



News and Notes

October 2022

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AFPAAA Members to Vote

Board Unanimously Approves Name Change and Active PA Membership

At the June 24 meeting of the Air Force Public Affairs Alumni Association Board of Directors, the board unanimously voted to refer the initiative to change the name of our organization to the Air Force Public Affairs Association to the full membership for a vote.

The board proposes making the structural changes necessary to permit full membership for the active Air Force Public Affairs force defined as uniformed and civilian members of the Air Force total force assigned to public affairs as their primary duty.

For many years growing our membership, and increasing the participation of existing members in AFPAAA functions and services, have been concerns voiced by both AFPAAA board members and general members. Board members, various committees and general members have regularly suggested changing our organization's name to include active PA's and making the structural changes necessary to do so.

"The assumption is it would be an important way to increase the

value proposition and enhance the membership experience for existing members as well as potential new members. It would also forge relationships with active PA's that would help grow membership and foster greater engagement for existing members," said Jay DeFrank, chairman of the committee exploring this initiative for the board.

Board Chairman Brett Ashworth observed, "While there may be significant benefits to this action, it

“**Now it is up to our membership to make the decision that is right for our organization. — Brett Ashworth**

is very important to note that the proposed name change implies the intention to open the organization to active PA's. This will necessitate structural changes that will

change the purpose, make up and potentially the culture of our organization. This is why it is so important for members to be fully informed, to get involved, make an informed decision and vote on this initiative."

AFPAAA's leadership or members proposed changing the association name to "Air Force Public Affairs Association" three times since 1994. The primary reason for the proposed change was to increase the appeal to the active duty

(See "Name Change" on p. 11)

From the President's pen...



As you read on page one of this issue of *News and Notes*, the committee reviewing the potential name change for our association has completed its task and made its final recommendation. You will soon be receiving a package in the mail, containing information you may study to decide whether or not to change the name, and the membership, of AFPAAA. At a point in the future, a vote will be made principally by electronic ballot. (Printed ballots will be provided for those who cannot vote electronically.)

You will recall that AFPAAA was initially started more as a social organization composed of prior and retired Air Force public affairs officers, NCOs and civilians who wanted to keep contact with one another. It became apparent quickly that there was much this organization could contribute to the active force by helping to mentor and guide active-duty PAOs and to help recognize their efforts and achievements. Now we must consider whether we will change the name of the organization to the Air Force Public Affairs Association (AFPAA) *and its membership structure* through your vote. This is an initiative that was considered and rejected three previous times it has come up for a vote. Further, our colleagues in the Army and Navy public affairs business have changed their respective associations to include active-duty PAOs, which has increased their membership base and the involvement of the Office of the Chief of Public Affairs for the Army (OCPA), and the Chief of Information for the Navy (CHINFO) in the day-to-day functioning of their respective associations. I respectfully request your thorough study and careful consideration of the proposal before casting your ballot. Remember it is not simply a change in name, but also a change in function, membership and, potentially, officers.

I am pleased to report, too, that it appears we have finally overcome the problems caused by COVID and will be able to conduct an annual meeting next year. It also appears that the men and women of the 6th Aerial Refueling Wing are willing to host us in Tampa, Fla., next October. This organization is stronger when we are able to meet each year, renew old friendships, tell war stories, and share our knowledge and experience. It has been too long since we've been together, and plans are underway for a superb get together next year. It's not too early to start making plans to join us in Tampa!

Greg

Air Force PA Director named new Pentagon Press Secretary

The Air Force's top public affairs official has been tapped to become the next Pentagon spokesman, a decision that will see a uniformed member of the military take a job typically held by a civilian.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin announced today his appointment of Brig. Gen. Patrick Ryder for the Pentagon press secretary position. Ryder currently serves as the Secretary of the Air Force's director of public affairs, overseeing media operations for the Air Force and Space Force. He will assume his new role following Senate confirmation, which has still not occurred at press time.

"Pat will fill a critical role, leading our efforts to provide timely, accurate information to the media, and through the media to the American people," Austin said in a statement. "I am confident that I will benefit from his counsel, and that the American people will benefit from his ability to clearly and consistently communicate our efforts to protect the United States and its interests around the world, take care of our people, and strengthen our unrivaled alliances and partnerships."

From 2017 to 2019, Ryder served as the spokesman for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Notably, he previously served as Austin's spokesman when Austin led US Central Command from 2013 to 2016, meaning there is a pre-established relationship and a level of

trust from Austin to Ryder.

Ryder replaces John Kirby, who left the Pentagon in May to become the National Security Council coordinator for strategic communications. Kirby was the last man to serve as chief Pentagon spokesperson in uniform, which he did from 2013 to 2015 during the Obama Administration. Upon his retirement from the Navy, he became the State Department spokesperson. He returned to the Pentagon as the DoD spokesman for Secretary Austin.

"As I head to OSD Public Affairs, I wanted to reach out and thank you for the incredible support that AFPAAA continues to provide for our PA and band career fields. Quite simply, we couldn't ask for better teammates when it comes to your advocacy, mentorship, support for professional development opportunities, and ensuring our proud legacy is carried on for generations of PA professionals to come. From providing PRSA scholarships, to leading the charge on our AFPAAA PA Hall of Fame at DINFOS, to assisting with our Air Force Public Affairs Career Field Strategy, to serving as mentors for our currently serving PA Airmen, I know I speak for the entire PA career field when I say how grateful we are for all that you do for our Air Force PA family," Ryder said.

Ryder stated Jerry Renne, SAF/PA Principal Deputy Director, will



Brig. Gen. Patrick S. Ryder, the director of public affairs for the Air Force, was named as Pentagon spokesman by Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Thursday, Aug. 4, 2022. (Andy Morataya/U.S. Air Force)

move up to serve as the SAF/PA Director for the next two years. "As you know, Mr. Renne has a deep Public Affairs background and has served as the SAF/PA Deputy for the last five years. He is the perfect leader to continue to take our career field forward and I'm very thankful for his willingness to serve as SAF/PA Director," Ryder said.

"Serving as SAF/PA Director and supporting our PA Airmen has truly been the honor of a lifetime and one for which I will be forever grateful. Many thanks again for all you and what the AFPAAA team does every day to support our important PA mission," Ryder said



Air Force Public Affairs Alumni Association News and Notes, Dick Cole, editor, is published quarterly for members by the Air Force Public Affairs Alumni Association, P. O. Box 2446, East Peoria, IL 61611-2446. On-line subscriptions are available at www.AFPAAA.org **Membership Information:** Those who have served in Air Force Bands, Broadcasting, Multimedia, and Public Affairs career fields, as either military or civilian, are eligible for Full Membership. Current or former members of those career fields, still on active duty, or in the Guard or Reserve are eligible for Associate Membership. **Membership Rates:** Lifetime \$300 (payable in four quarterly \$75 installments); Full Membership, one-year \$25 or three years \$50. Associate Membership, one-year \$10 or three years \$20. Membership applications are available at www.AFPAAA.org **Officers and Board of Directors:** Chairman, Brett Ashworth; President, Greg Smith; Vice President, John Dorrian; Secretary, Eric Schnaible; Treasurer, Phil Ratliff, Julie Briggs, Dick Cole, Doug Kennett, Jim McGuire, Chuck Merlo, David Phillips, Jerry Renne, and Carla Sylvester. **Committee Chairmen:** Annual Membership Meeting Coordinator, Perry Nousis; 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.

LORD GUARD AND GUIDE



**RICHARD F. "DICK"
ABEL**

Richard F. "Dick" Abel, 89, passed away August 31 from a number of ailments.

From the return of American prisoners of war from North Vietnam (Operation Homecoming) to the disastrous mission to free American hostages in Iran (Operation Eagle Claw), Abel saw his share of PA challenges. He approached them—and innumerable others—with the same combination of integrity and commitment to moral principles that was the hallmark of his remarkable life and career.

During his 30-year military career, Abel was an instructor pilot, led a flying demonstration team (the "Warhawks"), was a member of the first astronaut class, coached football at the U.S. Air Force Academy, served as an aide-de-camp, was the director of public affairs for the Pacific Com-

mand, the special assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the SAF/PA Director.

Perhaps the highlight of his PA career was his participation in Operation Homecoming in 1973. He made five trips to Hanoi to escort and assist American prisoners of war who were returning from as long as eight years of imprisonment in North Vietnamese prison camps.

While that life altering experience in North Vietnam may be hard to top, Abel had an equally distinguished career after retiring from the Air Force in 1985. He served as public affairs executive for the U.S. Olympic Committee from 1986-1988. As president of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes from 1988-1992 and director of the Campus Crusade for Christ's military ministry from 1992-2006, Abel helped transform these organizations into global institutions that flourish today.

A prolific writer and sought after speaker, Abel authored four books on leadership and led leadership seminars for business, community, religious and military leaders around the world as the founder of Leadership Is All About People.

Abel was inducted into the AFPAAA Hall of Fame in 2021.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Ann, of 65 years, four children, 19 grandchildren and eight grandchildren.

A celebration of life service will be held at Liberty Live Church, 1021 Big Bethel Road, Hampton, Va., on Sunday, Dec. 3 at 1 p.m. The family will receive friends following the

service.

Burial will be at a later date in Arlington National Cemetery.

Donations may be made in Abel's honor to The Fellowship of Christian Athletes at fca.org/donate or the Military Ministry of Cru (formerly known as Campus Crusade for Christ) at cru.org. Written tributes may be submitted to www.wjsmithandson.com.

Since 1966, Dick Abel has been my friend, mentor and spiritual guide. I am blessed Dick and Ann have been in my life so long. He had the most inspirational leadership traits of anyone I have ever known because he deeply cared about people. He was fair, forgiving, generous with his love and projected that in his unique "in-your-face" style.

He set that professional bar very high, expected us to excel, pushed us when we needed a boost and praised us for our accomplishments. From my non-pilot point of view he taught us what being a wingman was all about. With Dick's protection next to us we knew we would succeed.

He was the kind of coach, leader, mentor and friend we all wished we could work with. For his entire Air Force career he shared and taught us those essential leadership skills needed to be successful. Without fail he was always there, backing us up, keeping us focused with his energy, good nature and love. We worked hard under his leadership, tried to stay within the lines and counted on his guiding hand and wisdom to get the job done....and done well.

As a father his love for his wonderful family and his obvious faith in God

shined with intense brightness, never flickering. His faith magnified everything he did, in and out of the Air Force, and was proud of it. As a devoted and intense patriot Dick Abel leaves behind huge footprints and his legacy will remain indelible in the history of his service to America.

Although he entered Public Affairs later than most, he mastered the job and significantly elevated the respect and importance of our profession to the highest levels. His PA team excelled and somehow we had fun doing it. We all became better PAs...and more importantly, we all became better people because of Dick Abel.

The senior leadership of the Air Force recognized Dick was the perfect person to help escort our Vietnam POWs home and his heartwarming stories of those flights produced many tears of compassion for that unique element of his career.

Many times I heard him say it was faith, family, flying and football that inspired him to tirelessly work for and protect the freedoms we enjoy today, All who knew him have "Dick Abel stories" to cherish in our memory, roll our eyes a bit and smile as we recall them.

Go with God Dick Abel... he has a special place just for you as Wingman to those in need, because He knows you will safely guide them home.

- Mike McRaney

Dick Abel was a caring leader, outstanding communicator and mentor to scores of military and civilian public affairs professionals. He lit up the room with his infectious smile and positive energy. He and his lovely wife, Ann, were the role models for many of us as we pursued our Air Force careers. A stellar college athlete and Air Force Academy football coach, Dick loved sports and competition. He continued to participate in daily basketball games in the Pentagon athletic center, where I accused him of employing football rules on the court. Many of us referred to him as "Coach," a term used with love and respect. His long-time association with the Fellowship of

Christian Athletes gave him the opportunity to share his message of faith, family and football with thousands of amateur and professional athletes across the globe. We were fortunate to honor him with his Air Force Public Affairs Hall of Fame induction before he left us – a tribute that he deeply cherished. Farewell, Coach, we were proud to be on your team!"

— Art Forster

We lost another legend in Air Force Public Affairs with the passing of Dick Abel. I first met him in 1964. I was at Bolling AFB, and Dick was at the Air Force Academy. As an air officer commanding, he escorted a group of cadets to Washington where I gave them a tour of the Nation's Capital. Our paths crossed many times over the years, including during Operation Homecoming in 1973 at Clark Air Base. Dick had the honor of escorting our POWs from Hanoi to Clark, and I was Chief of the Hospital Joint Information Bureau.

Dick Abel was a great inspirational leader, motivator, and communicator. We are blessed to have known and worked with him. Rest in peace, my friend.

- Dave Shea

What a shining example of an outstanding human being. Rest in peace, sir. I'm certain you are being welcomed in Heaven with open arms.

- Jim Stratford

It'll be a long time before any of us see a leader like Dick Abel again. He ensured PA had a "seat at the table" when major Air Force visions were matured into strategies (60s-70s). His good humor and infectious laugh went a long way toward pulling us all through some of the profession's greatest challenges. We'll miss you, sir, but THANKS for leaving behind a solid foundation of PA leadership. Peace!

- Jim Greer

He was such an inspiration to so many of us who worked under his leadership. Fly high now!

- Don Hessenflow

Rest In Peace my dear friend!! I have known Dick Able for nearly 50 years! He was a great individual and will be missed!!!

- Doug Jacobsen

We lost a leader who inspired and motivated us to also achieve his high performance standards!

- Jim Hart

I am so sorry to hear of Dick Abel's passing. I was glad that I had sent him an email last week thanking him for his support of me and fulfilling my aspirations for success. I fondly remember the Bible group he led in The Pentagon back when it was allowed. Godspeed and fair winds! My sincere condolences to his family, friends and those Public Affairs staff members he led with distinction.

- Terry Arnold

As a fellow Clevelander, Dick Abel and I would chat about Browns football (he almost got to play for the Browns) and games between our respective high schools, which were rivals. (He attended St. Ignatius and I attended Collinwood.) It was always a joy to chat with him, and, although I never worked for him directly, I wish I'd had that honor.

- Dick Cole

We've lost a champion for our career field, a mentor who touched the lives of all of us who served with and for him, a man of steadfast faith and an unabashed patriot. May God guide him on final approach.

- Bud Ross

Dick Abel was a very special man – he cared about people, all people, but especially those he worked and served with. He was compassionate. When I told Dick my learning disabled son came ahead of my

career he understood why I needed to stay in the Washington, D.C. area rather than take a choice overseas assignment.

With his wife Ann they quietly showed a deep faith and humanity that touched everyone around them. With Dick's passing we have lost more than a highly competent military professional, the world has lost one of its great human beings that blessed our lives. Pax vobiscum Dick.

- John Terino



JAMES RICHARD "DICK" CASSIN

James Richard "Dick" Cassin, 88, died July 5 in Dallas, Texas. An educator and public affairs practitioner, Dick was born Oct. 7, 1933 in Port Huron, Mich. He was preceded in death by his parents Lloyd G. Cassin and Gladys C. Smith Cassin-McCarron of Port Huron and brother Kelley L. Martin of Clarkston, Mich. Dick was also preceded in death by his wife of more than 67 years, W. Christine Carr Cassin.

Dick was a veteran of both Korean and Vietnam service. Dick was assigned to DINFOS in 1966. He came from Japan where he was a radio and TV personality for the Armed Forces Radio and Television Service.

As a DINFOS instructor, Cassin

trained military journalists and broadcasters for the worldwide military network.

He left Fort Benjamin Harrison in 1970 to join the Air Force "Thunderbirds" precision flying team. For two years he served as the team's public affairs representative at air shows in 49 states and nine foreign countries.

Retiring from military service in 1972, Dick returned to Indianapolis where he was employed by American Fletcher National Bank as editor of employee publications. In 1974, he left AFNB for a position as publicity director of the Indianapolis-based Amateur Athletic Union, U.S. governing body of amateur sports.

A journalism graduate from Ball State with a master's degree in radio and television from Butler University, Cassin returned to teaching in 1976, accepting a civilian faculty position at DINFOS. Listed in Who's Who in the Midwest, he remained with the school as a professor of broadcast journalism and chief of radio skills training, until retirement from federal service in 1995.

With the closing of Fort Harrison, Dick continued teaching in area high schools and colleges, working with broadcast technology students at Warren Central, Marian College, and from 1998-2010 as an adjunct professor of media arts at Butler University. Outside the classroom, he worked for three years in the sports department of *The Indianapolis Star*.

Dick was an actor in TV commercials and films for the Helen Wells Agency, and associated with the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA). He was a lifetime member, of the Air Force "Thunderbirds" alumni association, the Armed Forces Broadcasters Association, and The American Legion Post 495.

He is survived by his two children and their families. Son, James R. II

(Jane) of Ingalls, IN and daughter Carolyn M (Robb) Krecklow of Dallas, TX. He is also survived by a sister Jeanne B. Martens of Port Huron, Mich. Cassin's childhood guardian and grandmother, Grace B. Smith of Port Huron, preceded him in death.

His funeral was held at Sparkman-Crane Funeral Home in Dallas and he was buried with his wife in the Dallas Fort Worth National Cemetery, July 20.

Dick was a highly talented, much valued, and vitally crucial part of the DINFOS Broadcast Department staff when I was Department Director (80-83). He made us all look good. RIP.

— John Gura

I had Dick as an instructor twice. The first time was when I attended the basic public affairs officer's course in 1982. He made a great impression on me on how best to deal with reporters, but, more importantly, how to train your senior leaders to deal with the media. Anyone who ever attended a mock press conference who was confronted by Rod Carlisle will never forget him or Dick. My second course with him was the broadcast managers course in 1986. It was great hearing from a former NCO with so much experience in the "growth days" of the Armed Forces Radio and Television Service.

I followed his lead and served a period of time as an adjunct professor of speech and communications at the University of Maryland. I modeled my teaching style after his and found that it worked marvelously with my students. The schoolhouse hasn't been the same without him.

— Dick Cole



“It’s Tampa!” says Nouis

After months and months (ok...years) of attempting to coordinate the association’s next “annual” meeting, a location and dates for the next event have been coordinated and established: October 26-28, 2023, in Tampa, Fla.

“We’re very pleased to announce that, after coordinating with MacDill AFB, we are planning the next meeting in Tampa, Florida,” said Perry Nouis, AFPAAA’s annual meeting coordinator. “After a series of postponements, it is a relief that we have been able to identify when and where we can host a meeting. Planning, such as identifying a host hotel and the logistics associated with coordinating a meeting, can begin in earnest.”

The meeting is expected to follow the typical meeting format with an icebreaker the evening of Thursday, Oct. 26 at the host hotel, followed by a visit to MacDill AFB on Friday, Oct. 27, and the Association’s “Re-Blueing,” business meetings, and Awards Banquet will be conducted on Saturday, Oct. 28.

MacDill is home to the 6th Aerial Refueling Wing operating KC-135R and KC-46A aircraft, Central Command and Special Operations Command.

A golf outing at Bay Palms Golf



Above: A KC-46A Pegasus refuels on the flight line at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla. Oct. 25, 2021. The KC-46A is undergoing testing and expected to be permanently based at the Tampa-area base. Other bases where the KC-46s are expected to be stationed include McConnell AFB in Kansas; Altus AFB in Oklahoma; Seymour Johnson AFB in North Carolina; Travis AFB, California; Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in New Jersey, and Pease Air National Guard Base in New Hampshire. (Airman 1st Class Joshua Hastings/Air Force) Below: A golf outing will be planned for the morning of Thursday, Oct. 26, 2023, at the Bay Palms Golf Complex. (Courtesy Bay Palms Golf Complex)



Complex will be planned for the morning of Thursday, Oct. 26.

“Four-and-a-half years will have passed since Association members last met in April 2019 in Charleston, S.C., and the meeting in Tampa,” Perry added. “We hope that the amount of time that has passed since our last meeting

will encourage more members to attend. The dates that were selected avoid most of the hurricane season and are in the middle of the window some members have suggested is the best time of the year to visit Tampa.”



Registration forms and itinerary information will be posted on the Association’s website, afpaaa.org, as they become available.



Became Air and Space Forces Magazine Last Month

Air Force Association Changes Name of Magazine

By Amanda Miller

Air Force Magazine becomes Air & Space Forces Magazine with the release of their September issue.

The magazine’s digital address changed Sept. 8, when all the content migrated to the new AirAndSpaceForces.com home page. All existing content and links will remain fully functional through this transition.

“Changing the title of a storied publication—and Association—is not something to be taken lightly,” said Air & Space Forces Magazine’s Editor in Chief Tobias Naegele in a news release announcing the change.

“Changing a name that is even

older than our Association itself, a publication created at the direction of Hap Arnold himself, meant turning a page. But just as flexibility is the key to air power, so it is in publishing, as well.”

Air Force Magazine launched as an official military publication in 1942, and ownership was transferred to the Air Force Association after its creation in 1946. At various times it also included a subtitle, making the publication *Air Force Magazine and Space Digest*.

AFA’s board of directors voted in March to change the association’s name to Air & Space Forces Association in an overt sign of its commitment to the Space Force as

an equal component of the Armed Services and the Department of the Air Force. Changing the title of the magazine was a natural follow-on to that decision.

AFA President retired Lt. Gen. Bruce Wright, who is also the magazine’s publisher, said the new title “reflects the new name of our storied Association and the reality that out of one Department of the Air force live two independent yet tightly linked military services. The breadth of that coverage is not new, but the name change makes that clearer to everyone. Seeing is believing, and we want our commitment to space to be right there for all to see.”





Welcome:

Cheryl Law
Patrick Ryder
Life Members

Steven Grever
Life Member Payment
Plan

Matthew Murphy
Complimentary
Membership

Vietnam Ace DeBellevue Credits Teamwork for His Six Kills

By John Tirpak

Courtesy *Air & Space Force Magazine*

Air combat is “a real team sport” requiring agile thinking, persistence, and a willingness to sometimes disregard the rules, retired Col. Charles B. DeBellevue, the highest-scoring Air Force Vietnam ace, said at a seminar held to commemorate the 50th anniversary of his last air-to-air kills.

Speaking at a Sept. 8 event in Oklahoma organized by the Air & Space Forces Association Gerrity Chapter, the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission, and the Oklahoma Defense Industrial Association, DeBellevue, the last ace on Active duty, a weapons systems officer, credited the “real-time support of a lot of people” from crew chiefs and maintainers to cooks and “supply guys” for making the F-4 Phantom effective in battle.

“It takes a lot of people to make it work,” he said. The F-4, in which DeBellevue scored all his kills, “breaks all the time. In fact, you could put an F-4 on the ramp, let it sit there, and not do anything to it—it’ll break.”

He walked the audience through his six kills, earned in 96 missions over North Vietnam out of 220 combat sorties and 550 combat hours during the war, resulting in decorations that included three Silver Stars and six awards of the Distinguished Flying Cross. All of DeBellevue’s combat victories were scored from May to September 1972, shortly after Operation Linebacker began.

DeBellevue revealed that F-4 pilots



Retired Col. Charles B. DeBellevue was a weapons systems officer flying F-4 Phantoms during the Vietnam War. Assigned to the 555th Tactical Fighter Squadron, the “Triple Nickel,” stationed at Udorn Royal Thai Air Force Base, then-Capt. DeBellevue scored four kills flying with Capt. Steve Ritchie and two more flying with Capt. John A. Madden Jr. on Sept 9, 1972, making him an ace. DeBellevue, who flew 220 combat missions during the Vietnam War, poses with an F-4 the day before the aircraft’s final flight at Holloman Air Force Base, N.M., Dec. 20, 2016. (Air Force photo by J.M. Eddins Jr.)

in that period were discouraged from dogfighting because “the powers that be said, if you get into a dogfight” while flying the F-4 against lighter, more nimble enemy fighters, “you’re probably going to lose the airplane. So we weren’t allowed to do that. We weren’t trained” in close-in, air-to-air maneuvering, he said.

“The first time I saw a dissimilar aircraft” in a dogfight, it was “a MiG-21, behind me,” he said.

The F-4 crews were directed instead toward shooting enemy aircraft with missiles at longer range, but that rarely worked against small, hard-to-see enemy fighters launched from airfields close to the action. Most of the kills scored by DeBellevue and the various pilots he flew with were at close range. In the two-seat F-4, back-seaters received equal credit with pilots for air-to-air victo-

ries.

He described the frustration of launching multiple missiles that didn’t connect with their targets, until finding greater success with the AIM-9J Sidewinder, which was rushed to operational units even before it went through operational testing.

After one encounter with two MiG-21s, after he and his pilot had already accumulated several kills, DeBellevue said intelligence later revealed that the enemy pilots “knew who we were” and had been sent specifically to kill USAF’s leading aviators.

“They practiced every day for us,” he said. “They knew who they were fighting.” Intelligence also had color-coded enemy pilots as inexperienced or skilled, and those sent after DeBellevue were coded green, meaning “aces,” he said.

(Cont’d on p. 12)

Board Appoints New Communications Chairman and Editor

Life member Dick Cole is the new AFPAAA communications chairman and has taken over the design and production of *News and Notes* from John Terino with this issue.

"Having served as the editor when we were founded in 1993 and all but four years since then (2001-2005), it's time, at age 82, to step aside," Terino said. "Dick's taking over ensures we have someone who can carry on for a good number of years to come. He is more than qualified to do the job and I'm confident *News and Notes* will continue to serve our membership well."

Among Terino's many contributions as a founder of AFPAAA was serving as the association's first secretary for five years and designing the association's logo.

Art Forster contacted Dick and asked if he would be interested in assuming John's responsibilities. "As Jim McGuire and I discussed the need to find a successor to John Terino as our newsletter editor, Dick Cole's name came immediately to mind. Having both worked with Dick over the years – both in uniform and civil service, we were aware of Dick's unique abilities and award-winning newsletter skills. We thought he was a natural for the job and were delighted when he accepted the position," said Forster.

Cole is a retired major and a retired GS-15 public affairs officer. His last

government position was as Director, Public Affairs for the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, Fort Belvoir, Va. He retired from federal service in 2013.

He has edited or designed numerous award-winning government publications including the former On-Site Inspection Agency's *On-Site Insights*, the National Wildlife Refuge System's *Refuge Update*, Naval Sea Systems Command's *NAVSEA Observer*, the Navy's Surface Warfare Directorate (N-86) bimonthly *Surface Warfare* magazine, the Defense Contract Management Agency's *Communicator* magazine, and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency's magazine, *The Shield*. He also formerly designed and edited the *IPMS/USA Journal* bimonthly magazine for the International Plastic Modelers Society, the bimonthly newsletter for the B-52 Stratofortress Association, and the quarterly newsletter for the Air Force Navigators and Observers Association.

While serving as Communications Chairman for AFPAAA and producing the quarterly *News and Notes*, he will also continue to produce the newsletter for his local American Legion Post, which was selected as "Best in the American Legion" for 2020.

Dick lives in Chester, Va., close to Fort Lee, with his wife, Jaye, his 90-year-old mother, Peggy, and two




Life-member Dick Cole is the new Communications Chairman and editor of the AFPAAA newsletter. (Photo by Betty Fox)

Shih Tzus—Jake and Bella.

He spends his retirement pursuing his hobbies—motorcycling, restoring classic motorcycles, building highly-detailed plastic model airplanes (he has several in museums across the U.S., including the National Air and Space Museum, the National Museum of the Air Force, the Pentagon and the Washington Navy Yard Museum), drumming in a classic rock band, genealogy research, flying as a private pilot and photography. He has written two aviation books and contributed photos to 19 others.





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!

“Name Change” (cont’d from p.1)

force and hence, grow membership. In each of these cases the membership voted down the initiatives. In recent years this initiative has emerged again as part of the continuing effort to grow membership as well as enhance the value proposition of membership and the membership experience itself.

The 2018 AFPAAA membership survey, which garnered a robust 49 percent response rate, revealed majority support for increased participation of active PA’s in AFPAAA (90 percent), greater support for active PA’s (93 percent), awarding active PA’s voting rights and other privileges of

membership (74 percent), and dropping “alumni” from our name (70 percent).

The committee exploring this initiative for the board worked closely with SAF/PA, who supports this initiative, and benchmarked with the other services. Both the Army and Navy public affairs associations realized their objectives in making this change and consider it a success.

“Now it is up to our membership to make the decision that is right for our organization,” Ashworth said. “After all, this is the members’ organization. It needs to be the organization they consider most valuable, rewarding and worth their time and sup-

port.”

To allow members to fully consider this initiative, all members will receive the decision paper the committee presented to the board and some history of the previous efforts. This information will also be available on our web site, afpaaa.org.

In addition, the board plans to hold an interactive on-line town hall meeting where members can ask questions, voice concerns or support, or make recommendations prior to a vote. Timing of the town hall will be forthcoming but is expected later in the Fall of 2022 with a membership vote scheduled prior to the end of the year.



Brig. Gen. H.J. Dalton Scholarship Program Recipients Selected

The Air Force Public Affairs Alumni Association has selected the first recipients of the Brig. Gen. H.J. Dalton Scholarship Program.

The six recipients are:

- **A1C Janae Masoner**, mass communications specialist, 139th Airlift Wing, Rosencrans ANGB, Mo.
- **Maj. (Lt. Col. Select) Natassia Cherne**, deputy commander, Air Force News Agency, Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas.
- **Capt. Victoria Wright**, public affairs officer, 87th Air Base Wing, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J.
- **SrA Joseph Morales**, mass communications specialist, 87th Air Base Wing, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J.
- **SSgt Haley Phillips**, public affairs specialist, 315th Airlift Wing, Joint Base Charleston, S.C.
- **CMSgt John Herrick**, senior enlisted advisor, 4th Combat Camera Squadron, Joint Base Charleston, S.C.

AFPAA originally budgeted for five \$1,000 scholarships per year. However, the applicants in the first year of the program were of such high quality, the board approved all six Air Force PA members who applied.

Chuck Merlo, chairman of the AFPAAA Dalton Scholarship Committee, said, “We are very happy to see a mix of applicants that included active duty and Air National Guard enlisted and officers. All received high praise from their supervisors for both their duty performance as well as their initiative to improve themselves on their own time.

The first career Public Affairs officer to be promoted to brigadier general and head SAF/PA, Jerry Dalton worked tirelessly throughout his military and civilian careers to promote the advancement of the Public Affairs profession. He was well known for his commitment to mentoring and encouraging the professional development of Public Affairs

personnel.

This is the inaugural year of the program and AFPAAA and General Dalton’s family—his wife Carolyn, daughter Cindy, and sons Robert and Steven—are happy to be sponsoring the scholarship program that helps Air Force public affairs professionals advance their careers.

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.

Interested in applying for a Dalton Scholarship, or know someone deserving of consideration? You can learn more about the scholarship program at afpaaa.org/scholarship.html.

Applications for the 2023 program will be accepted from March 1 to May 31, 2023.





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FIRST CLASS POSTAGE

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Program host retired Lt. Gen. David A. Deptula, head of AFA's Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies, noted that shortly after this period the Air Force instituted the "Red Baron" studies showing that pilot survivability in combat rose significantly after they had accumulated 10 real-world missions. The later "Red Flag" exercises were designed to realistically give pilots those first 10 missions, so that the first time they experienced air combat, they would already be comfortable with the sounds and sensations of a real battle. The success of Red Flag was borne out in Operation Desert Storm in 1991, when Air Force pilots thoroughly dominated the skies.

DeBellevue said "we had to learn the book" way of doing things; then the way their senior officers wanted things done; and then he figured out "my idea of how things should be."

In the Vietnam battles, DeBellevue said he believed his task was to watch aircraft systems, look for enemies, operate weapons, and keep up a running commentary for the pilot. In one engagement in which he was flying with fellow ace Steve Ritchie, DeBellevue said this approach worked well—so that Ritchie could always "keep his eyes outside" rather than having to look inside the cockpit at displays and status. In such engagements, which could last just a couple of minutes,

a pilot taking his eyes off the target meant he could lose sight of "that little speck against a cloud" at the very edge of visible range, which was a potentially fatal situation, despite the F-4's sensors.

"I was willing to die for my country," DeBellevue said, but spending time in a prisoner of war camp "was not on my bucket list." Consequently, he said, he made sure "I was very good at what I did."

DeBellevue said Ritchie was the "most experienced guy" in the 555th squadron, and on the ground, DeBellevue was his assistant.

"We worked well together," he said. Ritchie was the pilot in four of DeBellevue's six kills.



Submission deadline for the next issue is December 1!