

News and Notes

October-December 2023

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Attendees at the 2023 annual meeting got the opportunity to view one of the 6th Air Refueling Wing's KC-135Rs at MacDill AFB, Oct. 27. (Photo by H. Michael Miley)

San Antonio selected for 2024

The 2023 annual meeting in Tampa a “resounding success” says President

Dick Cole
Editor

The association's 27th annual meeting was held Oct. 26 - 28, 2023, in warm and sunny Tampa, Fla. Home base for the meeting was the Hotel Alba.

In addition to its beautiful weather, Tampa offered AFPAA members the opportunity to receive timely briefings and updates from U.S. Central Command, U. S. Special Operations Command, and MacDill's host unit, the 6th Air Refueling Wing.

The last annual meeting of the

association was 2019 because of the COVID pandemic. That meeting occurred in Charlotte, S.C. However, you would never know that this year's meeting was the first in four years because of the outstanding work by annual meeting committee chairman Perry Nouis.

“Without question, this year's meeting was a resounding success,” said John Dorrian, association president, who presided over this year's meeting in Chairman Brett Ashworth's absence.

Board member Art Forster agreed. “Perry Nouis did an abso-

(cont'd on p. 3)





SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

**AIR FORCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL MEETING
OCTOBER 3-5, 2024**

Annual Meeting (cont'd from p. 1)

lutely fantastic job in planning and executing our 2023 annual meeting in Tampa. Perry stood tall and accomplished all required tasks in an outstanding manner that ensured the success of our reunion. Thank you, Perry, for your hard work in making our Tampa meeting one of the best!”

I know I thoroughly enjoyed myself and it was wonderful seeing old friends and colleagues face-to-face once again.

A similar sentiment was offered by Don Hessenflow. “The venue was great, the program was great, but visiting with friends and colleagues was the best,” he said.

Several outstanding presentations helped AFPAA members “re-blue” during the meeting. In addition to the aforementioned CENTCOM and SOCOM briefings, attendees heard from former Air Force public affairs officer and Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs Philip J. “P.J.” Crowley on current world affairs; former managing editor of the Armed Forces Press Service John Banusiewicz; Civil Air Patrol Illinois Wing/PA Capt. H. Michael Miley and individual reserve augmentee to the Secretary of the Air Force Director of Public Affairs Col. Beth Horine.

Of course, the highlights of the annual meeting are the inductions into the Air Force Public Affairs Hall of Fame, and presentations of the Brig. Gen. Mike McRaney Distinguished Service Award and Brig. Gen. James W.

Hart, Jr., Best of the Best Award.

More photos from the meeting are being posted to the association’s website, <https://afpaaa.org/tampa-2023.html>. The following pages include a sampling of the photos taken by Dick Cole and H. Mike Miley.

Winner of the McRaney Distinguished Service Award—not publicly known before the annual meeting—was Art Forster. The award recognizes an individual for distinguished service to the association and is determined by the association board.

“Thanks for this incredible honor. I appreciate your support and will continue to do all I can to promote, grow and maintain our association,” Forster said.



Former Air Force public affairs officer and former Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs P.J. Crowley’s presentation was titled “Decisions to be Made,” and discussed current world affairs, concentrating on relations with China; U.S. support of Ukraine against Russia’s incursion and the potential of China moving on Taiwan. (Photo by Dick Cole)



Mike McRaney offers the microphone to Art Forster after presenting him the Brig. Gen. Mike McRaney Distinguished Service Award at the annual banquet. The recipient of the award is selected by the association’s board of directors. The presentation concluded the annual meeting banquet Saturday, Oct. 28. (Photo by Dick Cole)

Photos from the Tampa meeting

By Dick Cole and H. Michael Miley



Phil Ratliff checks in at the registration desk.



The area next to the registration desk was a favorite gathering spot for attendees to catch up with one another



Brig. Gen. James W. Hart, Jr., Best of the Best Award winner Ken Raimondi and his wife, Jackie, speak with board member Julie Briggs, left, at the cocktail reception.



Board President John Dorrian welcomes attendees to the cocktail reception and the annual meeting.



Left: Meeting Chair Perry Nouis provides a rundown on planned activities for Friday, Oct. 27. Above: Several attendees out on the town for dinner Thursday night. (Photo courtesy Carla Sylvester)



Attendees get the U.S. Special Operations Command mission briefing.



Listening to the 6th ARW briefing.



Al DeFend after winning an autographed copy of P.J. Crowley's book, Red Line: American Foreign Policy in a Time of Fractured Politics and Failing States. Crowley personalized the note to DeFend just before presenting him the book at the conclusion of his Saturday morning presentation.



Hal Smarkola, Eric Schnaible, Dave Smith and Judy Bivens in front of a KC-135R at MacDill AFB on Friday's tour.



A bite to eat on the base before returning to Hotel Alba.



One of the best briefing slides I've ever seen was included in John Banusiewicz's presentation "War Stories About New Technology." His presentation ventured into the subject of artificial intelligence and stimulated an interesting discussion of potential effects on the public affairs community.

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Civil Air Patrol Capt. H. Michael Miley provided a presentation of public affairs within the U.S. Air Force Auxiliary. Miley is the Illinois Wing/PA.



Air Force Reserve Col. Beth Horine, the individual mobilization augmentee to the SAF/PA director, provided an overview of Air Force public affairs, band and audiovisual operations.



Col. Beth Horine was all smiles visiting with former SAF/PA Directors Brig. Gen. Ron Rand, left, and Brig. Gen. Mike McRaney, right.



After libations, the awards banquet got underway.



Mike McRaney presented Ken Raimondi with the Brig. Gen. James W. Hart, Jr., "Best of the Best Award." Raimondi traveled from San Antonio to receive the award, accompanied by his wife Jackie.



Association President John Dorrian presented Ken Raimondi with his life membership in AFPAA for being selected "Best of the Best" for 2023.



Retired chief master sergeant and GS-15 Mike Kinchen presented one of this year's Hall of Fame Awards to retired Air Force News Service colleague John Banusiewicz.



Retired chief master sergeant Dave Smith presented one of this year's Hall of Fame Awards to retired Air Force chief master sergeant Judy Bivens.



Retired Brig. Gen. Mike McRaney presented Col. David Schill-erstrom's HOF Award to nephew Bill, left, and son David, Jr., center.



Retired Col. Jay DeFrank presented Col. Dave Shea's HOF Award to Dave's wife, Mary Lou, and daughter, Susan.



Art Forster presented the HOF Award to Mike Terrill's family including (l. to r.): son Michael, son Marshall, Forster, wife Carolyn, daughter Mischael, daughter-in-law Allison, and son Mark.



The five Hall of Fame Awards presented at the banquet.



Callum Turner (l.) portrays Maj. John “Bucky” Egan, commander of the 418th Bomb Squadron, and Austin Butler plays Maj. Gale “Buck” Clevon, commander of the 350th Bomb Squadron in the series *Masters of the Air*, set to premier on Apple TV+, Jan. 26.

American Airmen heroes of *Masters of the Air*

By Dick Cole
Editor

A long anticipated original series debuts in January on Apple TV. The series, *Masters of the Air*, is being produced by Steven Spielberg, Tom Hanks, and Gary Goetzman, the producers of HBO’s *Band of Brothers* and *The Pacific*.

While the two previous series from the producers focused on the service of paratroopers and infantrymen in European and Pacific Theaters, this series will focus on America’s Mighty Eighth Air Force and, specifically, the “Bloody 100th” — the 100th Bomb Group which fought Germany from the air.

Masters of the Air focuses on the crews who manned the B-17s. Incredibly brave American crews had to fly into heavy German anti-aircraft artillery fire (“flak”) and face German fighters in order to smash targets on the ground.

The 100th Bomb Group was equipped with the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress. The four-engine bomber could deliver a large bomb load a distance of 2,000 miles or more at speeds in excess of 200 mph. Each “Fort” was manned

by a crew of 10—two pilots, a navigator, a bombardier, a flight engineer/top turret gunner, radio operator, two waist gunners, a ball turret gunner, and a tail gunner.

The B-17 was to carry out America’s strategic bombing campaign against Hitler’s Europe, but did so with grievous losses. The aircraft’s role in strategic precision bombing missions was emphasized by a capacity for up to 17,196 pounds of bombs.

Being in a B-17 was arguably the most dangerous job in the entire war and the amount of deaths and POWs was staggering. Aircrews fought in non-pressurized planes in freezing temperatures and at altitudes where they required supplemental oxygen. In a single 376 plane raid in August 1943, 60 B-17s were shot down. That was a 16 percent loss rate and meant 600 empty bunks in England. In 1942-43 it was statistically impossible for bomber crews to complete a 25-mission tour in Europe.

As they did with *Band of Brothers*, the producers are concentrating their story on real servicemen who served during WW2. Austin Butler plays Maj. Gale “Buck” Clevon, commander of the 350th Bomb Squadron. Most

recently Butler starred as Elvis Presley in the film *Elvis*, for which he received a Golden Globe Award as best actor.

Callum Turner portrays Maj. John “Bucky” Egan, commander of the 418th Bomb Squadron. Egan and Cleven were both described as “debonair;” with white scarves and a Hollywood swagger, they were frequently the center of attention at the Silver Wing Officer’s Club at the unit’s home base, Station 139, located at Thorpe Abbots in East Anglia. Located 20 miles south of Norwich and 90 miles northeast of London, Thorpe Abbots was one of the hundred-odd airfields used by the Eighth Air Force in the United Kingdom during the war. Larger than life, other pilots idolized them as both served as the “heart and soul” of the Group.

Shot in locations ranging from the idyllic rolling hills of southeast England to the “harsh deprivations of a German prisoner of war camp,” many soldiers were shot down, captured, wounded, and “some were lucky enough to make it home.”



NCuti Gatwa in *Masters of the Air* as a Tuskegee airman. (Photo by Robert Viglasky/AppleTV+)

The series includes a star-studded cast led by Butler, Turner, Anthony Boyle, Nate Mann, Rafferty Law, Barry Keoghan, Josiah Cross, Branden Cook, Ncuti Gatwa, Josh Bolt and Kai Alexander.

Masters of the Air will premiere globally on Apple TV+ on Friday,

Jan. 26, with the first two episodes, followed by one new episode every Friday through March 15, 2024.

The trailer for the series may be viewed at <https://youtu.be/lA-1JCRguZ0>.



Famous fighter airborne again

Thunderbird is one of the recognizable P-51 Mustangs from the post war era. The cobalt blue P-51C, NX5528N, most notably won the 1949 Bendix race piloted by Joe DeBona where it set the piston driven speed record at 470 mph.

Thunderbird was owned by WWII brigadier general, bomber pilot and academy award winning actor Jimmy Stewart. Jackie Cochran, the “Speed Queen,” also owned *Thunderbird*.

The aircraft is now owned by Warren Pietsch and is housed at the Dakota Territory Museum located in Minot, N.D., following its restoration.

LORD GUARD AND GUIDE



DAVID J. SHEA

David J. Shea, passed away peacefully at home on July 14, 2023, in Springfield, Va. He is survived by his wife of 52 years, Mary; his three children Jessica (Brian), Susan, and Jeanne (Kris); and his seven grandchildren Ashley, Meagan, Natalie, Daniel, Sarah, Keira, and Kate; brother Steve and numerous nieces and nephews.

Shea was one of the 2023 class of inductees into the AFPAA Hall of Fame and passed before his award could be presented in Tampa.

A career public affairs officer and public relations pro, Shea was greatly ad-

mired in the PR world for his many achievements during both his military and civilian careers.

He began his Air Force career in 1959 after graduating from Fordham University and earning his second lieutenant bars as a distinguished graduate of Fordham's AFROTC program.

Reporting to Andrews AFB for his first assignment, Dave had no intention of staying past his three-year commitment. What he really wanted was to seek fame and fortune in the broadcasting business and pursue his dream of becoming the play-by-play announcer for the New York Yankees.

Well, after his Andrews tour he did get into broadcasting, but it wasn't exactly in the Bronx at Yankee Stadium. It was in Greece, where the Air Force sent him to be the station manager of the Armed Forces Radio and Television outlet at Iraklion Air Station.

His enjoyment of that assignment had him reconsider his career plans, and some great subsequent assignments, both overseas and stateside, sealed the deal. His Air Force career took

him around the world, with overseas tours in addition to Iraklion at Misawa Air Base, Japan, Osan Air Base, Korea, and his favorite, Ramstein Air Base, Germany.

When Dave was at Osan, he was sent TDY to Clark Air Base in the Philippines to support Operation Homecoming—the return of more than 300 U.S. prisoners of war from the Vietnam conflict in 1973. Dave managed one of the biggest media events in Air Force history when the POWs arrived at Clark, their first stop after leaving North Vietnam.

He was also the public affairs escort for one of the last POW groups to depart for home, with stops along the way at Hickam AFB, Hawaii, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, and Andrews AFB, Md. that generated intense interest from the media and the American public.

When Project Blue Book—the Air Force's investigation of UFOs—was closed in December 1969, Dave wrote the press release announcing the termination and summarizing the project's findings: after studying more than 12,000 reported UFO sightings, no evidence was found that any were extraterrestrial vehicles,

and only 701 of those sightings remained unidentified. However, as the very busy Project Blue Book spokesperson, Dave himself did not remain unidentified. Fascination with the subject continues unabated to this day, and even in retirement Dave received media requests to share his expertise on the subject.

Dave was the PA director at Air Training Command headquarters at Randolph AFB, Texas in 1979 when the exiled Shah of Iran unexpectedly arrived at nearby Lackland AFB's Wilford Hall Medical Center to continue his recovery from cancer treatment. The Shah's presence in the United States at the onset of the Iranian hostage crisis was highly controversial, and Dave had to deal with conflicting guidance from Washington about whether reporters would be allowed on base to cover the story. Working the issue with fellow Hall of Famer Mike Terrill, who was the PA chief at Lackland at the time, was probably the only enjoyable aspect of that difficult episode.

Not many people get to be a MAJCOM headquarters PA director, but Dave was selected for that challenging duty three times. In addition to his stint at Air Training Command, Dave was the director for U.S. Air Forces Europe at Ramstein and Air Force Systems Command at Andrews, where he originally thought

his military career would be ending after just three short years. With one last job, this time at the Pentagon as director of Defense Information in DoD Public Affairs, those three years had somehow turned into 29.

Dave retired from the Air Force in 1988, but not from public affairs. Although that job as the Yankees play-by-play announcer had still not opened, Dave nonetheless managed to go on to an award-winning civilian career. He served as spokesman for the Hughes Aircraft Company, which later merged with Raytheon Corporation, and became Raytheon's Director of Media Training and Development in Washington, D.C.

In 2012, Dave received the prestigious Lauren D. Lyman Award from the Aerospace Industries Association for outstanding achievement in aerospace communications.

He will be buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

Very sad news. I owe a great deal to my dear mentor and friend. Not too long ago, I sent him a letter thanking him for his mentorship and his role in shaping my career. I am very grateful I did. It should remind all of us to take the time to say "thank you."

—**Bud Ross**

Dave was the consummate communications professional who left an indelible mark on the Air Force public affairs career field.

Smart, persuasive and effective, Dave was director of public affairs for three major commands and mentored countless officer, enlisted and civilian personnel. Displaying a calm, positive and encouraging persona, I always called him "Father Dave" because he reminded me of a parish priest. He was a master of media relations and, together with the late John Gulick, authored the book Media Isn't a Four-Letter Word—A Guide to Effective Encounters with the Members of the Fourth Estate, which should be in every communications professional's library. I'm grateful to have informed him of his selection for the Air Force Public Affairs Hall of Fame shortly before he passed. Farewell friend, we salute you!

— **Art Forster**

I'm so saddened to see this. Another great PA warrior we've lost. Prayers for his family.

— **Chuck Merlo**

Mike and I dearly loved Dave, Mary Lou and their girls. We also looked so forward to seeing them both at the alumni events and to getting his Christmas letters. Dave had an amazing sense of humor and was a brilliant writer. I always told Mike, Air Force guys are smarter, have more integrity, are braver, wiser, and have more sex appeal than all the others. My heart is broken for Mary Lou, their daughters and grandchildren.

The Air Force community has lost a jewel.

— **Carolyn Terrill**

(cont'd on next page)

We've lost one of the best. A man with a great sense of humor, a professional in every respect and an outstanding supporter of our association. As a young captain at Wright-Patterson, to San Antonio, Andrews and the Pentagon, Dave was always there to advise, counsel and most importantly, be a friend.

— **Joe Purka**

When I was putting together Dave's Hall of Fame page for the AFPAA website, I really enjoyed two items his page links to. One was the text of his remarks when he accepted the Lauren D. Lyman award from Aerospace Industries Association. There are some great lessons learned for PAs in those remarks. The other, my favorite, was the brief story he wrote for the Washington Post's "Life Is Short" column. I still break out laughing every time I think of it. I strongly recommend reading both of those items. The links to them, highlighted in blue, are close to the last paragraph of his Hall of Fame page, which you can get to here:

<https://afpaaa.org/hof-inductees/hof-inductee-shea.html>.

What a tremendous talent and credit to the career field. He will be sorely missed.

— **Jim McGuire**

Dawn and I are were stunned to learn about the death of Dave Shea. Dave was a mentor and friend for more than half my career. I worked for him twice, first at Air Training Command Headquarters at Randolph and again at Air Force Systems Command Headquarters at Andrews. I owe him a lot.

Over the years we maintained a close relationship with him, his wife, Mary, and their three beautiful daughters. I

actually convinced him, the boy from New York City, and his family to go on a tent camping trip with our family in Texas. It took awhile for him to forgive me, but he eventually did.

I always felt that he was well-prepared to be a PAO because when he played hockey, he was the goalie, and when he played baseball, he was the catcher. He was used to having hard objects aimed at his head, so he was ready to stand up to the bombardment from the media.

Even after he retired, he was the go-to guy on some subjects. He was the PAO who dealt with the media when Project Blue Book closed down, and even in retirement he was occasionally called on to speak on UFOs.

We have lost a great one. Rest in peace, dear friend.

— **Sam Giammo**

Sorry to see him go but glad he's out of pain. We'll sure miss his grammar posts on Facebook. Thoughts and prayers to the Shea family.

— **Carla Sylvester**

I worked for Col. Shea at Air Force Systems Command headquarters, Andrews AFB, Md., from 1987-1990 as a young public affairs specialist. He was the director. I really respected him as he was a great leader, but he led with a sense of humor and class. His enormous Pancho Villa painting behind his office desk always put a smile on my face. So sorry to hear of his passing.

— **Mark Thompson**

Dave Shea was, and always will be,

an icon of professionalism in the world of military and industry communication. His command of the written word combined with his integrity, fine sense of humor and humble nature was a true beacon for anyone who knew Dave.

So many times Dave grabbed the stick, successfully landed whatever crisis he was working and made it look easy. He enjoyed the respect and credibility of the national media and every colleague he worked with in ways we all envied. He literally wrote the book on how to do it right.

Along the way he made us all proud to call him our friend and our editor, for he was the very best. He is editing this message right now I'm sure.

Rest with God Dave.

— **Mike McRaney**



TED G. TILMA

Association life member Ted G. Tilma, passed away July 19, 2023, in San Antonio, Texas. He served in the Air Force for 30 years, retiring in 1997.

He was born April 4, 1944, in Wichita, Kan. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism

from Wichita State University and a master's degree in personnel management from Central Michigan University. He was a graduate of Squadron Officer School, Air Command and Staff College and Air War College.

Tilma was commissioned through the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps in 1967. His first assignment was to the 3560th Flying Training Wing, Randolph AFB, Texas, as a wing information officer. He later served as Chief of Information.

In 1970, Tilma was Chief of Information for the 78th Flying Training Wing, Webb AFB, Texas and then assigned to Keesler Technical Training Center, Keesler AFB, Miss., as Chief of Information with additional duties as aide-de-camp to the Center Commander.

In 1972, Tilma was transferred to Lackland AFB, Texas, where he served successively as an Officer Training School flight commander; chief, scheduling division; wing protocol/special projects officer and wing executive officer.

He was reassigned to Sheppard AFB, Texas, in 1975 as Director of Information. He was assigned to Korea in 1977 as Chief of Information and wing executive officer for the 51st Tactical Fighter Wing at Osan Air Base.

After returning to the United States in 1978, Col. Tilma was appointed to the Secretary of the Air Force Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C. He served as Deputy Chief, Special Branch, Community Relations Division until 1980, when he became Deputy Chief, Support Forces Branch,

Media Relations Division.

In 1981, he returned to Randolph AFB, Texas, to Headquarters Military Personnel Center as Chief, Public Affairs Career Management, and Chief, Management Officer Assignment Section, Support Officer Assignments.

In 1985, Tilma became Director of Public Affairs for the Alaskan Air Command, Elmendorf AFB, Alaska, with additional duties as Director of Public Affairs, Alaskan Region, North American Defense Command.

In 1988, Tilma was promoted to colonel and became Commander of the Air Force Broadcasting Service at Kelly AFB, Texas. In 1991, he became Vice Commander of the Air Force News Agency.

Tilma is survived by his loving wife "Tee" McAllister Tilma; son Todd Tilma; sisters-in-law Annette Slater and Melody Patton (Mark); stepson Phillip McAllister and niece Adona Lowery (Mark) and nephew Conor Lowery.

His memorial service was held at Ft. Sam Houston National Cemetery, Aug. 9.

Ted Tilma was a magnificent mentor and phenomenal friend. I feel so fortunate to have had a front-row seat as Ted skillfully led AFNEWS. My wife, Shelley, and I also will be eternally grateful to the Tilma family for warmly welcoming our two adopted daughters from China when they were toddlers.

— Bob McCullough

Ted was the chief of public affairs officer assignments at MPC when I was officially grounded from flying in 1982. With the help of Art Forster, Mike McRaney, and —principally— Ted Tilma, I was able to transition into the Public Affairs career field. He assisted me in getting my AFIT assignment to Syracuse University to get my masters degree in radio, television, and film. I later had the pleasure of working for Ted as the Air Force Broadcasting Service liaison officer in the Headquarters, American Forces Information Service during his tenure as the AFBS commander. He was a great guy to work for and a great mentor.

— Dick Cole

Ted was one of the many all-stars who served in SAF/PA's Support Forces Branch in the late 70's and early 80's. In his long and distinguished career, Ted was "a man for all seasons" because he had the gift of communicating with a variety of audiences at their level of understanding, be they reporters, farmers, educators or civic leaders. Ted excelled as Pentagon spokesperson for Air Force personnel issues and later managed public affairs assignments at the Air Force Personnel Center. He was responsible for shaping the careers of many public affairs officers, civilians and enlisted personnel. After retiring, Ted led several volunteer community organizations in San Antonio — he lived the Air Force mantra of "service before self." Ted -you're gone but not forgotten.

— Art Forster

(cont'd on next page)

Ted Tilma touched the lives and careers of everyone in my era. He was a straight shooter who really knew what was best for our career field. He put his heart and soul in each and every assignment decision. When Ted told you something, you needed to listen. I'm proud to have served with him and to have known him.

—**Bud Ross**



DOUGLAS J. KENNETT

Association board of directors member Doug Kennett peacefully passed away at home in Alexandria, Va., on Oct. 25.

Kennett was born October 30, 1945, in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. He moved to New Jersey as a child and became a U.S. citizen in order to join the Air Force.

Doug earned a B.A. from Rutgers University in Journalism/Advertising and an M.A. from Ball State University in Counseling. He had over four decades of public relations management leadership in both the military

and private industry, specializing in media relations, crisis communications, executive level strategic planning and employee communications.

For 30 years he served as an Air Force public affairs officer.

He headed Public Affairs at bases in Texas, Korea, and England, and then served as Public Affairs Deputy for the United States Air Force Security Service in Washington, DC. Later, he joined the Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs Press Desk, handling highly controversial policy issues. He then became Chief of the Air Force Press Desk in the Department of Defense. His further assignments included Director of Public Affairs for the 3rd Air Force and Air Force Systems Command, Director of Air Force Media Relations and Director of Press Operations for the Department of Defense.

After retiring from the Air Force, Doug spent 14 years at Boeing as a national security spokesman. For several years he served as Vice President of Communications for their aircraft and missiles divisions, leading a staff of 160 persons with a budget of \$20 million.

In 2011 he was honored by the Aerospace Industries Association with the Lyman Award for lifetime achievement in aerospace communications and journalism.

Doug served 28 years on his condominium board of directors where he lived; 23 of those years as president or vice president. He also supported and served on the Board of Directors for United Community, a nonprofit

organization helping families in need in Fairfax County, Va. For Doug, volunteering was never a discretionary activity, it was a component of his character.

In his retirement, Doug enjoyed traveling with friends and family, Rutgers football, trivia, entertaining and keeping up with the news.

Doug was a loving husband to Eileen, stepdad to John Jameson (Lucy) and “GrandDoug” to granddaughters, Anna and Elly. He is also survived by his sister Marjorie Armstrong, niece Nancy and extended family members living in the U.S. and Canada.

A very young Capt. Kennett came and inspected my office in Taiwan many years ago. The inspection didn't take long, but he spent many hours downtown Taipei mentoring me! What a fun guy! He'll be missed.

—**Mike Cox**

Doug was clearly one of the best among our profession. I worked with him often when he was at Systems Command. Sorry to see another of our cadre pass away.

—**Joe Purka**

Very sad. Not only have we lost a truly consummate Public Affairs professional but a really great human being it was a privilege to have known.

—**John Terino**

Janet and I deeply mourn the loss of our long-time friend, Doug Kennett. He was truly one-of-a-kind and will be missed by many. Bright, meticulous

and funny, Doug had a way with words that underscored his reputation as one of the Air Force's best public affairs officers. He had the unique ability to translate highly complex terms into language the average person could understand. As an action officer in SAF/PA's Support Forces Branch, Doug earned the nickname, "CINCSMUT" because he was the spokesman for controversial issues such as homosexual policy, general officer misconduct and drug abuse cases. Doug loved people and liked to have a good time. His caring, compassion and concern for others made us all better. Sir Douglas - you'll always be in our hearts!

— Art Forster

I never had the privilege of working with Doug on active duty, but I salute his legacy of service to our country and dedication to our Airmen.

— John Dorrian

As a PA couple, Carla and I were fortunate to have Doug in our lives in a number of different ways. Carla was one of the "Kennett Girls" when she was assigned to AF Systems Command at Andrews. Later, Doug was my boss at SAF/PA. Still later,

Doug was my client when I was a stockbroker at Morgan Stanley in Alexandria.

We laugh a lot about the many "Kennett Girls" stories - if you haven't seen the video evidence on Facebook, make sure you do. But there was also a more serious side to the "Kennett Girls." You would be hard pressed to find anyone who did more to promote the role and advancement of women in the military than Doug Kennett. There are so many people - both female and male - who benefited from the very unique brand of leadership and mentorship that made Doug special.

We'll all miss that leadership and mentorship, but, for me, what I'll miss the most is Doug's friendship. He was definitely one of the good guys. The world is a better place because of him.

— Jim McGuire

Doug Kennett was one of my first and best bosses in the Air Force. At HQ Air Force Systems Command in the early 1990s, he led a PA office that was heavily female, even by today's standards. I was lucky to be one of "Kennett's girls," and I learned so much under his leadership. We worked hard but also played hard, as evidenced by the couple of videos that live on in the AFPAA Facebook group.

I traveled with Col. Kennett on a few TDYs. He was always steps ahead of me, both literally and figuratively. I like to walk fast, and so did he. To the extent that I've ever learned to think ahead a little, I learned it from him. We'd be walking through the airport, but he was already talking about where we'd pick up our checked bags, where we'd pick up the rental car, and what we would accomplish on the trip. He was warm and funny, and inspired me to be my best as an officer and a person.

I'm heartbroken that we've lost Doug so soon. His smiling face was always a highlight of our AFPAA board meetings. Our hearts go out to Eileen and his family; he will be dearly missed.

— Carla Sylvester

Doug Kennett was a leader in Media Relations and Crisis Communication his entire career. Doug and I were in the same DINFOS class in January-February 1968 at Ft. Benjamin Harrison and we have been friends ever since. Our careers followed a similar path. He preceded me at 3rd Air Force at RAF Mildenhall and we both ended up as division chiefs at SAF/PA at the same time. He had the perfect balance of professionalism and a great sense of humor. The PA career field was a better place because of him.

— Sam Giammo

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Douglas J. Kennett was a friend of mine and I will miss him deeply. I first met Doug in 1979 and we kept up with each other for these many years. I never worked directly with Doug but got to know him as a positive, professional public affairs officer. He was absolutely one of the best and his career accomplishments reflect that position. I believe his leadership policies and practices are continuing on even to this day. I pray his family finds peace and comfort in knowing so many people care for them. Godspeed my friend and blessings on you for always aiming high.

— Jim Ragan

I always thought of Doug as **the** consummate PA. Our all too infrequent steak dinners at Morton's with Charley Powers were memorable highlights of my PA life. I miss them both!

— John Gura

A good man! I worked with Doug at Boeing and while on active duty.

— Johnnie Ben Kump

One of my disappointments in life was the timing never worked out for me to get a chance to work for Doug Kennett. Brilliant, professional, knowledgeable, kind -- and funny, to boot. He was a legend!

— Linda Garlitz Leong



DONALD L. GILLELAND

Donald L. Gilleland, 87, passed on September 14, 2023.

Gilleland was born in Alton, Ill., in 1935 to Josephine and Orval Gilleland.

He was married for 60 years to the former Peggy Chaffee, of Worcester, Mass., whom he met at Southern Illinois University in 1956. Peggy was the love of his life!

Gilleland earned a B.S. degree in communications from Southern Illinois University and a MA degree in public relations from Boston University.

Gilleland served 30 years in the military — eight years enlisted in the Navy and 22 years

commissioned in the Air Force. He served with the Joint Casualty Resolution Center throughout South Vietnam and received the Legion of Merit, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Service Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster, Air Force Commendation Medal, and Humanitarian Service Medal. He retired from the Air Force in 1984.

Until 1987, Donald worked for the LTV Aerospace and Defense Company. From 1987 to 1994 he worked for General Dynamics Corporation.

Gilleland has six published books including *America: A Cultural Enigma*, *America: Where Great Things Happen*, *America: An Exceptional Nation*, *America: A Conflicted Nation*, *Stars, Stripes and Corporate Logos* and *Watching My Wife Die—A Christian Perspective on Grieving*.

Donald was a contributor to *Florida Today*, *TC Palm*, and *Vero's Voice* publications. He published more than 600 articles in a variety of magazines and newspapers.

Gilleland lived in Suntree, Fla., from 1994 until his death. He was a devout Christian who enjoyed serving as an usher at the Calvary Chapel Melbourne/Viera church, hugging hundreds of people every week.



The News and Notes is your publi-

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!

Donald was predeceased by his wife Margaret "Peggy" Gilleland, mother Josephine Gilleland, father Orval Gilleland, and sisters Carol Sue Gilleland, Mary Jo Bock, and Patricia Bondoc.

He was cremated, and his ashes reside in Arlington National Cemetery along with those of his wife.



LOU TORRACA

We know of Lou's passing because of an email received from his youngest daughter Tracey sent to Tom Shoemaker.

"Dad has sadly passed away unexpectedly. We have not announced his passing by obituary or online notices as he was a victim of fraud last year. We are not having any services per his wishes. I am slowly trying to notify those who have continuously kept in touch with him. I apologize for using his email, but I am going through one by one to try and sift through important contacts versus phishing attempts of which he has had thousands."

Lou had a degree in Public Relations from Boston University and was commissioned as an AFROTC Distinguished Military Graduate. He spent his first 13 years in the Air Force as an air traffic control officer.

His late entry into Public Affairs came when he earned his MA in communications from the University of Oklahoma. Among the assignments that followed were 7th Air Force and the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) air briefer in Saigon; Headquarters Pacific Air Forces; Clark AB for the return of the POWs from Vietnam; and Director of Public Affairs for the Air Force Communications Service and for Military Airlift Command

Prior to retirement in Hawaii in 1983, he was Director of Public Affairs for Pacific Command at Camp H.M. Smith.

It didn't take long for Lou to immerse himself in the public relations community in Hawaii holding positions as the Special Assistant to the President of the Bishop Museum, Department of Education Director of Communications, Executive Director of the Combined Federal Campaign, President of International Public Relations, and teaching at Chaminade and Hawaii Pacific University.

In 2009, the Hawaii chapter of the Public Relations Society of America bestowed its highest award, the Hall of Honor Award, on Torraca.

He received the award for his tremendous contributions to the Hawaii chapter over the years

and his notable career accomplishments.

Lou was a great guy and a good friend. I grieve at his passing.

— **John Terino**

Lou and I were in the Short Course (Winter '66) at Boston University; then in '70-'71 he was our senior officer present at AFIT's Masters' program at Oklahoma U. Smart guy, good friend, fine sense of humor. In retirement he and his English-born wife Beryl lived at Kaneohe on the windward side of Oahu. When she passed it was a lonely time for him. Glad we got to visit him on a sojourn over there a few years ago. Another sad loss for our gang.

— **Mark Foutch**



DOUGLAS L. JACOBSEN

Douglas L. Jacobsen, husband, father, grandpa, great-grandpa, and patriot passed away on October 17, 2023 just 18 days shy of his 81st birthday.

(cont'd on next page)

He was born November 4, 1942 in Winnemucca, Nev., to Dell and Wanda Jacobsen. Doug graduated from Brigham Young University and later obtained his Masters Degree at Troy University. He proudly served in the Air Force for 20 years as a Public Affairs Officer and retired at the rank of lieutenant colonel. Doug then worked for McDonnell Douglas and Boeing as protocol manager.

An avid fan of the 1955 Brooklyn Dodgers, Doug loved collecting baseball memorabilia, meeting his baseball heroes from this era, and twice, he even went to Dodger Baseball Fantasy Camp where he was voted the Most Valuable Player.

Doug was preceded in death by his parents Dell and Wanda, and by his brother, Rex Jacobsen.

He is survived by his wife, Nedene Jacobsen; daughter, Juli (Craig) Eivens and their sons, Parker and Bennett; Son, Philip (His three cats) Jacobsen; Son, Brad (Dominique) Jacobsen and their children, Laura (Josh) Schnurr (and their son, great-grandchild Ryan), Calvin Jacobsen, Sam Jacobsen, Matt Jessop, and Gabi Jessop.

He was buried October 30, 2023, in the Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery in Killeen, Texas.



GEORGE T. "TOM" GARCIA

Tom Garcia, who served in both the Korean and Vietnamese Wars passed away June 28, 2022. He was 88.

During the Korean War, Tom was assigned to the 606th Air Control Squadron, Pusan AB. The 606th provided early warning of enemy air attacks and directed A-26 Invaders supporting friendly ground forces during periods of darkness.

During the Vietnam War, he flew UH-1F/P helicopters with the 20th Helicopter Squadron at Ban Me Thuot, Republic of Vietnam. The "Green Hornets" supported special operations in South Vietnam and Cambodia. His headstone in the South Florida National Cemetery indicates he was awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross.

He retired from the Air Force in 1974 as a lieutenant colonel. Little is known of his Air Force Public Affairs service.

He was predeceased by his wife Phyllis Reed Garcia, 85, in 2018. No other information was available.



PAUL E. MUEHRING

Association life member Paul E. Muehring passed away June 13 at the age of 78. He had been living in Ankeny, Iowa.

He was born in Hannibal, Mo., on July 21, 1944, to John and Helen Muehring. His parents, brother Richard, and sister Loretta all preceded him in death.

Paul was a graduate of Kansas State University (B.A.) and Boston University (M.S. in Public Relations).

His military career began in 1967. He served as a public affairs officer at bases in Arizona, Montana, Utah, Nebraska, California and Japan. His last duty station was McConnell AFB, Kan., where he retired in 1990.

Among his military decorations were the Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters, Air Force Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with three stars, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with de-

vice and one oak leaf cluster, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal and Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces Honor Medal.

He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Carolyn, and children Lynlee, Leslie, and John. Other survivors include his sister Marlene, nephews Kyle and Scott Shaver, and grandchildren Caitlin M. Muehring, Kade E. Muehring, Caitlin A. Lemke and Evan G. Graham.

He was buried in the Kansas Veterans Cemetery in Winfield on July 14.



ROBERT J. "R.J." SULE

Association life member Robert J. Sule passed away Nov. 6 in Linwood, N.J., at the age of 83.

Sule was born on New Year's Day, 1940, in Lewiston, Idaho, the eldest son of John Sule, a lumberjack, and Edna Piatt Sule, a registered nurse. He grew up in Clarkston, Wash. He earned his bachelor's degree in Economics at Central Washington State in 1962 and

was commissioned in the Air Force Reserve through the university AFROTC program. He later received his MBA from the University of Utah.

He first served as an air traffic control officer before becoming a public affairs officer.

He met his wife, Suzanne Ray, while he was stationed at the Federal Aviation Administration's National Aviation Facilities Experimental Center in Pomona, N.J. They were married in 1970 in Nanzhuang, Republic of China, where R.J. was serving on Air Force active duty.

Upon his return to the U.S., Sule moved to Pittsburgh and left active duty to pursue a career in real estate with the Dravo Corporation. He managed the development of housing and industrial projects across the country.

In 1986, Sule was named president and CEO of Blue Ridge Real Estate Company and Big Boulder Corporation, operators of the Jack Frost and Big Boulder Pocono ski resorts. He and his family moved to the Pocono Mountains.

After leaving Blue Ridge, Sule returned to Pittsburgh working commercial real estate with the Galbreath Company, CBRE and Massaro.

In the 1990s, he began appearing in Hollywood film and TV productions shot in Pittsburgh. Among the productions in which he appeared were the feature films *Dogma* and *Smart People*.

Sule retired to Linwood, N.J. He was a member of the Knights of Columbus and kept busy with his family.

He is survived by his wife Su-

zanne; daughter Kerstin; son Michael; daughter-in-law Emily; granddaughter Ella; James Robertson, a son from a previous relationship; and numerous nieces, nephews, grand-nieces and grand-nephews.

His funeral was conducted Nov. 18, 2023.

Many of us who worked with Bob Sule knew him as a good PA and a great guy. When he was Doug Kennett's IMA at HQ Air Force Systems Command/PA, he always had a smile and a kind word. He even invited a bunch of us to go skiing at his resort. A kind soul, he was a person you were always happy to see. He will certainly be missed.

— Carla Sylvester



RICHARD J. "R.J." WOOD

Richard J. Wood, fondly known as "R.J.," passed Sept. 18 at Avow Hospice in Naples, Fla.

He was born October 2, 1937, in

(cont'd on next page)

Peekskill, N.Y.

Wood graduated with distinction from Rutgers with a bachelors degree in 1958. He also obtained masters degrees from Louisiana State University in 1961 and Boston University in 1964.

In the Air Force he served as a public affairs officer at numerous bases including Beale AFB, Calif., Luke AFB, Ariz., Peterson AFB, Colo., and The Pentagon.

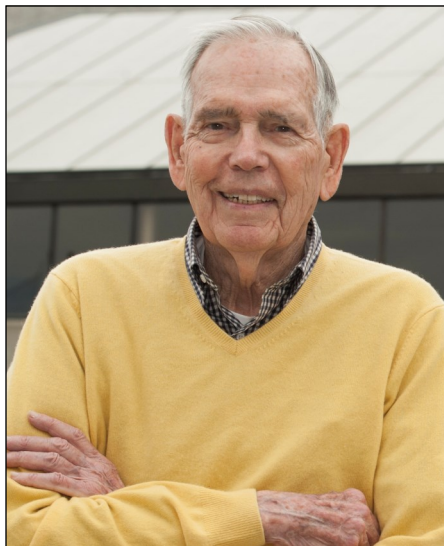
Following his retirement, he worked at multiple New York City corporations including J.C. Penney. He also served on the board of directors of the Valley Forge National Park.

Following the retirement of his wife, Pearl, from the Brandywine Agency that the two founded in New York City, they moved to Naples, Fla.

During his Air Force career, R.J. was awarded three Public Relations Society of America Silver Anvil Awards and the Legion of Merit.

He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Pearl, and daughter Kimberly and four grandchildren: Haley and Ashley Lanzoni and Grace and Jake Wood. He was preceded in death by his son, Gregory, his sister, Sally, and his parents John and Marjorie.

His internment is planned for a later date.



SAMUEL K. LESSEY, JR.

Lifetime AFPAA founder Samuel K. Lessey, Jr., passed away June 20, 2023. He passed just a few months before his 100th birthday.

Lessey was born October 9, 1923, in Newark, N.J., and grew up an only child in Chappaqua, N.Y. Following high school, he entered the U.S. Military Academy in 1942 as a member of the Class of 45.

During his cow (junior) year, he entered the Air Cadet program. He attended primary aviation school in Oklahoma, and completed subsequent training (basic and advanced school) at Stewart Field, earning his wings three days before graduation. After commissioning into the Army Air Corps, he learned to fly the B-25 in Arizona and the B-24 in Tennessee.

His first assignment was in Germany as a member of the occupation force following the end of World War II.

In 1951, he entered Harvard

Law School, and after graduating he was assigned to teach military law and the Uniform Code of Military Justice at the Naval Academy. While there, his mission, as far as he was concerned, was to convince midshipmen to branch into the Air Force. (The Air Force Academy was not established until 1954, and in the early years, 25 percent of each class at West Point and Annapolis could choose to branch into the Air Force.)

His next assignment was in Japan, where he flew for the 99th Air Transport Squadron in the 1503rd Air Transport Wing conducting missions all throughout Asia and the Pacific.

After returning from Japan, he transitioned to the Air Force Reserve and earned an MBA at Harvard, entering the business world in New York City. In 1975, he was the Distinguished Graduate of the Air War College, and in 1976 he was assigned to the Headquarters, Air Force to review the management structure of the Air Force Reserve.

In 1982, President Ronald Reagan appointed him as the Inspector General of the U.S. Synthetic Fuels Corporation, and in 1987 he became the Director of the Selective Service System.

He served as a CASA (Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army) and as the President of the Association of the U.S. Army. He has been the Chairman of the National Stroke Association, served on the West Point Board of Visitors and the selection committee for the Army Sports Hall of Fame and worked with the Dwight D. Eisenhower Society.



Lessey never married. Following his passing he was buried at West Point.



JACK H. OSWALD

Recent inductee into the AFPAA Hall of Fame, Jack H. Oswald, age 90, of El Dorado Hills, Calif., passed away on November 17, 2023.

Fresh off a degree in Radio and Television at Northwestern University's School of Speech, a stint as the manager of the University's radio station, and a commission through AFROTC, 2Lt. Jack Oswald began active duty at Lackland AFB, Texas, on December 7, 1955, exactly fourteen years after Pearl Harbor. From there, it was a quick trip to Ellington AFB, Texas, where he earned his navigator wings.

His navigator duties took him to an air rescue squadron at Norton AFB, Calif., and a deployment to Eniwetok Atoll in support of the nuclear testing program Operation Hardtack. Once back from the Pacific, Jack was assigned to

Prestwick, Scotland where, in addition to his navigator duties, he was the squadron information officer.

Returning to the states, Jack became the information officer at Scott AFB, Ill., and then the chief of internal information at Military Airlift Command headquarters.

After his selection for the Air Force Institute of Technology and the completion of a master's degree in cinema from the University of Southern California, Jack became chief of radio and TV at Command Services Unit at Bolling AFB. Jack left his mark there, working with the Air Force Band and producing public service material for radio and TV that greatly enhanced Air Force recruiting efforts.

Moving across the Potomac to the Pentagon as internal media chief gave him his biggest challenge: revising the Commander's Call program. That challenge brought Jack's unique leadership abilities to the fore, as he assembled and mentored a creative group of talented lieutenants and captains including Andy Chiaramonte, Rick Vaughn, Phil Robinson, Bill Lenz, Mike Robe, Mike Conaway, Jay Welsh, eventual brigadier generals Ron Rand and Tim White, and the Air Force Audiovisual Service staff at Norton AFB. Together they would make a major impact on the Air Force's internal information efforts for decades to come.

At the time, "Air Force

Now" represented a radically different approach to military filmmaking, and it took a lot of convincing before a skeptical Pentagon E-ring would give the go-ahead. Its underlying concept was to combine the then new "60 Minutes"-style long-form story with the also then new short "Sesame Street"-style "ads" — with subjects like safety, special topics and personnel issues. The adoption of these two "modern" ideas, produced by a cadre of bright, young Air Force filmmakers, some who went on to successful Air Force careers and others to fame and fortune in Hollywood, was the key to AFN's success and longevity.

In 1970, Jack's Pentagon tour was cut short by an assignment to Military Assistance Command Vietnam in Saigon, where he supervised five military film crews documenting the Vietnam war, and produced a powerful documentary highlighting serious drug abuse problems within the military in Vietnam. After returning stateside to an assignment at AAVS headquarters in California, Jack became the executive producer of "Air Force Now," and served in that role until he retired in 1977.

After his military retirement, Jack joined the faculty at the University of Southern California, teaching film and television production, and

(cont'd on next page)

started a production company which became the official filmmaker for the world famous Tournament of Roses, documenting Rose Bowl games and Tournament Parades for 18 years.

The "Air Force Now" series that Oswald conceived and nurtured was an indispensable communications tool that commanders at all levels came to rely upon heavily. Literally thousands of airmen gained a better sense of the Air Force mission and their role in it, thanks to his leadership, creativity, and groundbreaking approach to film production. While technology has changed, Jack's influence on the Air Force's audiovisual production and internal information programs continues to this day and remains as strong as ever.

No obituary or funeral arrangements were available for Oswald at press time.

As the years go on I continue to think with more and more appreciation and admiration of Jack and what an amazing job he did creating AFN and hiring us non military oriented crazy cats and herding as only he could with a legacy of amazing results.

I still remember vividly as I entered his office in October 1969 to explain how much I appreciated his request to interview me, but thank you, no I would prefer for you to just send me to Norton to direct films, not come to the Pentagon. Jack had his feet on his desk and said, "sit down Lieutenant and relax. You're hired!"

— **Mike Conway**

Very sad. He was a big presence in our lives, and I'm very grateful to have known him. He helped keep me (somewhat) sane in circumstances for which I was not particularly well-suited.

— **Phil Alden Robinson**
Director, AMPAS

Jack was an incredibly empathetic, dependable guy for us fledglings. You could go to him with anything, and knew you'd be talking to a friend, not just a superior officer. OK, he rolled his eyes at my problems more than once, but still. 'Twas a special person in my life I'll never forget."

— **Mike Robe**

We were friends for 40 years and business partners for 20 years and he was and is still the smartest and most creative person I've known in or out of the USAF.

— **John Gura**

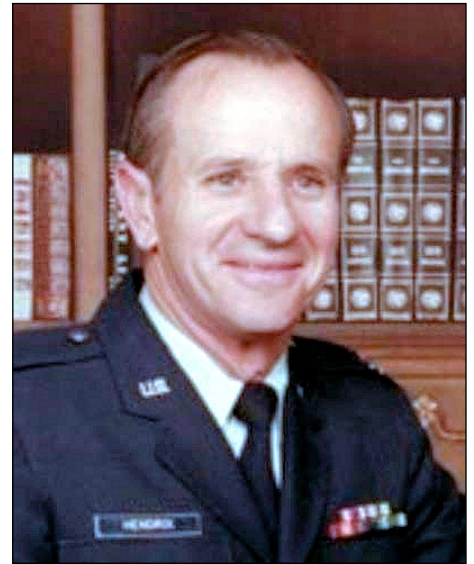
Like other charismatic leaders, Jack was complex, confident, and often brutally honest. When I was leaving active duty for the film division of the United States Information Agency, I had an out processing meeting with Jack. I asked him why he didn't put me in for some medal or another. He said, "Because you didn't earn it." He was right. But our friendship spanned 50 years and there was never, ever a boring moment with Jack Oswald.

— **Tim White**

Jack Oswald was my first military boss. As such, he taught me a lot... about filmmaking, leadership, and the Air Force, but also about confi-

dence, initiative, and life. I only worked for him for 18 months, but his lessons and impact have lasted a lifetime. Thanks, Jack. RIP.

— **Ron Rand**



JERRY B. HENDRIX

Jerry B. Hendrix of San Antonio, Texas, passed away on Dec. 7 at the age of 84.

Jerry was born Dec. 23, 1938, the youngest of Ora and Charles Hendrix's seven children. He grew up in Commerce, Texas, attended Texas A&M University on a football scholarship, then transferred to East Texas State University to complete his Bachelor of Science degree on an ROTC scholarship.

He graduated as the ETSU's Sigma Delta Chi Outstanding Male Graduate in Journalism in 1961, and then entered the Air Force as a second lieutenant.

Also in 1961 he married Barbara Shields, just as he embarked on what would be a 30-year military career in public affairs in which he used his writing, editorial, and photography skills and training.

Through the 1960s and 70s he was assigned to Osan AB, Korea, the Pentagon, and Wiesbaden and Ramstein Air Bases in Germany. In 1974 he was transferred to Randolph AFB in San Antonio.

In 1980, Jerry married Gaye Burris, and that same year was selected as the director of public affairs at the Air Force Academy. In 1983, he was reassigned to the Pentagon as chief of the Community Relations Division, and in 1986 he returned to Randolph AFB as the director of public affairs for Headquarters Air Training Command.

He retired as a colonel in 1991.

After retirement, Jerry continued to work for a time, managing the Courtyard Tennis Club in Austin and then working at USAA in San Antonio. But he also found more time for family and hobbies including furniture- and swingset-building, pie-baking and gardening.

His most consistent joy from high school through his 70s was playing (and winning) tournament tennis wherever he lived. During his military years he coached and played on the Air Force Interservice Tennis Team when the team, including he and his doubles partner, took the 1979 championship trophy.

Jerry married Kay Ruckman in 1996. She shared his love of tennis and together for many years they taught tennis skills to children through Camp Discovery, which offers camps for children with cancer, and Racquets Up!, for children with Down's Syndrome.

He is survived by his wife of 27 years, Kay Hendrix of San Antonio, and his children and their

spouses: Dana Hendrix of Georgetown and her husband Keith Hutchinson, Dave Hendrix of Austin and his wife Robin Hendrix, Drew Hendrix of Plano and his wife Amy Hendrix, and Elizabeth Hendrix Bunch of Wake Forest, N.C.; as well as Kay's children Heather Rios of Kingwood and her husband Chris Rios; and Summer Ruckman of Boulder, Colo, and grandchildren Kate Hendrix, Samantha Cloud-Miller, Kasey Hendrix, Allison Hendrix, Austin Hendrix, Abby Hendrix, Norah Bunch, Lucas Bunch, Barrett Rios, Hayden Rios, and Tanner Rios.

Military funeral honors and interment took place at the Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in San Antonio, Jan. 5.



ROBERT HAWTHORNE

Robert Hawthorne, chief of the American Forces Network Pacific technical services division, died Feb. 22, 2023, at Yokota Air Base after suffering a heart attack.

"Rob was an incredible leader with a storied career in the De-

partment of Defense, serving for 40 years across the Defense Media Activity, American Forces Network, Defense Information Systems Agency, the Air Force Broadcasting Service, Air Force Television, and the Air Force News Agency," said the American Forces Network in a press release.

Rob had a talent for keeping AFN stations broadcasting and networked around the world, but what we'll remember most is how he treated people; he was a wonderful mentor and team builder, and his legacy lives on through those he trained and developed through the years.

"We grieve the loss of a true professional, family man, and friend. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and the many co-workers who knew Rob," read the release.



THOMAS J. SAUNDERS, SR.

Thomas J. Saunders, Sr., passed away in Inverness, Fla., on November 14, 2023. A veteran and civil servant, Tom

(cont'd on next page)

dutifully defended his country during the Persian Gulf War, as well as numerous conflicts and operations in the Middle East and Africa.

He was born December 27, 1959, in Laconia, N.H., to Thomas and Claudette Saunders.

He enlisted in the Air Force in the summer of 1979 and was first stationed at RAF Lakenheath, England. Tom traveled to Africa, Asia, Europe, and across the United States documenting military and humanitarian efforts, and assisting with humanitarian aid.

A defining moment of Saunders' decorated career was Operation Support Hope in 1994, where he documented the atrocities of the Rwandan genocide and assisted with handing out 15,000 tons of humanitarian supplies.

After nearly 26 years of active duty service to his country, Saunders retired with full honors in the summer of 2005, only to continue serving his country as a public affairs action officer supporting the United States Army and United States Air Force.

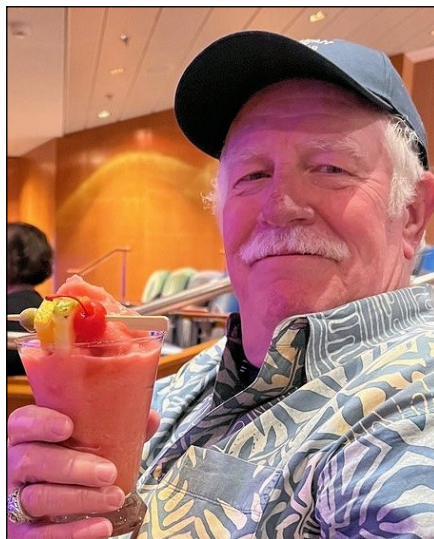
He finally retired in April of 2023 after 43 years in the Department of Defense both in and out of uniform.

A true Boston sports fan with a larger-than-life personality, he spent his days with friends, watching sports, and attending social functions with his fiancée, Terri, and her kids McKenzi and Trey Maynard.

He is survived by his fiancée, Terri McKean; daughters, Brittany Allsop-Adams and Victoria Saunders; his sons, Ryan Saunders, Thomas Saunders, Jr, and Gunner

Saunders; his grandchildren, Isabella Hetu, Riley Saunders, Caleb Saunders, Aiden Saunders, and Kai Hetu; his mother, Claudette Saunders; his sisters Linda Goodwin, Michelle Saunders, and Laurie Martines; twin brother Tim Saunders and younger brother Eric Saunders; and his best friend and pet dog, Buddy Lightfoot Saunders. He now joins his granddaughter, Juliette Hetu, and his father Tom N. Saunders.

He was buried with military honors November 28, 2023, at the New Hampshire State Veterans Cemetery in Boscawen, N.H.



RICHARD D. "RICK" BLACKBURN

Rick Blackburn, 64, of Columbia, Md., passed away Dec. 23. Born July 13, 1959, in Stamford, Conn., he was raised in Houston, Texas.

He earned a bachelors degree in business administration from the University of Maryland. He served in the Air Force from 1981 to 2002 at duty stations in

Okinawa, Greece, Iceland, Italy and Texas.

Following his military career, Rick held multiple civilian positions over 40 years with the Department of Defense at the American Forces Network in Germany and at Fort Meade, Md. He retired as the deputy director of AFN in 2021.

Rick is survived by his wife Julie; mother Juanita Dean; sister Stephanie Blackburn; sister Kim Carlton; daughter Lindsay Williamson; son Jared Scott, and daughters McKenzie and Rose Scott. He was preceded in death by his father, Quill "Buddy" Blackburn, stepfather Lloyd Dean, and daughter April.

His internment will be announced at a later date.

Very sad. Rick and I had worked together in my last assignment with the Defense Media Agency.

— Eric Schnaible

Very sad to hear! Rick was a very good man!

— Chuck Merlo



If you learn of the death of an AFPAA member, please notify membership chairman Christine Queen as soon as possible at:

cjqueen@comcast.net



“Daedalus” finally home

At long last, the a sculpture by Lt. Col. C.B. Kelly named “Daedalus,” which he presented to AFPAA at an annual meeting in 1997, and was “stored” in Don Brownlee’s home for 25 years, has been officially presented to SAF/PA from the Association.

In 2021, Alice Price, former Director of the AF Art & Museum Program called AFPAA’s liaison to SAF/PA, Lou Timmons, asking for his assistance in getting it displayed in the Pentagon.

The sculpture is now displayed in the SAF/PA front office. Here’s Lou presenting the plaque that accompanies the sculpture, and the sculpture itself, to SAF/PA Director Jerry Renne, Aug. 1.

The sculpture was presented in recognition of SAF/PA’s “continuous support and encouragement of AFPAA.”

Welcome to the newest members of our association!

Members

- Lisa Bachman
- Pat Bragg
- Rebecca Coleman
- Erin Dorrance
- Beth Horine
- Nicole Koreen
- Johnnie Kump
- Robert Purtiman
- Alexander Rector
- Rick Reibelng
- Kenneth Scarle
- Deven Schultz
- Elliott Sprehe
- Heather Cozad Staley
- Trevor Tiernan
- Christopher Warner
- Heidi West

Adjunct Member

- Barbara Cagle

Life Members

- William Ackerman
- Thomas Christie
- Adriane Craig
- Amanda Dick
- Michel Escudie
- Steven Grever
- Deb Henley
- Matthew Matlock
- Colleen McGee
- Jason Medina
- Chuck Merlo
- Christie Thomas
- Stevi Shapiro-Wellington
- Melissa Bailey
- John Banusiewicz

- Tyrone Mitchell
- John Kirkwood

Life Member (Payment Plan)

- Patrick Barnes (1 of 4)
- Chris Gilles (1 of 4)
- Randy Hopp (1 of 4)
- Thomas Mullican (3 of 4)
- David Branham (1 of 4)
- William Barksdale (1 of 4)

Affiliate Member

- Cindy Dalton

PA Warriors selected for E-5 Promotions

Congratulations to the below PA warriors selected for promotion to staff sergeant:

- **Kimberly Barrera** - HQ DMA, Ft George G. Meade, Md.
- **Mercedes Bizzotto** - 7BW, Dyess AFB, Texas
- **Brandy Bodolay** - HQ DMA, Ft George G. Meade, Md.
- **Yosselin Campos** - 18WG, Kadena AB, Japan
- **Philip Castro** - USAF Heartland of America Band, Offutt AFB, Neb.
- **Lauren Cobin** - 6ARW, MacDill AFB, Fla.
- **Joshua Crossman** - 39ABW, Incirlik AB, Turkey
- **Anabel Del Valle** - 1CTCS, JB Charleston, S.C.
- **Natalie Fiorilli** - 1SOW, Hurlburt Field, Fla.
- **John Foister** - 86AW, Ramstein AB, Germany
- **Bryan Guthrie** - 1CTCS, JB Charleston, S.C.
- **Jason Hammers** - USAF Heritage of America Band, JB Langley -Eustis, VA
- **Stephanie Henry** - 375AMW, Scott AFB, Ill.
- **Timothy Houey** - 3AVS, JB SA-Lackland, Texas
- **Jovante Johnson** - 57WG, Nellis AFB, Nev.
- **Thomas Karol** - 86AW, Ramstein AB, Germany
- **Jack Legrand** - AFN Korea, DMA, Camp Humphreys, Republic of Korea
- **Destani Matheny** - AFN Kunsan, DMA, Kunsan AB, Republic of Korea
- **Austin McIntosh** - 28BW, Ellsworth AFB, S.D.
- **Alexander Merchak** - 60 AMW, Travis AFB, Calif.
- **Nicole Molignano** - AFN Aviano, DMA, Aviano AB, Italy
- **Kimberly Mueller** - 81TW, Keesler AFB, Miss.
- **Kristal Munguia** - 432WG, Creech AFB, Nev.
- **Marti Muniz** - U.S. Air Forces in Europe Band - Ramstein AB, Germany
- **Callie Norton** - 62AW, JB Lewis-McChord, Wash.
- **James Nufer** - USAF Band of Flight, Wright Patterson AFB, Ohio
- **Isaac Olivera** - 86AW, Ramstein AB, Germany
- **Clarissa Osborn** - USAF Band of the Golden West, Travis AFB, Calif.
- **Dakota Raub** - 45SLD, Patrick SFB, Fla.
- **Ashley Richards** - 319RW, Grand Forks AFB, N.D.
- **Carlos Rodriguez** - 1CTCS, JB Charleston, S.C.
- **Rocio Romo** - 30SLD, Vandenberg SFB, Calif.
- **Zachary Rufus** - 57WG, Nellis AFB, Nev.
- **Saomy Sabournin De Los Santos** - HQ DMA, Ft. George G. Meade, Md.
- **Chloe Shanes** - 633ABW, JB Langley-Eustis, Va.
- **Patrick Sullivan** - 673ABW, JB Elemendorf-Richardson, Alaska
- **Jose Tamondong** - 354FW, Eielson AFB, Alaska
- **Moses Taylor** - 436TS, Dyess AFB, Texas
- **Anthony Walker** - 1CTCS, JB Charleston, S.C.
- **Vernon Walter** - 27SOW, Cannon AFB, N.M.
- **Michael P. Ward** - USAFA, Colorado Springs, Colo.
- **Zoe Wiggins** - 57WG, Nellis AFB, Nev.
- **Zachary Wright** - 5BW, Minot AFB, N.D.
- **Ryu Yamakawa** - USAF Band of the Pacific-Asia, Yokota AB, Japan

Congratulations to you all! Becoming a member of the NCO corps is a critical move in your career where you will serve a vital role in our Air Force.

Promotion delayed by Senator over DoD Abortion Policy

Ryder pins on second star

The Department of Defense Press Secretary was finally able to pin on his second star Dec. 6.

Air Force Maj. Gen. Patrick S. Ryder was among 22 general officers selected for promotion in March 2023 who's promotions were delayed by a U.S. Senator.

Ryder follows in the footsteps of the last—and only other—uniformed Pentagon press secretary, Rear Adm. John F. Kirby, who pinned on his second star shortly after taking on the job in late 2013.

Sen. Tommy Tuberville (R-Ala.) released most of his holds on officer promotions on Dec. 5, largely ending a 9-month protest that failed to reduce troops' access to abortion services but left the U.S. military increasingly shorthanded at its most

senior jobs. Within hours, the Senate approved the promotion of 425 senior officers long held up by the Alabama Republican.

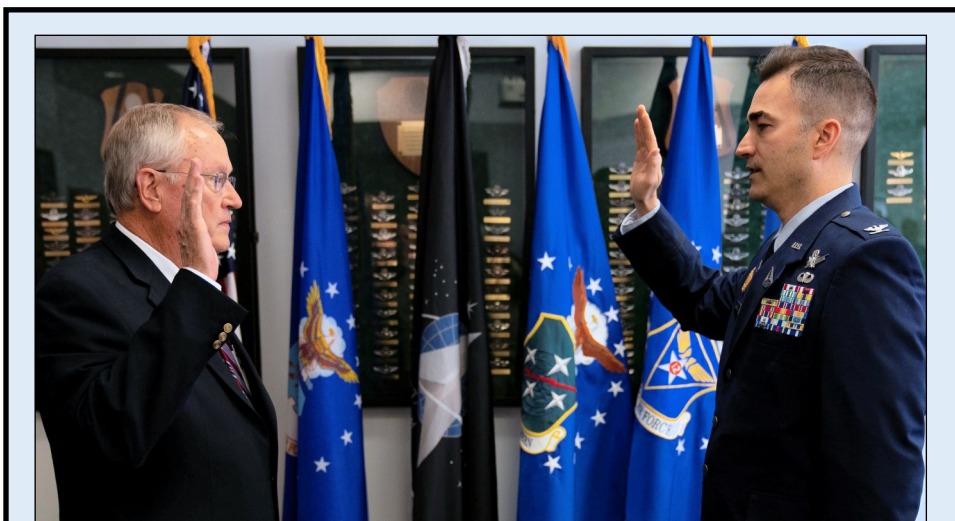
The GOP senator placed his hold about eight months after the Supreme Court eliminated U.S. women's right to an abortion. Within weeks of the court's July 2022 decision, several states had moved to limit access to reproductive health care, including ones that were home to nearly a quarter-million troops, including some 40 percent of female servicemembers. In February, Tuberville imposed a "senatorial hold" on every military promotion and defense appointment that required Senate approval in an effort to stop paying for troops to travel from states that have functionally outlawed abortion. By mid-year, Tuberville's hold



Maj. Gen. Patrick S. Ryder

had delayed several hundred promotions.

Senators approved 425 promotions by voice vote hours after Tuberville said he would allow nominations to proceed for all officers below the rank of four stars.



Air Force Public Affairs Association life member, retired Col. Johnny Whitaker, left, administers the officer oath of office to his son, Col. Jonathan Whitaker, U.S. Space Force. The occasion was Jonathan's O-6 promotion ceremony, October 31, 2023, at Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz. The newly promoted younger Whitaker is the Director of Space Forces, USSOUTHCOM. Jonathan's wife, Jennifer Whitaker, is the civilian Deputy Director of Public Affairs for 12AF (AFSOUTH). (USAF Photo by TSgt. Rachel Maxwell, NCOIC, Command Information, 12AF (AFSOUTH) Public Affairs)

A recruitment poster for the Air Force Public Affairs Association. At the top is the logo for the Air Force Public Affairs Association, which consists of the letters 'AF' in a blue oval with 'Public Affairs Association' written below it. Below the logo is the text 'We Want YOU!' in a large, colorful, stylized font. The word 'YOU!' is particularly large and has a hand pointing towards it. Below this is the text 'To Recruit a New Member' in a black, handwritten-style font.



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FIRST CLASS POSTAGE



CENTURION PROGRAM

AFPAA's Endowment Fund gained \$2,800 dollars as 24 members listed below made \$100 donations during the 2023 annual meeting.

Donors present at the annual membership meeting participate in a drawing for a free hotel room. Because it had been several years since an annual meeting was conducted, three drawings for free rooms were held this year. The winners were Dick Cole, Alan DeFend and Dave Smith.

AFPAA members can donate to the Endowment Fund at any time in a variety of ways – money, stocks, real estate, collectibles, or other valuables. Donations are tax deductible, reducing a member's tax liability while helping provide for AFPAA's future. Contact treasurer Phil Ratliff on how to make donations at pmratliff@thevillages.net.

This year's donors were:

- Adriane Craig
- Alan DeFend
- Art Forster
- Beth Horine
- Carla Sylvester
- Christine Queen
- Chuck Merlo
- Clem Gaines

- David Smith
- Donna Stratford
- Henry Hufnagel
- Jim Ragan
- Jim Stratford
- Julie Briggs
- Neil Buttimer
- Ron Rand
- Carolyn Terrill (who donated \$500—\$100 for each member of her family who attended.)
- Don Black
- Hal Smarkola
- Jay DeFrank
- Jim McGuire
- Joe Purka
- M.J. Jadick
- Dick Cole



Submission deadline for the next issue is Feb. 1!