



United States Air Force Academy
Department of History

Falcon Footnote

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Academic Year 2025-2026

Commander's Call: Colonel Meg Martin



Happy Spring, DFHers! USAFA is through its Spring Break and in the final stretch before finals. It's been a busy semester—most notably we welcomed the twelfth Dean of the Faculty, Brig Gen James Valpiani. General Valpiani took command in mid-March and has already demonstrated his commitment to academics and the faculty through his interactions with department leadership. In his change of command speech he even name-dropped our very own (then) Capt Ed Kaplan as his military history instructor who left a lasting impact on his professional and academic development. The general is a test pilot and engineer by training, and you can find a great summary of his career

from the Association of Graduates here: <https://www.usafa.edu/academy-to-welcome-new-dean-of-the-faculty/>

This semester we have resumed cadet field trips. Lt Col Gil Sambolin took 36 American History cadets to History Colorado in Denver. The visit combined self-guided museum exploration, focused exhibit engagement, and a behind-the-scenes special collections experience to reinforce classroom learning through direct interaction with historical artifacts, interpretation, and public history.

Lt Col Dan Jackson took his Airpower History cadets to Wings over the Rockies, also in Denver, where they learned how to use museum displays and artifacts as primary sources and gained an appreciation for the guts and skills of their predecessors and their Air and Space Force heritage.

We also had a strong contingent at the Society of Military History Conference in Washington DC. Lt Col Joe Eanett chaired and commented on an all-DFH panel with presenta-

tions from Maj Paul Landsberg (environmental testing for Cold War weapons systems), Dr Jordan Pitt (development of aviation psychology in World War II), and Dr Stephanie Makowski (interracial relationships between GIs and civilians in Britain during World War II).

We will have lots more for you on faculty publications, cadet accomplishments, and travel in the June and September editions of the Footnote. I'll be especially excited to report out on the Department's annual historic weapons shoot, which this year was made possible by the deliberate engagement of the DFH Alumni Association during the Academy Foundation's giving Tuesday. Thank you for your enduring support of DFH and please share news of the DFH Alumni Association with any former faculty or cadets you are in contact with who may not be connected.

With gratitude, on behalf of our current department members and cadets, because "once a DFHer, always a DFHer!"

Start planning now for the DFHAA 2027 Reunion. Save the Date for 12-14 October 2027! Stay tuned!

Alumni Association: Larry Weaver



Welcome to the Spring 26 edition of the *Falcon Footnote*! A long brutal winter for some of us is over, and we have passed the spring equinox, so summer is around the corner. Spring brings renewal and change. The Academy is no different. DF welcomed a new Dean on 16 March, and you will find Brigadier General Valpiani's bio on page 4 with a link that should answer all your questions. A new superintendent and commandant will be arriving in the summer with those names not yet finalized.

This edition contains something new that we are going to periodically revisit. We added a section on Alumni scholarship that you will find interesting. DFH served as a platform for creating historians for life, and the breadth of the continued contributions to our history profession warms the

heart. In addition, Dik Daso provided a great update on AFHF and the important take-away is the symposium on 13-14 May. We had a great presence last year, and there is a link to register for the event this year in the AFHF pages. Come join us and I can promise you a good time. On page 13, Kristi Lowenthal provides an article on Santos-Dumont. John Terino (page 15) writes a partner article on the birth of the pilot watch. Both articles will widen your horizons on Air Force history. Plus, if you can look at the pictures of the "crushed hat" tradition and not laugh, you can send me a note and I will explain the joke.

Finally, you will see a summary of what the different committees' accomplished over the last year. We were very successful in 2025 with a reunion, sponsorship of the Harmon Memorial Reception and most importantly raising the money for the Cadet Historical Weapons Shoot. As most of you know, very little outside of the basic classroom mission is supported by any form of government funds. This weapons shoot is valuable for bringing the history major to life and recruiting more cadets to our cause. I want to express my personal thanks to

those who contributed. These are the places where we can fulfil the other half of our mission of supporting the department

Brenda Roth, Don Bishop, John Terino, Mark Clodfelter, Dik Daso and Larry Skogen have hit another home run with this edition and I hope you enjoy the read. On to Summer!!

Inside this issue:	
Commander's Call	1
DFH Alumni Association	2
DFHAA Committee Updates	3
USAFA's New Dean	4
What's New at Air University	5
AFHF 2025-2026 Awards	6
DFHAA Scholarship (Books, Articles, Presentations, etc)	9
Two Books Reviewed By Larry Weaver	11
Gone But Not Forgotten	12
Santos-Dumont, Brazilian Aviation Icon by Kristi Lowenthal	13
Santos-Dumont And the Birth of the Pilot Watch by John Terino	16
The Back Page	17

Become a Member: <https://usafadfh alumniassociation.com/membership/>

DFH Alumni Association website: <https://usafadfh alumniassociation.com/>

YouTube: www.youtube.com/@USAFADepartmentofHistoryAlumni

DFHAA Committee Updates

Affinity Group: (Larry Weaver) We have had a dramatically successful year marked by three important milestones. First, we held the second Alumni Association reunion where we recognized our 2024 (Brigadier Generals Hurley and Reddel) and 2025 (Brigadier General Reynolds) Distinguished Alumni and renewed our ties to the department and the Academy. We had representatives from every DFH generation from Major General Rohr carrying the banner of our founders to three Firsties heading to graduate school before their tours in the Air Force, followed by assignments to DFH. Second, we sponsored the Harmon Memorial reception after probably one of the best presentations in the lecture series. Finally, we raised the money to fund the 2026 DFH Cadet Historical Weapon Shoot. This event run by the department and funded through the Foundation is an important event for military history majors. Our focus is to build the camaraderie among Department members past and present and future while providing support for the DFH's mission. These three events show real progress on all fronts.

Harmon Memorial Lecture: (Larry Weaver) The Harmon team helped rally support for the lecture in meetings with its major supporter, John Hurley, and we were rewarded with one of the best lectures of all time. Dr Kate Landdeck gave a well-respected and received lecture in F-1 that roused cadets to declare a history major. In addition, we sponsored the after-lecture reception in a manner fit for our memories of days gone by. We also timed the 2025 reunion so that the lecture was the first official event, and it was well attended by the DFH alumni. Credit for leading this effort rests with Mark and Donna Clodfelter who organized the reception and coached the speaker to success. The stage is set for our group to help the department ensure that the oldest lecture series at the academy remains the crown jewel of DF presentations.

Fogleman Project: (Mark Clodfelter) The effort to fund a bronze statue of Gen Ronald Fogleman (USAFA '63) and his wife, "Miss Jane," continues, with our proposal having been submitted to the USAFA Memorial Fund Committee for review. We submitted our proposal more than six months ago. Although we made several efforts to contact the Fund Committee for an update, our efforts have thus far proven unsuccessful. We will continue trying. Estimated costs for the statue, which will appear adjacent to the Class of 1963 Exhibit in Arnold Hall, run between \$100,000 and \$110,000. The sculptor, Jim Nance (USAFA '71), has met with General Fogleman about the project and will begin work after we have received approval from the Fund Committee to start collecting donations.

Friends of DFH: (Darrel Whitcomb) We currently have 35 DFH Friends registered on our [website](#). I still periodically send invites to veterans groups. Many of you are well-connected through your service and professional endeavors. If you know anyone who would like to become a member, please reach out and invite them to join. We are our best advertisement and our best recruiters.

DFHAA Reunion: (Donna Clodfelter) The next DFHAA reunion is slated for Tuesday-Thursday, October 12-14, 2027, tentatively at The Antlers Hotel in downtown Colorado Springs, where it was held in 2025. Last year's room rates were \$165/night plus tax, while daily parking was \$24 valet, or \$19 self-park, and we anticipate similar prices for Fall 2027. Evening events include a reception, a banquet (tentatively on Thursday, October 14), and a possible Harmon Memorial Lecture. We're also looking into some unique tour possibilities. More details to follow as we get closer to the event.

Falcon Footnote: (Brenda Roth) We are currently publishing four *Footnotes* every year. One is devoted to the Alumni Association, one for DFH news, and two "special" editions. We currently have 390 alumni and friends who receive the newsletter.

DFHAA website (Larry Skogen) The DFH Alumni Association [website](#) is packed with information about our association and membership. You can access the *Falcon Footnote* from the website, but hang around awhile and see what else is there. Clicking on the tabs will take you to various publications, information on membership (we now have 181 members and 35 Friends), previous reunion photos, video and audio links, Air Force Historical Foundation information, and the names and obituaries of those who have departed our ranks. If you have an idea about what should be added to our website, please contact Larry Skogen (lcskogen@gmail.com). He's a confirmed Luddite but has tricked the technology into thinking he knows what he's doing.

JAMES VALPIANI TAPPED AS NEW DEAN

By Mark “Clod” Clodfelter (Class of 1977; DFH 1983-1985, 1987-1991)



On February 5, 2026, Air Force Secretary Tony Meink announced that Air Force Col James P. “Fangs” Valpiani will serve as USAFA’s Dean. He assumed command on March 16th with a promotion to brigadier general.

Valpiani was USAFA’s top graduate from the Class of 2004, a Marshall and Truman Scholar who graduated from the French test pilot school and received honors as the Air Force’s top test pilot in 2017. He has a PhD in astronautical engineering, with more than 1,200 flying hours in 30 different types of aircraft, including nearly 100 combat hours in the F-15E. Valpiani also commanded the F-35 Integrated Test Force of 650 personnel in high-risk developmental testing of the nation’s most modern fighter aircraft. He also graduated from the Air Force’s School of Advanced Air and Space Studies (SAASS), where

he wrote the thesis, *In Defense of the Common Good: Strategy, Ethics, and the Responsibilities of Command*. In his work, he argued that Aristotle’s ethical thinking, combined with Clausewitz’s ideas on strategy, can reframe just war principles. The result is “a coherent framework which enables officers and scholars to investigate strategic and ethical aspects of command in an integrated manner.”

For more insight on this extremely well-prepared officer, please see [Academy to welcome new Dean of the Faculty • United States Air Force Academy](#).





WHAT'S NEW AT AIR UNIVERSITY

By John Terino (DFH 1991-1995)

Since many DFHers, past and present, have connections with Air University (AU), I was asked to provide an update regarding things at Maxwell AFB. Over the last few years, higher education in general, and PME specifically, have been in the news for a variety of reasons [A sampling of some of the debate (with some pieces written by DFHers) can be found in these links: <https://warontherocks.com/category/special-series/educating-the-force/>; <https://www.military.com/daily-news/opinions/2023/09/22/why-our-generals-cant-think.html>; <https://warontherocks.com/2026/03/military-senior-service-colleges-require-reform-but-there-sure-are-some-bad-ideas-out-there/>; <https://amgreatness.com/2026/02/16/making-the-war-colleges-great-again/>.]

Some of the fallout from these ideas has affected AU in various ways. First, over the past five years there has been an emphasis on great power competition in all the schools.

Second, the Joint Staff has mandated an outcome-based education approach that has affected some elements of what happens at Air Command and Staff College (ACSC) and Air War College (AWC). (<https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/3678739/a-new-form-of-accountability-in-jpme>

[-the-shift-to-outcomes-based-military-educa/](#); <https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2025/august/value-joint-professional-military-education>; and https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA1694-1.html .

Third, at ACSC, there has been a strong focus on the Joint Planning Process for Air (JPPA) coupled with sending more operators and top tier officers to the in-residence program. In addition, ACSC is having a faculty and staff reunion May 14-15, 2026. Use the QRC code below for more information.



Finally, there was a restructuring of Air University related to the creation of Airman Development Command proposed by the former CSAF, General Allvin (<https://www.airandspaceforces.com/airman-development-command-2025-foundational-change-allvin/> and <https://>

www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/3690126/airman-development-command-announced-supporting-sweeping-changes-to-maintain-su/.

Although this change was ultimately not implemented, Air University had already lost billets and developed new organizations in preparation. The main result was the establishment of an Air War College Enterprise that encompasses Air War College, Air Command and Staff College, the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, the International Officer School, and the Center for Science and Technology under the same leadership.

Other happenings that may be of interest to readers of the *Falcon Footnote* are events such as ACSC's 3rd Annual Airpower Forum, May 11-14, 2026. Several DFHers, including Steve Call, Jobie Turner, and Joel Mathews, are on the program. The Gathering of Eagles is still going strong. Gen Ron Fogleman was one of the honorees last year, and this year includes astronaut Eileen Collins, Jacqueline Van Ovost, Doug Englen, and Fred Haise.

Finally, I can report that a few children of DFHers are students at ACSC this year. In addition to my son and his wife, Robert Carriedo's daughter is also in the class.



Become A Member: afhistory.org/support/become-a-member

AFHF Website: afhistory.org/

The Journal of the AFHF: afhistory.org/journal-of-the-air-force-historical-foundation/

2026 Symposium and Awards Banquet 13-14 May 2026

Go [here](#) to register

The Air Force Historical Foundation is pleased to announce the recipients of Awards for 2025-26. These units and individuals represent the finest traditions of both the USAF and the USSF. Congratulations to all on their accomplishments!

2025 AFHF James H. “Jimmy” Doolittle Award



509th Bomb Wing

The James H. “Jimmy” Doolittle Award recognizes an active Air Force or Space Force unit for gallantry, determination, esprit de corps, and superior management of joint operations in accomplishing its mission under difficult and hazardous conditions in multiple conflicts. The 509th Bomb Wing is stationed at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri.

2025 AFHF Air National Guard Award for Superior Unit Performance (Inaugural Trophy for ANG Excellence)



131st Bomb Wing

The ANG Award recognizes an ANG unit for gallantry, determination, esprit de corps, and superior management of joint operations in accomplishing its mission under difficult and hazardous conditions in multiple conflicts.

On June 21, 2025 seven B-2 Spirit bombers delivered an overnight strike on three Iranian nuclear facilities, the largest B-2 operational strike in US history. In a timeline of just weeks, members of the **509th** and **131st**

Bomb Wings turned strategic planning of an unprecedented operation into global execution. During the Iran–Israel War, the 131st Bomb Wing was tasked to participate in Operation Midnight Hammer, the largest operational deployment of the B-2 Spirit in USAF history. On the night of 12–13 June 2025, Missouri Air National Guard Airmen flew alongside active-duty counterparts from the 509th Bomb Wing in a coordinated strike against Iranian nuclear development facilities. Operation Midnight Hammer marked the first time the Air National Guard directly participated in a nuclear-deterrence strike package of this scale.

“The success of this mission demonstrates the precision and potency of a combat-ready Air Force and strategic innovation,” USAF Secretary Dr Troy Meink said. “The warfighting capability of the Total Force Airmen here and the B-2 Spirit was tested with the world watching, and Team Whiteman performed flawlessly.”

The complex operation incorporated decoy bombers that flew west over the Pacific Ocean. This deceptive tactic was known ahead of time by only a select few mission planners at Whiteman AFB and key leaders at the Pentagon and US Central Command headquarters. The seven aircraft that executed the mission deployed a total of 14 GBU-57 Massive Ordnance Penetrators, which was the first operational use of the “bunker buster” bombs.

2025 AFHF General Carl A. “Tooley” Spaatz Award

The General Carl “Tooley” Spaatz Award recognizes an individual who has made significant contributions in their lifetime to the making of Air Force history that continues to shape the future development of the service.

Col James G. “Snake” Clark, USAF (ret)
 “The Godfather of the MQ-1 Predator.”



“Snake” Clark has been described as one of the most colorful, innovative, and risk-taking US Air Force (USAF) warfighters in the service’s 70-year history. He served in the Senior Executive Service. In a career spanning five decades, he enabled numerous tactical and strategic capabilities which shaped our modern-day USAF. His work includes building and standup of the Warrior Preparation Center (WPC) – the world’s premier wargaming, modeling, and simulation center. Leading the USAF’s first mission

planning division, his implementation of a system program office and shrewd identification and canceling of systems that did not work led to operational success for its first use in support of Operation El Dorado Canyon. His leadership as USAF Director of Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) Modernization and Infrastructure capitalized on his skills as one of the Defense Department’s leading experts in the fields of mission planning, commercial imagery, unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) applications, computer modeling and simulations and as the inventor of EAGLE Vision. Snake forever changed airpower through his determined advocacy in the early stages of the Predator UAV/RPA platform. His efforts brought innovation that changed the calculus involved in combat operations for the USAF, sister services, allies, and perhaps our adversaries and competing powers. He is rightfully known as “The Godfather of the MQ-1 Predator.”

2025 AFHF General John W. “Jay” Raymond Award

The General John W. “Jay” Raymond Award recognizes an individual who has made significant contributions in their lifetime to the making of US Space Force history that continues to shape the future development of the service.



US Representative Michael Dennis Rogers, Alabama

Since he was first elected in 2002, Mike has been known for his tireless advocacy for the people and interests of Alabama’s Third Congressional District. He currently serves as Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee and previously served as the Ranking Member of the Committee on Homeland Security in the 116th Congress. His leadership on these issues has been vital to Alabama’s interests.

Nationally, Rep. Rogers has built a reputation as a recognized leader on national security and a strong advocate for national defense. As Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, he works to ensure that our military is properly funded, that our warfighters have the resources and weapons they need to succeed on current and future battlefields, and that the military is focused on deterring and combating threats coming from China and our other adversaries.

During his tenure on the House Armed Services Committee, Mike saw a need to realign our resources and efforts toward countering our adversaries in space. With bipartisan support in Congress, Mike initiated and oversaw the creation of the US Space Force.

2025 Best Journal Article Award

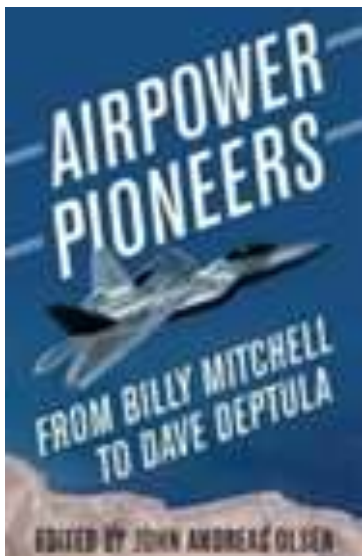
Korey F. “Bounce” Lantes

“REFORPAC’s Pacific Playbook: Survive, Surge, Sustain, and Synchronize to Win” (JAFHF Fall 2025)



Maj Korey F. Lantes is an experienced Air Force officer with 12 years of service as an Air Battle Manager. He is a Master AETC instructor and has served as an Instructor and Evaluator ABM on the E-8C JSTARS and at the ABM Schoolhouse. Major Lantes has deployed to multiple theaters, including CENTCOM and PACOM, with over 750 combat hours supporting various operations. He is currently pursuing his PhD in Military History through the Air Force Advanced Academic Degree program at Kansas State University.

Airpower History Book Prize
John Andreas Olsen,
Airpower Pioneers



John Andreas Olsen is a colonel in the Royal Norwegian Air Force currently assigned to NATO headquarters. He is a professor at the Norwegian Institute for Defense Studies, a non-resident senior fellow of the Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies, and a fellow of the Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences. Professor Olsen has published a series of books on airpower strategy and defense policy, lectured world-

wide, and received several awards for his writings. His latest books include *Airpower Reborn*, *Airpower Applied*, and *Routledge Handbook of Air Power*.

Space History Book Prize
David Arnold
Space Force Pioneers



David Arnold is a prominent figure in the field of space leadership and strategy. He is the editor of *Space Force Pioneers: Trailblazers of the Sixth Branch*, a book that delves into the biographies of key space leaders who have made significant contributions to military space.

Arnold's work is a valuable resource for understanding the evolution of the United States Space Force and the leadership styles of its pioneers. His expertise in space and missile strategy, along with his experience as a colonel in the US Air Force, makes his contributions to the field of space leadership particularly noteworthy.

AFHF President's Medal For Exceptionally Meritorious Contributions to the Foundation

Rick Herter, Excellence in Artistic Documentation of Aviation History



After graduating from Spring Arbor University with a BA in art in 1984, he cultivated his artistic skills and began working in the commercial art and illustration arena. Rick's first commemorative air show poster won a national award and the following season, the artist was commissioned to create work for shows in Pittsburgh, Denver and Cleveland. In 1987 Rick was invited to become a participating artist in the elite Air Force Art Program. The AFAP, under the office of the Secretary of the Air Force, was created in the 1950s using the talents of select artists to document Air Force activities and history worldwide.

Rick has generously granted the AFHF access to his art for Journal, Newsletter, and website uses. The 2024 Summer Journal Special Edition featured Rick's art in a wonderful 20-page historic essay.

DFH ALUMNI ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIP



Phillip Meilinger
(Class of 1970; DFH 1978-79; 1986-89)

Phil's latest book is coming out in May 2026 from Cambridge Press ([link](#)).

Mark "Clod" Clodfelter
(Class of 1977; DFH 1983-85, 1987-91)

Clod continues to research and write. First, his book chapter "The Air Wars in Vietnam" appeared in *The Cambridge History of the Vietnam War: Volume II—Escalation and Stalemate*, edited by Andrew Preston (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2024), pages 58-82 ([link](#)). Another chapter, "Air Power and the U.S. Air Force" appeared in *The Oxford Handbook of American Military History*, edited by Samuel J. Watson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2025), pages 263-277 ([link](#)). His article, "Critiquing the Air Force Academy's Core: Does It Satisfy the Need?" was in the November 2025 issue of *Air and Space Power Operations Review*, pages 80-92 ([link](#)).

Dik Daso
(Class of 1981; DFH 1992-93)

Dik's latest book is out now and available on Amazon ([link](#)). The book shines a light on a lesser known Revolutionary War hero, who came from humble beginnings as a planter in South Carolina to play a key role in disrupting British control in the South.



Don Bishop
(DFH 1975-79)

Don continues to publish in many different media and on various topics. Here are his latest publications.

First, a few articles: "Well Choreographed: The Victory Day Parade in Beijing," in *RealClear Defense* ([link](#)); "Public Diplomacy in Single-Party States: The Case of China" in *American Diplomacy* ([link](#)); "Religious Liberty: Three American Stories," in *RealClear History* ([link](#)); "Understanding Anti-Semitism from a Neglected Film and Novel" in *Academic Questions* ([link](#)); "General Lansdale at the Air Force Academy's 1978 Military History Symposium," Institute of World Politics ([link](#)); "Communicating Values: Looking Back at the Four Freedoms," in *Shaping Nations for Conflict and War* ([link](#)); "Painting Our Principles," in *American Purpose* ([link](#)); "Seven Modern Wonders," in *American Purpose* ([link](#)); A "Trinity College and World War I" series and other stories of Trinity College veterans in the *Trinity Tripod* ([link](#)); "Julian Simon: In the Fleet and with the Marines," Acton Institute ([link](#)). And now for some book reviews: *Education and Liberty: The Role of Schools in a Modern Democracy*, by James Bryant Conant (1953) ([link](#)); *A Nineteenth Century American Reader*, U.S. Information Agency (1988) ([link](#)); *Liberal Education in the Service Academies*, by William E. Simons (1965) ([link](#)); *Base Hospital No. 9 AEF: A History of the New York Hospital Unit During Two Years of Active Service*, by Raymond Shirling Brown (1920) ([link](#)); and *Valley of the Larks*, by Eric Purdon (1939) ([link](#)).

David Arnold
(DFH 1997-99)

David's latest book is an edited volume called *Space Force Pioneers: Trailblazers of the Sixth Branch* ([link](#)). The book has won the Space History book prize from the Air Force Historical Foundation. He will accept the award at the annual banquet in May (see page eight for a complete writeup).



John Norvell
(DFH 1978-81)

John's flying memoir, *Fighter Gator* was published in 2022 ([link](#)). He also co-authored, with Col

Dick Anderegg (USAF, Ret., former director of Air Force History and Museums), a bicentennial history of the military at Hobart College, titled *Hobart and William Smith Colleges' Legacy of Military History* (2022) ([link](#)). John continues to contribute to various historical journals. His most recent article examines Revolutionary War soldiers interred in the Old City Cemetery in Nashville, Tennessee, (*Middle Tennessee Journal of Genealogy and History*). Of particular note, John was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters (LHD) by Hobart and William Smith Colleges in 2024. Finally, he writes a regular column for the OpEd page in his local paper, *The Finger Lakes Times*, on historical subjects and veteran related information.

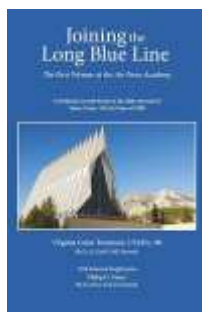


William Fischer, Jr.
(DFH 1991-94)

Bill gave the keynote address in November, 2025 for the dedication of a new monument honoring thirteen United

States Colored Troops (USCT) buried in unmarked graves in the historic Payne Chapel AME Cemetery in Canonsburg, PA. Of special surprise was that a member of the 1st KS Colored Infantry is interred in a marked grave in the cemetery; from 2010 to 2016, Bill was the NPS historian at Fort Scott National Historic Site (NHS) in Kansas where the unit was federalized in 1863 as the 79th USCT (New). Bill retired from the NPS in 2020 as the division chief at Steamtown NHS, Scranton, PA (third largest archives in the NPS). He is also the immediate past PA state commander for the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War and regularly speaks on the USCT.

Virginia Caine Tonneson
(Class of 1980, history major)

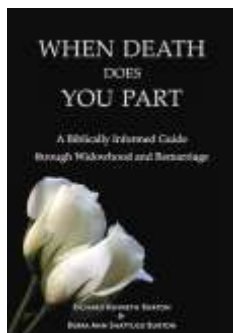


Ginny was one of 157 women who were the first female cadets at USAFA arriving in 1976. She kept a daily journal of her time as a cadet, which she has turned into a book titled: *Joining the Long Blue Line: The First Women at the Air Force Academy* (Long Line Heritage Press, 2026) ([link](#)). Her father, BGen Phil Caine (longtime DFH tenured professor, Acting DFH Head, and later the first permanent professor in CW) contributed to the book by providing historical insight.

Debbie Shattuck Burton
(DFH 1987-91)

Since Debbie left DFH in 1991, she was widowed and has since remarried. With her new husband, Richard, she has written a

book, *When Death Does You Part: A Biblically Informed Guide through Widowhood and Remarriage* (Shepherd Press, 2025) ([link](#)).



Gary Willis
(Friend of DFH)



Gary's 2023 book, *Red Markers: The Rest of the Story*, was a Gold Medal Award from Military Writers Society of America

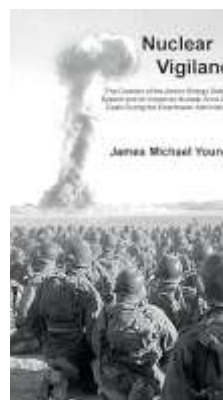
([link](#)). Red Markers were a small Air Force forward air controller (FAC) detachment, along with the elite Vietnamese Airborne Division and its US Army advisors (called Red Hats). The Red Markers and Red Hats fought alongside the Airborne in battles throughout Vietnam and Cambodia for more than a decade. Also, Gary's magazine article from 2022 titled "The Cambodian Incur-sion." was published in *Air and Space Power History*, Fall 2022 – Vol 69, No. 2, p. 27 ([link](#)).

Edward Westermann
(Class of 1984; DFH 1993-95)



Ed continues to write and lecture. In February, he gave the annual International Holocaust Remembrance Day Address as part of the Martin-Springer Institute Lecture Series at Northern Arizona University. He retired in May 2025 as a Regents Professor of History Emeritus of History and a Piper Professor from Texas A&M. In Spring 2026, he will be the *Theodore Zev and Alice R. Weiss-Holocaust Educational Foundation Chair in Holocaust Studies* Visiting Professor at Northwestern University. His latest

article is "Auf der Flucht Erschassen" (Shot While Trying to Escape") in *The Journal of Perpetrator Research* (Dec 2025) ([link](#)).



Mike Young
(Army Exchange Officer 1992-94)

Mike worked as the Command Historian for the Air Force Technical Applications Center (AFTAC) from 2011 to 2022. At AFTAC, he declassified many documents pertaining to the origins of AFTAC in the 1950s. In 2022, AFTAC published his book, *Nuclear Vigilance: The Creation of the Atomic Energy Detection System and its Impact on Nuclear Arms Control Goals during the Eisenhower Administration* ([link](#)). Also, in 2021, *Air Power History* published his article, "The Air Force's Long Range Detection Program and Project MOGUL"

Miguel Lopez
(DFH 1996-20)



After retiring in 2024, Miguel went back for his PhD. He is studying at the University of North Texas. He is presenting a paper in tat the Society for Military History Annual Conference titled "The Interplay of Military Necessity and *Auftragstaktik*."

Mark Grotelueschen (DFH 1998-2000, 2006-10, 2012-18) with **Doug Kennedy** (class of 1989, DFH 1995-96, 2006-10), **John Ab-batiello** (current faculty), and **John Farquahar** (class of 1980, DFH 1983-86, 1999-2002) formed a panel at the Flint Hills Military History Symposium at Kansas State University. The panel was based on a larger book project for University of Oklahoma Press scheduled for early 2027.

TWO BOOK REVIEWS

By Larry A. Weaver (Class of 1976; DFH 1984-90)



Red Markers: The Rest of the Story is the sequel by Gary Willis to the 2012 *Red Markers: Close Air Support for the Vietnamese Airborne 1962-1975*. The first book examined the changing nature of forward air control operations in the Vietnam War. This second volume is dedicated to telling the personal stories of many of the participants, from Red Markers to those who fought with them. Red Marker was the radio call sign of the Forward Air Controllers who directed close air support for the Vietnamese Airborne from 1962 to early 1973. This highly personal telling of the story enriches the history of the period by bringing the lives of those who fought into sharper focus.

Willis begins the tale with a chapter on “The Cambodian Incursion” because it was the high-water mark of the Red Markers involvement in Vietnam. This chapter alone sets the stage for how Red Markers operated in austere environments with their own best judgments as a guide. The next several chapters serve to widen the story with a description of the cooperation among the red berets (Vietnamese paratroopers), the red hats (American army advisers) and the Red Markers. The third chapter is dedicated to a background telling of the Red Marker origin story from 1962-1964. While chapter four gives the reader an understanding of what it was like to fly the O-1 and O-2A.

With the scene set, the author begins the tale in chronological order from 1965, the official Americanization of the War, to 1975 and the fall of South Vietnam. These personal stories place the expansion of the war to its final collapse in terms of operations at the tip of the spear. Willis brings the story to a close with a chapter containing a complete listing of the Red Markers and where they are as of 2022.

The Vietnam War has attracted numerous tellings from diplomatic failures and military actions to deep analysis on why we lost from every point of view. This book takes all of that sometimes sterile recital of a doomed cause and makes it personal. As you read the stories you feel the personal commitment of all the players and you find yourself pulling for some miracle that allows the war to end on a successful note with a free and independent South Vietnam populated by native heroes and Americans satisfied with a job well done.

It is also useful from another point of view. It is a guide for future forward air controllers supporting indigenous forces. At the tactical level they got it right even if the war itself was lost at a strategic level. *The Red Markers: The Rest of the Story* captures a story easily forgotten in a war that now seems to be already lost in faded memory. Gary Willis has done all of us a favor and documented their personal story before it truly disappears



To Educate American Indians Edited and Introduced by Larry C. Skogen.

This is the second volume dedicated to the papers from the Department of Indian Education and its affiliation with the National Educational Association. It

is the perfect bookend for the first volume which showed in educators’ own words their intentions, mistakes, prejudices and outcomes of their attempt to mainstream Native American education.

This volume contains 30 papers presented from 1905-1909. The individual topics cover high-level questions such as “Indians and Their Education” to obvious assumptions such as “Essential Features of the Education of the Child Race” to the downright mundane of “Demonstration Lesson: Wheat and Bread Making.” These papers reflect the era’s values, the fact that the government had crushed all resistance, and the desired goal to assimilate Native Americans into the broader culture under strict assumptions about their capabilities. Congressman John J. Fitzgerald summed up one desired end state: “Some good persons believe that all distinctly Indian traits should be completely eliminated. I am of those who believe that the good of the Indian character should be cultivated and the bad eliminated.” The open issue was defining what was good or bad. Clark University’s president, G. Stanley Hall, stood in the middle asking, “Why not make a good Indian rather than a cheap imitation of the white man?” Finally, the government representative, Francis E. Leupp, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, counseled patience until “the Indian will voluntarily drop his racial oddities as he becomes more and more one of our common body politic and learns to breathe the atmosphere of our civilization as his own.” While these

differences made great fodder for debate, there was little questioning of the basic assumptions that Native American children needed to be taught in boarding schools, recognized as an inferior race, and relegated to and trained for service jobs as fit their limited capabilities.

The central character, Estelle Reel, stood at the center of much of the debate and action. Reel led a groundbreaking career as an educator, second woman elected to public office as a State Superintendent of Public Education, and the first woman to hold a position requiring US Senate ratification. She served as the Superintendent of Indian Schools from 1898 to 1910. On the positive side she is responsible for integrating the topic of Native American education into the national education debate. On the negative side she believed that the “Indian has the physical attributes of an adult with the mentality of a fourteen-year-old boy.” Needless to say, this comment is fraught with some dark undertones. In the end she raised the issue of Native American education in the public mind but fell dangerously victim to the cultural norms of the time that treated Native Americans as wards of the state with little hope of really becoming full-fledged “Americans.” On balance her and her department’s good intentions left Native Americans only marginally better off if not in a worse condition. Boarding schools served to destroy Native American culture, harm children’s health, and educate them only to fill service industry needs. Her creation denied opportunities to students with ability and ambition. In the end, Congress did not fund Reel’s position after 1910, and on balance that may have been a good thing.

This book, much like its predecessor, serves as a guide to good intentions gone wrong because of bad assumptions, lack of vision and bureaucratic ineptitude. As a reader, I am left with three questions: what motivated Reel, and why did she not see and correct the defects of the system, and what were the long-term ramifications of this failure? On a personal level you must wonder about the individual lives of Native American students that survived this system. How many happy endings were there? Larry Skogen has done us a great service with this second volume. It clearly shows that the effort *To Educate American Indians* was an exercise fraught with good and bad intentions that served nobody’s needs. It is a warning bell to the nations effort to educate successive waves of minorities and immigrants that should not be ignored.

Gone But Not Forgotten

(<https://usafadfalumniassociation.com/gone-but-not-forgotten/>)



Roger Fosdick
August 13, 1944–
November 26, 2025

Retired Lt Col Roger B. Fosdick, who taught in DFH from 1977-1979 and 1982

-1987, passed away in California on November 26, 2025, at the age of 80. At Claremont Men's College he began as a pre-med student until a collision with chemistry moved him to major in psychology, but he also discovered it was history courses that most interested him.

After graduating cum laude from CMC, he attended Officer Training School and as a distinguished graduate received a regular commission. After training at Keesler AFB, he was a communications officer -- at Lowry AFB, U-Tapao Royal Thai Air Base (he lightheartedly called the naval airfield a "seaside resort"), and Altus AFB. He recalled operations at U-Tapao quickened when the base's B-52s flew in Operation Linebacker. He was licensed as a private pilot. Selected for DFH, he earned a master's degree in history from Claremont Graduate School.

During his first tour in Fairchild Hall, he was a "trencher." He later received his PhD from the same institution. His dissertation examined statistical measures of Army enlisted morale in World War II. In his second DFH tour he was an Associate Professor and director of plans and research. After he retired, he became the Air Force Junior ROTC instructor in the Moreno Valley Unified School District in Moreno Valley, California, teaching there for 19 years. During the school's summer vacations, he and his wife traveled to many countries.

DFHer Elliott Converse recalls Roger was "always serious and highly professional regarding the Air Force and as an instructor in DFH." Bob Ehrhart recalls Roger "always had a smile and an offer to help at the ready." [DMB]



Mark Berent
October 24,
1931—September
29, 2025

The friends of DFH

lost a dear comrade this last September when Lt Col Mark E. Berent, USAF (Ret), passed away quietly, aged 93. He hailed from Minneapolis, Minnesota, but received a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from Arizona State University.

Mark began his distinguished Air Force career as an enlisted man before entering the aviation cadet program. After pilot training, he served a career as a fighter pilot logging time in the F-86, F-100, and F-4. He served three combat tours in Southeast Asia, flying 452 combat sorties for 1,084 combat hours. He was later stationed in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, for two years, piloting propeller-driven aircraft and, through an unusual twist in communications, was tasked with running the air war for several weeks from a unique post. His decorations include the Silver Star, Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross with one oak leaf cluster, Bronze Star, and Air Medal with twenty-four oak leaf clusters.

Later in life, he also authored five Vietnam air war historical fiction novels—*Rolling Thunder*, *Steel Tiger*, *Phantom Leader*, *Eagle Station*, and *Storm Flight*—as part of the "Wings of War" series. His first novel, *Rolling Thunder*, quickly became a favorite among veterans and aviation enthusiasts, praised for its realism, intensity, and deep respect for those who served. His novels and subsequent voluminous articles capture the essence of combat flying in Southeast Asia.

And he was my friend. I met him in the summer of 1973, when he was essentially running our air operations to support Cambodian forces in that beleaguered nation, before Congress terminated funding for combat operations. He was the firm voice on the radio that we forward air control-

lers followed in our mission assignments. I met him twice there in Phnom Penh, but developed a strong friendship in later years. I always enjoyed his company and the endless stories that he shared. He loved attending the veterans' reunions, and we loved having him there. We, his fellow combat aviators, friends, and his vibrant family, will miss him so. Sadly, I can only offer a slow, tearful hand salute to a great person and lifetime friend. Fair skies and favoring winds. Vaya con Dios. [Darrel Whitcomb]



Ted Kracht
March 15, 1967—
October 10, 2025

Theodore (Ted) Andrew Kracht, Class of 1989, passed away at home in Fort Collins,

Colorado. He was born in Wooster, Ohio. Ted began his Air Force career as a missile launch officer and after his first tour reported to Maxwell AFB where he created the first online distance learning program for the Air Command and Staff College. During his tenure at Air University, he completed his master's degree in History at the University of Alabama. Ted returned to DFH and taught world and military history for three years before leaving the Air Force and heading to the West Coast. After a brief business career, he went to work for the Department of Energy at Western Area Power Administration as an Electric Power Systems Grid Operator. He played a vital role in managing the US power grid system west of the Mississippi River. His love for Colorado and Falcon football led him to transfer to the WAPA headquarters in Fort Collins, Colorado. While here, he played a vital role as a shift manager leading a team responsible for keeping the lights on for over half the nation. Ted made Fort Collins his home, sharing it with family, a library filled with books, and an abiding love for all things *Star Trek*. He always remained true to his first calling, history. His sudden passing was a shock to everyone that knew him. He is survived by family, a host of friends and classmates who will miss him. His service will be conducted at the USAF Academy Cemetery at 1300 on 27 April 2026. [Larry Weaver]

Santos-Dumont, Brazilian Aviation Icon: A Historiographical Debate

By Kristi Lowenthal (Class of 1996; DFH 1998-1999)

Back in the summer of 1992, while finding myself at the receiving end of a lot of yelling, I mentally retreated into the historical knowledge concentrated in *Contrails*, the pocket USAFA knowledge book for newly in-processing fourth-class cadets. I was not completely ignorant about aviation: I knew about the Wright Brothers' first flights at Kitty Hawk, the Red Baron, Jimmy Doolittle, Chuck Yeager, and a handful of other firsts. *Contrails* also introduced other important, but less well-known figures: the Montgolfier Brothers, Otto Lilienthal (briefly my nickname, of course), Frank Luke, Jr., and Billy Mitchell. For thirty years, I figured I had the basics covered when it came to the progenitors of early aviation.

I did not expect to come face-to-bust with an entirely unknown (to me) pioneer of airpower in Brazil: Alberto Santos-Dumont. Copies of his bust, like the one below, are displayed prominently in nearly every Brazilian Air Force base and civilian airport in Brazil, as well as many other airports around South America. His name is in every Brazilian aviation ceremony, Air Force dinner,



and flying award presentation. Who was this guy and why had I never heard of him in *Contrails*, or anywhere else for that matter? In researching this article, I realized the omission in the USAF record may not have been entirely inadvertent. First, some foundational facts and claims:

Alberto Santos-Dumont was born on 20 July 1873, the sixth of eight children of wealthy French parents and the first of his siblings to be born in the family's new home in the agricultural state of Minas Gerais, Brazil, where his father Henrique Dumont relocated his family for railroad engineering work. Young Alberto, who would later be known just by his last names (with or without the hyphen), showed an early interest in aeronautical science and attended a series of science, technical, and engineering schools in Brazil, although he was indifferent to formal studies. At age 24, he departed Brazil for France, where he bought one of the first gasoline-powered motor cars for racing and developed a love of hot-air ballooning. He later designed and created nine balloon-based aircraft and accepted paying passengers for short voyages. Privately, he pushed the limits of altitude and time aloft, at one point remaining airborne for 22 hours. He began experiments with dirigible airships in 1898, believing that evolutionary design and development were the only ways to achieve powered flight. He built and discarded four airships until, desirous of an airmanship prize offered by oil tycoon and Aero-Club de France

co-founder Henri Deutsch de la Meurthe, he built his fifth and sixth craft. Santos-Dumont's attempts at the Deutsch Prize resulted in numerous crashes and injuries, along with several successful attempts that exceeded the allowable 30-minute course time limit. Finally confident of his ability to succeed, on 19 October 1901, with a large group of onlookers, he succeeded in taking off in his dirigible-based craft No. 6, completing the required circuit around the Eiffel Tower and returning to the Saint-Cloud airfield in the required time, but a difficult landing caused him to exceed the time limit by mere seconds. The Aero-Club de France initially disqualified the effort but protests from spectators and later heated public outcry convinced the members to reverse their decision, awarding Santos-Dumont the Deutsch prize and creating an instant international celebrity.

Buoyed by his fame, Santos-Dumont embarked on an international tour to generate interest in aeronautics. Despite talks with President Theodore Roosevelt and flirting with a series of demonstrations in the US with interested representatives from the Army and Navy, Santos-Dumont instead left for Monaco in 1902 without a single flight on US soil. He continued to travel widely while creating four more airships, two of which were heavily damaged by sabotage. In the meantime, the Wright Brothers succeeded in their attempts with heavier-than-air flight in 1903, but, according to some, their underpowered engine required either a "catapult" or the stiff winds of Kitty Hawk

to generate sufficient power for liftoff; their private experiments also included no “official” observers (more on these two claims below). In Europe, Santos-Dumont continued to experiment publicly with his own heavier-than-air craft. On October 23, 1906, Santos Dumont’s single-seat 14-bis canard biplane, the first aircraft fitted with wheels for landing, achieved the first officially certified, publicly witnessed powered flight in Europe, covering 60 meters at a height of three meters and earning him an Aero-Club de France prize named for the club’s co-founder, the 25-meter “Coupe d’Aviation Ernest Archdeacon.” This event was observed and documented by a crowd, demonstrating “controlled flight” (another claim addressed below). On 12 November 1906, he won a second Deutsch prize for flight of 100 meters by executing five public flights in front of a crowd with film company Pathé recording the action, thus becoming the first film footage of sustained airplane flight. He was ultimately able to fly 220 meters at a height of six meters, which were the first heavier-than-air flights certified by the Aero-Club of France, the first such flights officially witnessed by an aeronautics recordkeeping body, and the first flights of their kind recognized by the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale. Santos-Dumont continued to experiment with, refine, and perfect his aircraft creations until his health deteriorated after World War I. He died at age 59 on 23 July 1932.

What happened to Santos-Dumont’s legacy is where the record becomes murky. In Brazil, he is the unrivaled Father of Aviation who flew the first fully self-powered, sustainable flights in front of crowds while advancing important ancillary technologies like aviation film footage, landing gear, and the wristwatch (see



Alberto Santos-Dumont, circa 1909

companion article by John Terino); the premier Brazilian Air Force service medal is named in his honor. France also honors Santos-Dumont as its most famous early aviation pioneer, judging his numerous well-documented public experiments to mark the official start of the aviation age. In the US, however, his record is met with considerable skepticism. After discussing the content of this article with my old friend, DFH alum and airpower specialist Dr. John Terino of Air University, he supplied numerous rebuttals to the Santos-Dumont mythos.

Aviation historian Tom Crouch posited that Santos-Dumont was largely a copier: he had neither the engineering knowledge nor command of aviation principles as those displayed by the Wright Brothers. The Wrights’ licensees in France pursued a patent case against Santos-Dumont and other aviation companies but the cases were never fully resolved. Crouch also challenges the secrecy presumed around the Wrights’ flights, recording a number of accounts of those who saw the Wrights fly in 1904, including Amos L. Root, who wrote the first published eye-witness ac-

count of a Wright flight made on 20 September 1904.

Another source is noted English aviation historian Charles H. Gibbs-Smith, who debunked the notion of the Wrights using a catapult in their earliest flights, categorizing the carriage-and-rail system used in 1903 as a stabilizing yoke, “The Wrights did not use any accelerated take-off device for their 1903 flights: this [catapult] device was first used in 1904” for additional speed upon takeoff. Regarding their Dec 17, 1903 flight, he wrote, “These flights were the first in the history of the world in which a piloted machine had taken off under its own power; had made powered, controlled, and sustained flights; and had landed on ground as high as that from which it had taken off.” Regarding Santos-Dumont’s second Deutsch Prize-winning flight in Nov 1906, Gibbs-Smith sniffed, “...it was not of course flying in any true sense of the word, let alone sustained and controlled flight.”

The question of who was truly first to fly presents an interesting historiographical debate. For Americans, the Wright Brothers are the uncontested victors, with their earliest successful aviation experiments and seminal airplane design. For Brazilians, pride in their self-promoting native son Santos-Dumont overwhelms the Wrights’ quiet accomplishments, even though his flights were obviously years later. We do know Santos-Dumont and the Wright Brothers knew each other personally and clamored for details of each successful aviation experiment, often incorporating ideas gained from the other in constructive competition. The Wright Brothers advanced the technical mechanics of flight, while Santos-Dumont popularized and emphasized the accessibility of air travel. Together, their achievements accelerated aeronautics for com-

mercial, leisure, and military uses, defining the birth of aviation through their shared discoveries. The USAF should consider restoring Santos-Dumont to a place of pride in *Contrails* and in other foundational aviation history sources as an important early aviation innovator and venerated aviation hero in South America. Perhaps Brazil has an extra bust lying around. . .

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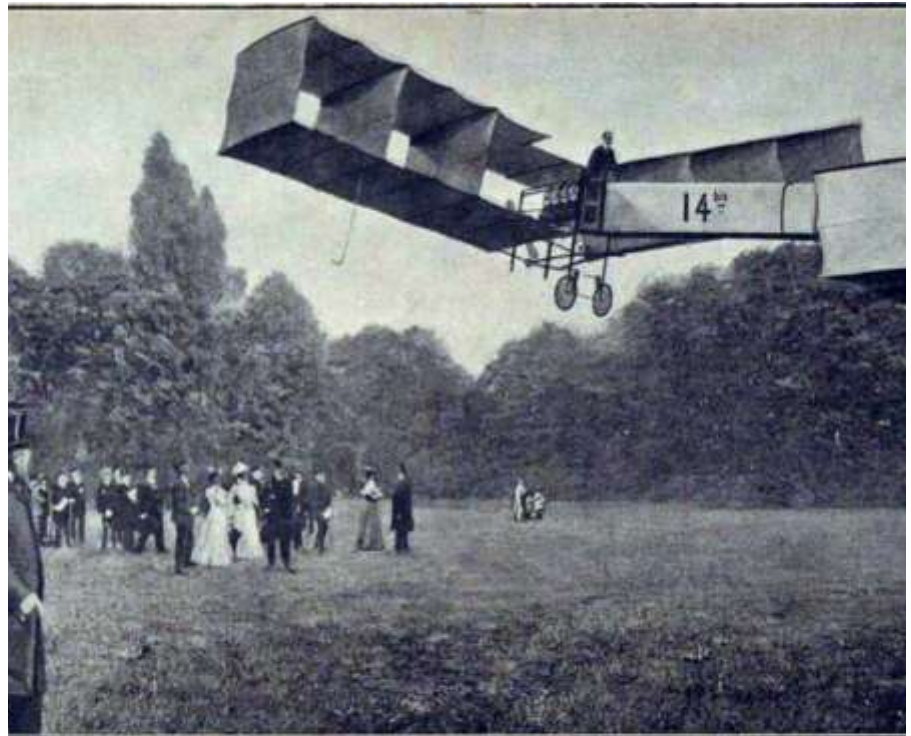
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M. SANTOS DUMONT'S FIRST SUCCESS WITH A FLYING MACHINE.
 . . . after several preliminary trials in Paris on November 12th, when his flying machine had flown 75, 123, and 147 feet high, he started to rise at a point by going against the wind. For thirty yards the motor ran along the ground, then suddenly it rose to a height of 100 feet. Like a great white bird, it soared half-way down the course. M. Santos Dumont, startled by some spectators, and the machine came heavily to the ground, damaging one of its wings. The experiment, however, was a triumph and it seems as though it were only a matter of time for the conquest of the air to be accomplished. The flight lasted 1 minute and 10 seconds.

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GROWING THE RANKS

On March 3, 1964, President Lyndon Johnson signed Public Law 88-276, which authorized both the US Air Force Academy and the US Military Academy to expand to equal the US Naval Academy's strength. USAFA's Cadet Wing soon grew from 2,529 to 4,417 cadets. This change had been initiated by President John Kennedy.

—From USAFA's Facebook page



Alberto Santos-Dumont and the Birth of the Pilot Watch

By John Terino (DFH 1991-1995)



When the image of the stereotypical pilot comes to mind, most of us picture a rugged individual full of energy and skeptical of authority clad in a leather jacket, wearing sunglasses, and sporting a massive wristwatch as a minimum. The person who advanced a major aspect of this stereotypical accoutrement was one of the first pilots, Alberto Santos-Dumont. In many respects, Santos-Dumont was the living embodiment of *La Belle Époque*, a fastidious dresser, the flamboyant man about town, and obsessed with a developing a better present and future through the mastery of technology. As he developed his airships, he would often be seen running errands above the streets of Paris. He would even stop, tether his dirigible overhead, and visit a sidewalk café for a break.

While flying his machines, he struggled to use his pocket watch when needed for timing purposes because he could not take his hands from the controls long enough. In 1904, while at a party, (of course), he asked his friend, the famous jeweler, Louis Cartier, to create a device that would allow him to both maintain control of his aircraft and still tell time. Cartier devised the first practical wristwatch for men and gifted it to his friend.

For almost a century, wristwatches were considered jewelry suitable for women. The first wristwatch was delivered to Caroline Murat, the Queen of Naples and sister of Napoleon, in 1812. It was developed by the famous watch designer Abraham-Louis Breguet, whose timepieces are still manufactured and coveted today.

Cartier was renowned for its exquisite jewelry but had only been making pocket and pendant watches since 1853. By 1888, they created exquisite, jeweled wristwatches for high society women and the royal houses of Europe as well. The watch devised for Alberto Santos-Dumont was originally one-of-a-kind, but Cartier, after working with master watchmaker Edmond Jaeger (later of Jaeger-LeCoultre) ensured the accuracy of the device. Louis Cartier designed the flat face, the square dial, and the strap. The result was first true men's wristwatch and realistically, the first pilot's watch. Starting in 1911, the first line of Cartier men's watches, the Santos-Dumont was introduced and has been in production ever since. Later, in 1917, Cartier developed his second line of men's watches, the Tank, with the first model supposedly gifted to General Pershing by Louis Cartier himself before it went into full mass production in 1919.

World War I led to several changes in fashion. Among the most significant was the popularization of the wristwatch as both a practical and a fashion accessory for men. Not only did aviators require an accurate timepiece that they could employ while in the air, but infantry soldiers in the trenches had similar needs. Cheap wristwatches as essential instruments for timing the fall of shot and coordinating mass movements across terrain became standard issue. Their inherent practicality coupled with innovation in design, largely represented by the Cartier Santos and Tank, led to wristwatches becoming

essential components of men's fashion. The development of singularly distinctive and functional aviation watches capitalized on the innovation of the Santos and brands such as Breitling, Omega, Waltham, and Heuer all became associated with pilots, astronauts, and race car drivers. A far cry from the simple pocket watch that the Wright Brothers mounted on their 1903 *Flyer*.

Regardless of his status as an early aviator, the most enduring legacy of the Brazilian aviation pioneer, even if many are not truly aware, might as the godfather of THE symbol of an aviator and essential male fashion accessory, the wristwatch. In this aspect of pilot ethos and aviation culture, Alberto Santos-Dumont was well ahead of and above his peers.

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