-out May 3, 2026. * The cost of golf is \$69/person, payable at the Pro Shop. Further details will be provided separately to those wanting to play.

Moving Up

Congratulations to the below public affairs, visual information, and band personnel on their promotion selections! These selections are a testament to your tremendous leadership, exceptional performance, and consummate professionalism.

Colonel

- Justin Brockhoff, HQ United States Air Forces in Europe, Ramstein Air Base, Germany
- Tamara Fischer, Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, Honolulu, Hawaii
- Francis Hartnett, 9th Air Force (Air Forces Central) inbound, Shaw AFB, S.C.
- Rebecca Heyse, HQ Air Force Special Operations Command, Hurlburt Field, Fla.
- Malinda Singleton, Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, Pentagon

Major

- Kaila Bryant, US Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colo.
- Ieva Bytauberg, 325th Fighter Wing, Tyndall AFB, Fla.
- Renee Douglas, HQ US Cyber Command, Ft Meade, Md.
- Noah Emerson, 52nd Fighter Wing, Spangdahlem AB, Germany
- Mackenzie Golka, Air Force ROTC, Clemson University
- Faith Hirschmann, 354th Fighter

- Wing, Eielson AFB, Alaska
- Sarah Johnson, SAF/PA Media Operations Division, Pentagon
- Kevyn Kaler, SAF/PA Media Operations Division, Pentagon
- Madeline Krpan, 20th Fighter Wing, Shaw AFB, S.C.
- Jacqueline Lockett, SAF/PA Media Operations Division, Pentagon
- Danielle Lucero, Joint Planning Support Element, Norfolk, Va.
- Katie Mueller, SAF/PA Engagements Division, Pentagon
- Amy Rasmussen, HQ Air Force Special Operations Command, Hurlburt Field, Fla.
- Kara Rone, Squadron Officer School, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
- Nicolle Roose, 57th Wing, Nellis AFB, Nev.
- Barrett Schroeder, HQ Air Combat Command, JB Langley-Eustis, Va.
- Nikita Thorpe, 23rd Wing, Moody AFB, Ga.
- Scarlett Trujillo, HQ Air Education and Training Command, JBSA-Randolph, Texas
- Claire Waldo, 355th Wing, Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz.

Major (USAFR)

- Justin Clark, AFOSI/PA, Quantico, Va.
- Marquel Coaxum, 315th Airlift Wing, Charleston AFB, S.C.
- Darren Domingo, 4th Combat

Camera Squadron, Charleston AFB, S.C.

- Rachel Goodspeed, 655 Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance Wing/CCE, Wright Patterson AFB, Ohio
- Travis Schirmer, SAF/PAYL, Los Angeles AFB, Calif.
- Savannah Stephens (Position Vacancy), SAF/PAO, The Pentagon, Va.

Master Sergeant

- Micaiah Anthony, 18th Wing, Kadena AB, Japan
- Daniel Asselta, USAF Expeditionary Center, JB McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J.
- Zachary Boyer, Air Force Public Affairs Agency, JBSA-Randolph, Texas
- Caleb Brinkley, SHAPE International Band, Mons, Belgium
- Philip Bryant, 60th Air Mobility Wing, Travis AFB, Calif.
- Victor Caputo, 49th Wing, Holloman AFB, N.M.
- Courtney Chapa, 33rd Fighter Wing, Eglin AFB, Fla.
- Kaylee Clark, 27th Special Operations Wing, Cannon AFB, N.M.
- Alexander Cook, 6th Air Refueling Wing, MacDill AFB, Fla.
- Matthew Davis, 17th Training Wing, Goodfellow AFB, Texas
- Michelle Doolittle, USAF Band of Mid-America, Scott AFB, Ill.
- Nicolas Erwin, Secretary of the Air

- Force Public Affairs, Pentagon, Va.
- Leah Ferrante, 90th Missile Wing, F. E. Warren AFB, Wyo.
- Sara Garing, USAF Band of Mid-America, Scott AFB, Ill.
- Quincy Garner, USAF Band of the West, JBSA-Lackland, Texas
- David Gonzalez, The USAF Band, JB Anacostia-Bolling, Washington, D.C.
- Bradley Green, USAFE Band, Ramstein AB, Germany
- Rosemary Gudex, 81st Training Wing, Keesler AFB, Miss.
- Jonathan Guzman, Defense Media Activity, Ft George Meade, Md.
- Michael Hill, The USAF Academy Band, Peterson SFB, Colo.
- Ryann Holzapfel, 5th Bomb Wing, Minot AFB, N.D.
- Benjamin Huseby, USAF Band of the Pacific, Yokota AB, Japan
- Anthony Hyatt, 363rd Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Wing, JB Langley-Eustis, Va.
- Chris Jackson, The USAF Academy Band, Peterson SFB, Colo.
- David Julian, USAF Band of the Pacific-Hawaii, JB Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii
- Adrienne Kling, The USAF Band, JB Anacostia-Bolling, Washington, D.C.
- Emili Koonce, 48th Fighter Wing, RAF Lakenheath, United Kingdom
- Stephanie Longoria, 316th Wing, JB Andrews, Md.
- Eric Mann, Defense Media Activity, Ft George Meade, Md.
- Candin Muniz, Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs, Pentagon
- Denver Murphy, The USAF Academy Band, Peterson SFB, Colo.
- Kimberly Nagle, 355th Wing, Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz.
- Ben Paille, The USAF Academy Band, Peterson SFB, Colo.
- Tory Patterson, 59th Medical Wing, JBSA Lackland, Texas
- Ryan Persaud, USAF Heritage of America Band, JB Langley-Eustis, Va.
- Joseph Pick, 1st Combat Camera Squadron, JB Charleston, S.C.
- Laurel Richards, White House Communications Agency, Washington, D.C.
- Janiqua Robinson, Defense Media Activity, Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan
- Lynette Rolen, Defense Media Activity, Kadena AB, Japan
- Armando Schwiermorales, US Air Forces Europe, Ramstein AB, Germany
- Stephanie Serrano, 31st Fighter Wing, Aviano AB, Italy
- Daniel Shifren, USAF Band of the Golden West, Travis AFB, Calif.
- Rito Smith, AF Institute of Technology – Education with Industry, Charlotte, N.C.
- Robin Strickland, Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations, Dover AFB, Del.
- Eric Summers, 7th Bomb Wing, Dyess AFB, Texas
- Alexandru Szasz, The USAF Band, JB Anacostia-Bolling, Washington, D.C.
- Christopher Thornbury, 55th Wing, Offutt AFB, Neb.
- Elijah Tiggs, 349th USAF Recruiting Squadron, Tinker AFB, Okla.
- Tinese Treadwell, Defense Information Systems Agency Joint Staff Support Center, Pentagon, Va.
- Colin Trusdell, USAF Band of Mid-America, Scott AFB, Ill.
- Westin Warburton, 337th USAF Recruiting Squadron, Charlotte, N.C.
- Joseph Whitt, USAF Band of the Pacific, Yokota AB, Japan
- Kathryn Yuill, The USAF Academy Band, Peterson SFB, Colo.
- Matthew Zettlemoyer, 321st Training Squadron, JBSA-Lackland, Texas
- Camp Humphreys, Republic of South Korea
- Thomas Barley, 40th Flight Test Squadron, Eglin AFB, Fla.
- Brian Bean, USAF Heritage of America Band, JB Langley-Eustis, Va.
- Victoria Boyton, Defense Information School, Ft Meade, Md.
- Stuart Bright, Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs, Pentagon, Va.
- Kelsea Caballero, 35th Fighter Wing, Misawa AB, Japan
- Edward Coddington, 1st Combat Camera Squadron, JB Charleston, S.C.
- Sarah Cosano, USAFE Band, Ramstein AB, Germany
- James Crow, 368th Recruiting Squadron, Hill AFB, Utah
- Levi Cull, USAF Heritage of America Band, JB Langley-Eustis, Va.
- Maxwell Daigle, 52d Fighter Wing, Spangdahlem AB, Germany
- Michael Dee, USAF Band of Mid-America, Scott AFB, Ill.
- Nicholas Del Villano, USAFE Band, Ramstein AB, Germany
- William Dellinger, USAFE Band, Ramstein AB, Germany
- Marco Gomez, 436th Airlift Wing, Dover AFB, Del.
- Jazmin Granger, 707th Force Support Squadron, Ft Meade, Md.
- Milton Hamilton, Jr., Defense Media Activity, Ft Meade, Md.
- Kristen Heller, 1st Combat Camera Squadron, JB Charleston, S.C.
- Madeline Herzog, HQ Air Combat Command, JB Langley-Eustis, Va.
- Colin Hollowell, 367th Recruiting Squadron, Colorado Springs, Colo.
- Jasmonet Holmes, 1st Combat Camera, JB Charleston, S.C.
- Matthew Kakaris, American Forces Network-Europe, Sembach AB, Germany
- Benjamin Kersey, USAF Heartland of America Band, Offutt AFB, Neb.
- Sierra Kukan, USAF Band of the Pacific – Hawaii, JB Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii

Technical Sergeant

- Ramon Adelan, 364th Recruiting Squadron, McClellan Park, Calif.
- Matthew Angulo, American Forces Network-Humphreys,

(cont'd on next page)

- Gracie Lee, 2nd Audiovisual Squadron, Hill AFB, Utah
- Miranda Loera, Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center, Kirtland AFB, N.M.
- Kevin Long, 100th Air Refueling Wing, RAF Mildenhall, United Kingdom
- Malissa Lott, 87th Air Base Wing, JB McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J.
- Justis MacKenzie, USAF Band of the West, JB San Antonio-Lackland, Texas
- Miranda Mahoney, 1st Special Operations Wing, Hurlburt Field, Fla.
- Isaac March, 316th Wing, JB Andrews, Md.
- Jonathan McElderry, 1st Combat Camera Squadron, JB Charleston, S.C.
- Nathaniel Monsivais, Defense Media Activity, Ft Meade, Md.
- Dylan Murakami, 1st Combat Camera Squadron, JB Charleston, S.C.
- Anthony Nin-Leclerc, Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs, Pentagon, Va.
- Samuel O'Brien, 82nd Training Wing, Sheppard AFB, Texas
- Aubree Owens, 316th Wing, JB Andrews, Md.
- Caroline Parks, 352nd Special Operations Theater Air Operations Squadron, RAF Mildenhall, United Kingdom
- Caleb Pavao, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, Bethesda, Md.
- Darien Perez, White House Communications Agency, JB Anacostia-Bolling, Washington, D.C.
- Suzanna Plotnikov, American Forces Network-Spangdahlem, Spangdahlem AB, Germany
- Timothy Reeder, USAF Band of the Pacific-Hawaii, JB Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii
- Devin Rumbaugh, 621st Contingency Response Wing, JB McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J.
- Deven Schultz, Defense Information School, Ft Meade, Md.
- Thomas Sjoberg, American Forces

Network-Aviano, Aviano AB, Italy

- Bryan Smith, USAF Band, Ramstein AB, Germany
- Peter Sommerville, USAF Heartland of America Band, Offutt AFB, Neb.
- Alex Stephens, 1st Special Operations Wing, Hurlburt Field, Fla.
- Danielle Sukhlall, 3rd Audiovisual Squadron, JB San Antonio-Lackland, Texas
- Christian Sullivan, 1st Combat Camera, JB Charleston, S.C.
- Madison Sylvester, 86th Airlift Wing, Ramstein AB, Germany
- Elizabeth Taranto, HQ Pacific Air Forces, JB Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii
- Pedro Tenorio, 36th Airlift Wing, Andersen AFB, Guam
- Tristan Truesdell, 374th Airlift Wing, Yokota AB, Japan
- Justin Weisenborn, USAF Band of the West, JB San Antonio-

Lackland, Texas

- Charles Welty, 48th Fighter Wing, RAF Lakenheath, United Kingdom
- Blake Wiles, 40th Flight Test Squadron, Eglin AFB, Fla.
- Dalton Williams, HQ Air Mobility Command, Scott AFB, IL



2024 Department of Defense Media Award Winners:

Military Photographer of the Year

TSgt. Devin Boyer

23rd Wing

Moody AFB, Ga.

Thomas Jefferson Civilian Writer of the Year

Glenn Robertson

90th Missile Wing

F.E. Warren AFB, Wyo.

Civilian Videographer of the Year

Taylor Curry

502nd Air Base Wing

JB San Antonio-Ft. Sam Houston, Texas



Oral History

Below is a gem from an Air Force public affairs practitioner who preceded us and shared these comments during their oral history interviews with John Gura.

In The Beginning...

In 1916, the Secretary of War was a man named Newton D. Baker. He decided that with the war in Europe going on and more and more questions coming up, he just didn't have time to take all press calls personally. He was going to have a buffer. So, he turned to one of the people on the General Staff at a meeting and said, "You're gonna be the Chief of the Bureau of Information." That man's name was Douglas MacArthur.

Later, MacArthur sent Col. Oldfield this explanation of how he got the job:

"I was then the junior member of the General Staff consisting of 22 officers and without any previous discussion was directed by the Secretary to assume the duty in addition to those I was performing."

Here was a guy who would go on to become one of the most skilled practitioners in the use of the media to acquire and maintain public support of all time. He knew how to pitch a story, he knew all of the peculiarities of the then media. So, some have survived the profession, went on and did great things and added a little touch to our profession that's not normally (laughs) associated with some of the demeaning roles we get ourselves into."

Quoted from Colonel Barney Oldfield's Oral History at: <https://www.afpaaa.org/oralhistory.htm>

Steve Canyon moved from the comics to the TV screen in the late '50s

By Dick Cole
Editor

As a boy growing up in '50s who dreamed of being an Air Force pilot, there were three television shows I never missed: "Sky King," "Whirlybirds," and "Steve Canyon."

Milton Caniff, a cartoonist, gave birth to Lt. Col. Stevenson B. "Steve" Canyon in 1947, nine months before the Air Force became a separate service. In the comic strips, syndicated in newspapers across the U.S., Canyon was an easygoing adventurer with a soft heart.

Originally a World War II veteran running his own air transport business, Canyon returned to the military during the Korean War and stayed in the Air Force for the remainder of the strip's run. In later years, he was involved in Air Force intelligence and operations.

The strip was adapted into a filmed, half-hour television series of 34 episodes on NBC in 1958–59 with reruns on ABC in 1960. Dean Fredericks played Canyon.

When the series began, Canyon was a globe-hopping pilot for the Air Force, stationed at Edwards Air Force Base and in charge of the Air Force Flight Test Center where novice test pilots were called "Jaybirds." You never knew what Canyon might fly in any given episode and he flew anything in the Air Force inventory. The opening of each show showed Canyon taking off and doing barrel rolls in a Convair F-102 Delta Dagger, but he also piloted other hot fighters, transports, trainers, and bombers.

Steve flew a B-52 with the call sign "Big Bear" while working on all manner of exciting and perilous assignments and investigations.

After the first season of the series, Canyon became commander of the fictitious Big Thunder Air Force Base in California where he managed to find himself mixed up with robberies, hijackings, kidnappings, blackmail, assassination plots, murder and Nazi war



Actor Dean Fredericks played Lt. Col. Stevenson B. "Steve" Canyon in the series, which, at the time, had the largest annual production budget in American television—\$1.6 million!

criminals.

Other regulars characters on the series included Maj. Willie Williston played by Jerry Paris, Airman Abel Featherstone, played by Abel Fernandez; Police Chief Hagedorn played by Ted DeCorsia and Steve's secretary Ingrid, played by Ingrid Goude. The series was made with the full cooperation of the Air Force and had an unheard of (at the time) production budget of \$1.6 million.

"Steve Canyon" aired on NBC between September 13, 1958, and September 8, 1959, with Chesterfield cigarettes as the sponsor. All of the episodes were shot, and aired, in black and white. In the years after they appeared on network TV, they were colorized and were also released on DVD. You can watch the old black and white episodes on many of the popular streaming services including Amazon Prime and YouTube.

One of the most popular Christmas gifts for boys

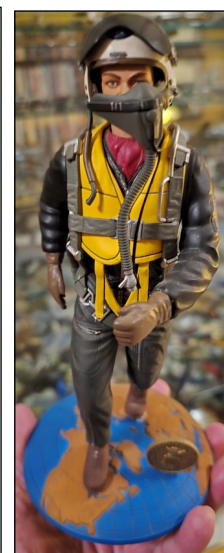


The Convair F-102 Delta Dagger was featured in the opening sequence of every episode of the “Steve Canyon” TV series.

in 1958 was a Steve Canyon fighter pilot helmet with oxygen mask. I still have mine, along with the box it came in, on display with my actual Air Force flying helmet in the library of my home.

As you can see in the photo, the helmet was molded in white and red plastic, and had a green transparent visor. So that you would sound more like Steve when wearing the oxygen mask, it had a piece of waxed paper inside the mask to distort your voice just enough that you would really sound like you were on the radio!

That same Christmas, Aurora Plastics—a manufacturer of model kits—also sold a figure kit of Steve Canyon wearing his flight suit, gloves, helmet, parachute, life preserver, and oxygen mask. Yes... I have one of those too, and it is in the center of the bottom shelf of my display case in the library of my home where all of the model kits I’ve built that haven’t ended up in museums or the Pentagon are displayed.



Above Right: The Ideal Toys Steve Canyon helmet was a hot Christmas seller in 1958 for the price of \$2.98! **Right:** The Aurora Plastics Steve Canyon Jet Pilot kit was approximately 1/8 scale and had to be assembled and painted, of course. It cost a whopping 98-cents!



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