



UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

FALCON FOOTNOTE

Volume 36, July 2026

Academic Year 2025-2026

Commander's Call: Colonel Meg Martin



Greetings DFHers! As has become a mid-summer tradition, the current department members are excited to share highlights from this last academic year and to highlight how donor funding has contributed to the development of our cadets outside the classroom. We are also proud to share updates on all our cadet and faculty award winners as well. This is also the time of year we hail and farewell members of the department. You will see a short blurb introducing each of our new colleagues and updates on the many who are off to their next great assignment

in the Air Force or elsewhere. The alumni network is expanding yet again!

Our new Dean, Brigadier General Valpiani, has quickly settled into his leadership role. In May, he joined us for a department immersion. We were able to share an overview of our core courses, the major's sequence, our department learning objectives, and how all our classes tie to the Academy's mission of developing leaders of character. He commented positively on the classroom learning activities we highlighted and shared his own appreciation for the importance of history to officer development. His comments to faculty and staff continue to highlight his dedication to the academic element of the Academy's mission and he made clear to the department his belief that we all have an important role to play in cadets' academic and professional development. It was

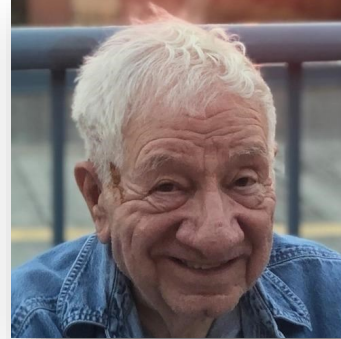
encouraging to hear him underscore beliefs that align with our approach to cadet development.

As we transition to thinking about fall, we will be finalizing plans for this year's Harmon Memorial Lecture and will be sure to push details through the alumni network once they are finalized. The DFH Alumni Association is once again planning a reunion next fall and as always, we'll be excited to see all who can participate. Current members of our department and our cadet history majors benefit from the strong support and encouragement from DFHers from all periods of the department's history. We are grateful for the extended network and appreciate the interest and support offered by our Department of History alumni. With gratitude and excitement for Fall 2026, "Once a DFHer, always a DFHer!"

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

In Memoriam: Colonel Alan Gropman

February 4, 1938—May 31, 2026



Retired Colonel Alan Gropman, one of DFH's most distinguished alumni, passed away in Alexandria, VA, on May 31. Commissioned at Boston University in 1959, he was a C-130 navigator who flew two tours in Vietnam before joining the USAFA faculty in 1970. His first book on the integration of the Army Air Forces in World War II anchored later USAF initiatives for equality. After DFH, he led major Air Staff planning sections, and he taught at the National War College. After retirement, he was a professor at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (now the Eisenhower School) and chair of the Grand Strategy and Mobilization department. Former USAF Chief of Staff Norton Schwartz '73 spoke at the funeral reception, recalling Colonel Gropman as an inspiration to cadets. For more, see [here](#) and [here](#). He was profiled in the December 2022 issue of the *Falcon Footnote*. He will be missed. Alan will be buried at Arlington on November 6, 2026 at 11:00 AM. Go [here](#) for a full obituary.



Alumni Association: Larry Weaver

Welcome to the Summer 2026 *Footnote*! This edition is focused on the Department and the natural renewal, departure, and arrival of a class of cadets and instructors. We all remember those days and the articles should provoke fond memories and smiles. I want to call your attention to the two articles on the 50th Anniversary of Women at USAFA. Brian and Alison did an excellent job of capturing the significance of the event for all of us. You will also note there are several articles on cadet research trips. We, as an Alumni group, financed the weapons shoot last year and will do so again this year. It is a valuable experience for cadets and a great way for us to give back. So please join our effort when the call goes out. Dik Daso provided

a summary of the AFHF Symposium. A truly class event with lots of DFH representation. Come join us there next year! As always Brenda, Don, and John have done a great job and the Department made this edition possible with the internal story of the passage of academic year 2025-2026. Enjoy your summer and we will engage again when a new academic year begins!

As we move ahead to next year, please mark your calendars for the DFHAA reunion scheduled for 12-14 October 2027. And if you have any suggestions or comments for us, please reach out. See the back page for contact information.

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Our 2026 Graduates

DFH graduated 24 new lieutenants on May 28, 2026, including 16 history majors and eight FAS-History majors, three of whom graduated with distinction and two as academy scholars. Amongst these newest officers, 17 were selected for rated operations, including 14 for pilot training, one for remotely piloted aircraft, and two as combat systems officers. DFH also produced three battle-field airmen (two in Security Forces and one as a Tactical Air Control Party Officer), as well as two intelligence officers, one contracting officer, and one graduate entering the US Space Force pipeline, which no longer assigns officer specialties until they complete the yearlong Officer Training Course at Peterson SFB.

General, American, and International History:

2d Lt Ezra D. Barneson, USAF (92T0: Pilot Trainee)

2d Lt Sabrina Basso, USAF (31P1: Security Forces)

2d Lt Samuel C. Beyer, USAF (92T0: Pilot Trainee)

2d Lt James Q. Filippini, USAF (92T0: Pilot Trainee)

2d Lt Kayli J. Hilburn, USAF (14N1: Intelligence) (*Graduate with Athletic Distinction*)

2d Lt Connor E. LaChappelle, USAF (92T1: Combat Systems Officer Trainee)

2d Lt Aidan J. Quigley, USAF (92T0: Pilot Trainee)

2d Lt Solomon Stoddard, USAF (19Z1B: Tactical Air Control Party Officer)

Military History:

2d Lt Cameron P. Collins, USAF (92T0: Pilot Trainee)

2d Lt Cooper W. Feinberg, USAF (92T0: Pilot Trainee)

2d Lt Gavin Gross, USSF

2d Lt David I. Ignacio, USAF (92T0: Pilot Trainee)

2d Lt Samuel Nelson, USAF (31P1: Security Forces)

2d Lt Elijah L. Rodrigues, USAF (92T0: Pilot Trainee)

2d Lt Don N. Strawbridge, USAF (92T3, RPA Pilot Trainee)

2d Lt Jonathan B. Walker, USAF (92T0: Pilot Trainee)

Foreign Area Studies — History:

2d Lt Isaac M. Barnum, USAF (14N1: Intelligence) *Academy Scholar, Graduate with Academic Distinction*

2d Lt Louis F. Body VI, USAF (92T1: Combat Systems Officer Trainee)

2d Lt Vance P. Carew, USAF (92T0: Pilot Trainee)

2d Lt Creed A. Finifrock, USAF (92T0: Pilot Trainee)

2d Lt Cole R. McGee, USAF (92T0: Pilot Trainee)

2d Lt Charlotte M. McPhee-Gillum, USAF (64P1: Contracting)

2d Lt Lucas C. Morales, USAF (92T0: Pilot Trainee)

2d Lt Ethan A. Peterson, USAF (92T0: Pilot Trainee)

Cadet Awards



Andrews Award for the Overall Top History Major

C1C Elijah L. Rodrigues

**Bong Award for the Top Military History Major
And Award for the Outstanding Senior Thesis**

C1C Cooper W. Feinberg



**7th Bomb Group Foundation Award for the Top
General History Major**

C1C Ezra D. Barneson

**Col Wayne C. Pittman, Jr. Award for
Best Airpower Paper**

C2C Rithvik Vijayakumar



Cadet Awards

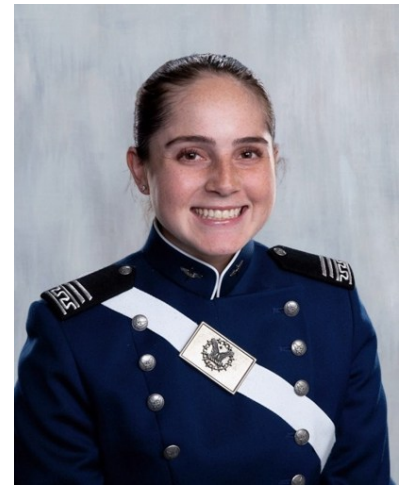


American History Award for the Top American History Major

C1C James Q. Filippini

International History Award for the Top International History Major

C1C Sabrina J. Basso



Rupp Award for the Top FAS-History Major

C1C Ethan A. Peterson

Thiele Award for those selected to undertake graduate studies in History



C1C Sabrina J. Basso
University of Florida



C1C Kayli J. Hilburn
University of Kansas



C1C Don N. Strawbridge
University of Maryland

Faculty Awards



Outstanding Academy Educator Award

Dr Jorden Pitt
Assistant Professor of History

John F. Shiner Award for Teaching Excellence in Military History

Lt Col Joel Barnes
Instructor of History



Jean T. Heidler Award for Teaching Excellence in American History

Lt Col Gilberto Sambolin-Perez
Senior Instructor of History

David H. Zook Award for Teaching Excellence in World History

Lt Col Winston Jean-Pierre
Instructor of History



Steven L. Orrison Award for Mentorship Excellence

Ms Hannah Gerla
Education Program Specialist

2025 Foreward INDIE Bronze Book Award in War & Military Nonfiction: *Rhino Tanks and Sticky Bombs: GI Ingenuity in World War II* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2025)

Dr Bob Wettemann
Associate Professor of History





Hail and Farewell

By Lt Col Joe Eanett



New Faculty Profiles

Lt Col Seung-Min “Tim” Baik (USAFA Class of 2010) hails from St. Paul, Minnesota, and arrived this summer from the United Kingdom after finishing his MA studying British Royal Navy history under Professor Andrew Lambert in the War Studies Department at King’s College London. Tim’s previous Air Force experience as an E-3 Sentry pilot includes serving as an instructor pilot for the E-3, C-208 Caravan, and T-53 Kadet II aircraft. Prior to his studies at King’s, he successfully completed command as the Bravo Squadron AOC at the USAFA Preparatory School. He will be teaching History 100 this fall.

Maj Elisha H. Conway (USAFA Class of 2013) is an Air Force Intelligence Officer arriving from the National Capital Region following assignments at the Defense Intelligence Agency and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. She holds a CSAF-sponsored PhD in Russian History from Georgetown University, and her research interests include KGB, Soviet, and Cold War history. Elisha is accompanied to Colorado Springs by her husband, Egan, their daughter, Grace, and their cavapoo, General.

LTC Greg Hope is an Army Officer arriving at DFH after commanding 1st Battalion, 81st Armor Regiment at Fort Benning, Georgia. Greg commissioned from the United States Military Academy in 2006 as an Armor Officer and has served in a variety of command and staff positions, including a Tank Platoon Leader, Tank Company Commander, Combined Arms Battalion Operations Officer, and a Cavalry Squadron Executive Officer. Additionally, after earning an MA. in History from Ohio State University, Greg spent three years as an Assistant Professor in the Department of History at USMA. His research interests are in operational military history in the 20th Century with an emphasis on the World Wars, and the institutional and organizational history of the US Army.

Lt Col Jason Naaktgeboren is returning to DFH after an extended absence. He enlisted in the Navy in 1998 and served as a Flight Engineer on P-3C Orion and EP-3E Aries II aircraft, amassing over 3,000 flight hours in support of operations in the Balkans, Caribbean, and Middle East. In 2009, he graduated from Northern Arizona University and entered the Air Force as an Intelligence Officer, serving as the Mission Support Cell Chief and Intelligence Evaluator for Remotely Piloted Aircraft at Creech AFB, Nevada, before instructing at the Intelligence Officer Course at Goodfellow AFB, Texas. Lt Col Naaktgeboren also served as Senior Instructor of History at USAFA before taking over as the Chief of the ISR Strategy and Plans for Seventh Air Force at Osan AB, Korea, and the Senior Intelligence Officer for the 86th Airlift Wing and Chief of ISR Engagements Division for Headquarters US Air Forces in Europe-US Air Forces Africa at Ramstein AB, Germany.

Lt Col John William Sutcliffe IV (USAFA Class of 2008) recently joined DFH after a four-year assignment to US Strategic Command, having received his PhD in History from the University of Leeds in 2022. William’s doctoral dissertation examines the influence of politics upon France’s military nuclear program under the Fourth Republic (1946-1958), with his more recent research exploring foreign observation of U.S. nuclear weapons testing during the early Cold War. Lt Col Sutcliffe is a career intelligence officer and a member of the Project of Nuclear Issues’ Mid-Career Cadre. William is joined by his wife Amanda and their four children: John V, Woodford, Evelyn, and Elizabeth.

...Always DFHers

We have said our farewells to several exceptional educators and even better friends over the last academic year. **Lt Col Jess Brown** departed USAFA in the summer of 2025 to become Commander of AFROTC DET 840 at Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas. That same summer, **Dr Sara Castro** accepted a new role as the Associate Director of the Intelligence Studies Project and as a Professor of Instruction at the University of Texas at Austin’s Clement Center for National Security and the Strauss Center for International Security and Law. **Capt Jeremy Jacobellis**, who spent his last year at USAFA as the Executive Officer to the Dean of the Faculty, returned to being a Public Affairs Officer with the 86th Airlift Wing at Ramstein Air Base, Germany. **Lt Col Peter Euler** officially retired from the Air Force after twenty-two years of service in December 2025 and is now comfortably living in Tennessee and enjoying life as a commercial airline pilot. **Maj Mallory Marlin** also finished her DFH tour in December 2025, returning to Tinker AFB, Oklahoma, to resume flying E-3s as the Assistant Director of Operations at the 552d Operations Support Squadron. Sadly, she left before we could all celebrate her selection for lieutenant colonel! Nor was she alone, because **Maj Chris Reith**, also selected for lieutenant colonel, left USAFA this summer, after spending a year of drudgery as Dean’s executive officer, for Little Rock AFB, Arkansas, to reenter the C-130 flight training world as the Director of Operations for the 62d Airlift Squadron. We also bid tearful farewells to four faculty members this summer. **Dr Stephanie Makowski** proved too incredible for any college to pass up, and she departed after she was offered a tenure-track position at the University of North Alabama in Florence, Alabama. We also lost two of our best to their career fields, despite our efforts to hold on to them. **Maj John Prince** is off to Scott AFB, Illinois, to rejoin the personnel world with the 375th Force Support Squadron, and **Lt Col Gilberto Sambolin-Perez** left for Joint Base Langley-Eustis in Virginia to join Air Combat Command’s A2 staff. However, **Maj Jordan Bolster**’s departure is only temporary, as he was selected for the Advanced Academic Degree pipeline and will return to DFH after completing his PhD at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

DFH Cadets Present at USAFA's Cadet Research Forum

By Lt Col Gilberto Sambolin-Perez

The Department of History proudly highlighted two cadet historians at the USAFA Research Forum: C1C Sabrina J. Basso and C3C Emily O. Wagner. Their projects demonstrated the range and relevance of historical research at USAFA, connecting questions of power, morality, state ambition, and human factors across historical contexts.

C1C Basso presented “Resistance in the Gray Zone: The *Sonderkommando* of Auschwitz-Birkenau,” which examines how predominantly Jewish men forced to work in the crematoria at Auschwitz-Birkenau resisted Nazi efforts to erase their humanity. Her research challenges narrow definitions of resistance by showing that the *Sonderkommando* resisted not only through the uprising of 7 October 1944, but also through communication, relationships, religious practice, testimony, and daily acts of endurance.

C3C Wagner presented research on nineteenth-century American maritime exploration, focusing on the United States Exploring Expedition, Commodore Perry’s expedition to Japan, and the United States Coast Survey. Her project analyzes how the federal government used maritime exploration to expand trade, advance scientific knowledge, and project global influence through the Navy, while also confronting the violence, coercion, and imperial consequences tied to those efforts.

Together, these presentations reflected DFH’s commitment to developing cadets who can evaluate evidence, communicate complex arguments, and think critically about the past. Basso and Wagner’s work reminds us that history prepares future officers to understand complexity, moral responsibility, and the enduring relationship between power and people.



C1C Sabrina Basso with her presentation poster

Gliding into Normandy with the 306th

By Dr Bob Wettemann

Dr Bob Wettemann accompanied two officers from USAFA's 94th Flying Training Squadron, one civilian contractor, and six cadet instructor pilots to Normandy, France, to attend ceremonies and events associated with the 82nd anniversary of the June 6, 1944, D-Day invasion. Dr Wettemann prepared a customized tour for the party, recognizing that the 94 FTS's legacy unit is the 943d Troop Carrier Squadron, which carried elements of the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, including Easy Company of *Band of Brothers* fame, into Normandy.

After visiting the invasion beaches, the group attended an



Cadets at the American Cemetery in Colleville-sur-Mer

international memorial ceremony in Picaudville for a C-47 that crashed on the night of the invasion, visited the crash site of Easy Company Commander Lt. Thomas Meehan in Beuzeville-au-Plain, toured museums in St. Mere Église and Colleville-sur-

Mer, and visited American, British, and German cemeteries. The team took advantage of the UNESCO World Heritage site at Mont-Saint-Michel to relax for an afternoon and spent an eventful day in Paris, which included a meeting with the wife of a former USAFA Commandant.

On their last day in Normandy, the group witnessed a mass drop of more than 400 parachutists from US and allied C-130s at La Fiere Bridge. The trip was a resounding success, and the 94 FTS hopes to enlist DFH's assistance for future trips and staff rides.



Cadets at La Fiere commemorative Parachute Drop

The Historical Weapons Shoot: A DFH Annual Tradition

By Dr Doug Kennedy

Thanks to continued and generous gift funds from the Air Force Foundation (and generous contributions from our DFH Alumni Association), the annual “historical weapons shoot” was once again a success! Organized by DFH alum Army LTC (ret) Nathan Watanabe (USAFA ’88), the event gave 18 cadets the opportunity to shoot various weapons from American history, providing a hands-on history lesson.

The shoot once again took place at Fort Carson, where cadets fired dozens of historical weapons, ranging from muskets and Colt revolvers to the Krag-Jorgensen, M1903 Springfield, Tommy guns, M1 Garands, M16s, and even the Army’s new M7 Battle Rifle, chambered in 6.8 mm. Before the shoot, LTC Watanabe briefed cadets on the weapons’ historical significance and tactics and provided a thorough safety briefing. C1C Don Strawbridge, the Cadet-in-Charge, organized the event until he was called away for a Drum and Bugle Corps event, so C3C Emily Wagner stepped in to lead four other cadre members in learning about and training with weapons from a specific era. During the shoot, these cadets wore complete period-accurate uniforms while instructing the other 13 cadets. The program is currently limited by funds, but hopes to expand to 15 cadre members and 35 shooters!

For many cadets, the weapons shoot is a highlight of their Academy experience as a history major. Directly experiencing the evolution of military weapons, equipment, and tactics gives cadets a much greater appreciation of their heritage as members of America’s armed forces. Cadets who serve as cadre also receive practical leadership experience. Lt Col (ret) David Bachler (USAFA ’87 and DFH alum) and Mr Kurt Scholer assisted LTC Watanabe’s program with the black powder weapons. The Department of History’s mission is “to teach history for the profession of arms,” and the weapons shoot is a perfect embodiment of what achieving that mission looks like.



C2C James Vogel instructs Shooters on the WWI
M1917 American Enfield



Heritage Shoot 2026 Cadre members

Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Women at USAFA

By Dr Brian Laslie, USAFA Command Historian

Dr Brian Laslie, USAFA Command Historian and DFH-associated faculty, had the honor of speaking to members of the USAFA Classes of 1980-2024 earlier this year as part of the reunion weekend celebrating the passage of Public Law 94-106 and the admission of women to US military service academies in the summer of 1976 (the first class to include women graduated in 1980). As the picture makes clear, he wanted to talk about something a little different, so he titled his talk “History of USAFA: Origins, Mythology, and Reality.”

Because of scheduling issues and other speakers with generous

understandings of their allotted time, Dr Laslie valiantly condensed his hour-long presentation to half the time, but it seems all participants enjoyed the talk, and (surprisingly) some even laughed at his jokes. His talk covered topics ranging from where class colors really come from, class exemplars, and paintings to the origins of cadet patches and why they keep changing. It was a large and enthusiastic (dare I say, raucous?) crowd gathered to celebrate a common bond and remember our shared history at the United States Air Force Academy.



USAFA Alumnae gathered for Dr Laslie's presentation at the 50th anniversary reunion

DFH Hosts Veterans of the Air War In Southeast Asia

By Lt Col Dan Jackson

On April 3 and 6, 2026, eight USAFA graduates from the Classes of 1959-1969, all veterans of the air war in Southeast Asia, addressed all 23 sections of History 100. In small groups, 449 cadets from the Class of 2029 engaged with veterans who had once sat in their seats and later flew in combat, gaining firsthand insight into airmanship, officership, and the warrior ethos. As part of their visit, Air Force Cross recipient Mr Joe Personett ('69) donated a propeller blade to the department from his OV-10, which, in September 1972, was hit by an SA-7 that struck the left engine. The missile entered through the ex-



L-R Roger Carleton, '67, Jim Mack, '62, Ron Olds, '69, Darrel Whitcomb, '69, Ed Montgomery, '59, Joe Personett, '69.

haust and traveled the length of the engine, bending the propeller blades as it passed through the engine without detonating. Personett managed to land the damaged aircraft. His donation to the department will remind cadets that upon graduation, they will not just be students of

history, but historical actors themselves.

Watch the video [here](#).



Joe Personett's damaged propeller, inscribed "To Joe From Russia With Love"

50 Years of USAFA Women Symposium: Remembering the Class of 1980

By Alison Kaytes

Attending the “50 Years of USAFA Women” symposium felt like stepping into a living archive—one shaped by the voices of the women who lived through the Academy’s earliest, most turbulent years of integration. The weekend offered a powerful reminder of how history is carried forward by the power of those who live it.

The stories began with the most basic details: living conditions. The first 20 squadrons housed women, while the remaining 20 (those without women) took pride in that fact. That pride, as several speakers noted, often manifested as exclusion. Before Christmas of that first year, half of the women were moved into those other squadrons, effectively forcing them to start their Doolie year all over again. It was a jarring reset, one that would have broken many young cadets. Instead, it forged something remarkable: the deep, lifelong bond of the “80s Ladies.”

Throughout the weekend, I noticed quiet rhythms in the room. As speakers recounted their experiences, women across the audience nodded—sometimes subtly, sometimes with unmistakable recognition, while they poked their class-



mate next to them to confirm their experience was the same. Their shared expressions told a story of their own: these challenges were not isolated incidents but a collective reality. Many described moments when they needed the support of their male peers but rarely received it. Some recalled men oinking or mooing at them. Others remembered how certain men refused to wear their jump wings once women earned theirs. These were not small slights; they were daily reminders that the women were seen as intruders in a space they had every right to occupy.

Yet even in the face of these indignities, the women spoke of the Academy giving them a sense of family. A complicated family, yes, one that demanded resilience, grit, and emotional endurance, but a family nonetheless. Their bond with one another

became the foundation that carried them through.

The symposium also highlighted the perspectives of AOCs who arrived in January 1976. Suddenly, they found themselves acting as “upper classmen” to the new cadets who arrived that September. Their reflections added nuance to the narrative: they, too, were navigating uncharted territory, balancing authority with uncertainty, and learning alongside the very cadets they were meant to guide.

One of the most moving moments came during the memorial service. As the third verse played, many women in the room linked arms. It was a simple gesture, but it radiated decades of solidarity—an unspoken acknowledgment of everything they had endured and everything they had built together. And as each name was read and the response “Absent, Ma’am” echoed through the room, the weight of loss settled over us in a deeply moving way.

I came to this symposium hoping to learn about history. What I left with was hope for the future.

Editor’s Note: Alison Kaytes was not a member of the class of 1980, but was invited to attend the Symposium. She resides in Manitou Springs, CO. A special thanks to Alison for providing this article.

Know the Past...Shape the Future

Become A Member: afhistory.org/

AFHF Website: afhistory.org/

The Journal of the AFHF: [afhistory.org/
journal-of-the-air-force-historical-foundation/](http://afhistory.org/journal-of-the-air-force-historical-foundation/)

AFHF Symposium and Awards Banquet Recap May 13-14, 2026

The AFHF held the 2026 Symposium on May 13, 2026 at the AFA Headquarters in Pentagon City. The topic was unmanned aerospace vehicles (UAV) and their integration into the USAF. Most of us think of the development and use of these vehicles as rather recent, but as we learned, it goes back much further and played a key role in both WW I and WW II. James "Snake" Clark kicked off the Symposium with his address on the Legacy of the Predator. Snake was the recipient of the Spaatz Award and is known as the "Godfather of the Predator."



Col James G. "Snake" Clark, USAF (Ret)

Dik Daso, the Executive Director of AFHF, illuminated the early history of UAVs, going back to 1910. The day continued with all things UAV including highlights of "Operation MIDNIGHT HAMMER" and the role of the 509th Bomb Wing. Finally, we heard from members of The Mitchell Institute, including Dave



Dik Daso at the podium

Deptula, about how we are developing and integrating an unmanned mindset in the Air Force. It was a remarkable day with time to ask questions and interface with one another.

The next evening, May 14th, we all got dressed up and went to the Udvar-Hazy Museum for the awards banquet and to enjoy an evening among historical aircraft and the ambience of the museum. Our keynote speaker was Gen Ron Fogleman. The highlight of the



General Fogleman delivers the keynote address

evening was, of course, the awards. Every recipient had a chance to speak and it was a heartfelt evening. For a bio on awardees and information on the awards, go [here](#) on the AFHF Awards page or go to the last [Falcon Footnote](#) on our website.

Another highlight of the evening was an unveiling of an original painting by Rick Herter, the AFHF "Air and Space Artist for Life." An artist's original canvas reprint of the painting was auctioned off, and Darrel Whitcomb was the lucky recipient of the work. The original painting will hang at Whiteman AFB in the 509th Bomb Wing

Headquarters building.



Col Keith Butler, former 509th Commander, and Artist Rick Herter

Of course, no gathering would be complete without meeting new friends and talking with old ones. DFH was represented well so there were many familiar faces.



(l to r): Don Bishop, Jessica and Corey Lantes, and John Terino



(l to r): Darrel Whitcomb, Larry Weaver, Don Bishop, Brenda Roth, David Arnold, John Terino, Dik Daso, Phil Meilinger, and John Farquahar



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The Air Force Academy Foundation (AFAF) accepts gifts for DFH. The AFAF is the organization “singularly charged with this abiding stewardship of donated funds” in support of the Academy’s mission, providing margins of excellence beyond what federal funding can achieve. If you’re interested in giving to DFH through the AFAF, visit their home page at this [link](#). Then click on the “Give Now” button in the upper right-hand portion of the homepage. Scroll down to “Other Giving Opportunities.” In the drop-down menu, click on “Academics” and scroll down to “History Department Fund.” Or write to them at: **Air Force Academy Foundation, 3116 Academy Drive, USAF Academy, CO 80840-4475, (719) 472-0300**

USAFA Class of 2026 graduation ceremony at Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, May 28, 2026. A total of 931 cadets received commissions as second lieutenants in the US Air Force and US Space Force. (Photo by Ray Bahner) downloaded from DVIDS.

