

'07 Best of the Best Presented To Lt. Colonel John Thomas

Lieutenant Colonel John J. Thomas, currently the commander of the 338th Training Squadron, Keesler AFB, Mississippi, was presented AFPAAA's Best of the Best trophy and \$1000 check for 2007. The presentation was made by Colonel Prince Gilliard, 81st Training Group commander. Colonel Thomas was chosen for the award by SAF/PA after being selected as the Outstanding Communication Field Grade Officer of the year for his work in Kabul, Afghanistan, and in the New York office.

"The Air Force gave me lots of those 'opportunities to excel' in 2007 but I never expected this honor," Thomas said. "It's humbling, because if anyone deserves recognition it's the teammates I served with in Kabul and in New York City. You certainly don't accomplish much by yourself in those fast-paced situations. I may be



Colonel Prince Gilliard (left), commander, 81st Training Group, presents AFPAAA's 2007 Best of The Best Award to Lt. Colonel John J. Thomas, at Kessler, AFB,

getting the credit, but they are the ones who deserve it."

"The Air Force Public Affairs Alumni Association is made up of many public affairs luminaries and most of my mentors over the years — my 'PA heroes,' Colonel Thomas continued. "This means an awful lot coming from a group of people I truly respect and who continue, many of them already long retired, to care about their Air Force enough to stay actively involved."

April Not That Far Away - Register Now For Annual Meeting With Banquet In A. F. Museum

You can look forward to being at the birthplace, home, and future of aerospace at our 16th Annual Membership Meeting, April 30-May2 at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

We have a great program planned. Festivities kick-off at our headquarters, the Hope Hotel, which is right on the base, with the traditional ice breaker Thursday evening, April 30. The ice breaker is a great chance to greet old friends and meet members of the Wright-Patt Public Affairs contingent.

Friday we will visit Air Force Materiel Command headquarters where we anticipate a welcome by the new AFMC commander, General Donald J. Hoffman. Then, it's off to the Museum of the United States Air Force for a behind the scenes tour of the restoration facility where the famous B-17 "Memphis Belle" and other aircraft are being restored.

Following the President's lunch at the Wright-Patt Club, we move on to either the Air Force Research Laboratories or the new C-5 Wing. That evening, there will be transportation to an optional dinner at the dining/shopping complex known as The Greene.

Saturday we will be at the Hope Hotel for a warfighting presentation by Colonel Bradley D. Spacy, 88th Air Base Wing commander, and we will hear from Dr. Thomas S. Wells, director of the new Human

Performance Wing. Following the SAF/PA luncheon we will have our Annual Membership Meeting.

The gala banquet, surrounded by historic aircraft in the Modern Flight Hanger at the museum, concludes our meeting on Saturday evening. The Band of Flight will provide a variety of patriotic music and a vocalist will sing the National Anthem after our meal.

Golfers can play in our AFPAAA tournament at the Wright-Patt course on the afternoon of Thursday, April 30. For details, contact Al Cummings at www.agolfer4@yahoo.com

For the latest information on meeting activities visit our web site: www.afpaaa.org To make your reservations, use the form on page 7.

Abel's Book Provides 'Checklist' For All: CEO's To Boy Scouts To Parents

Among the many things AFPAAA's Dick Abel has been during his lifetime are football player, coach, foundation executive, general, SAF/PA director, husband, and father. But, when Dick started his Air Force career he was a pilot . . . and pilots use checklists to do things right.

His book, *The DNA of Leadership*, published by Tate Publishing & Enterprises, is a checklist anyone can use

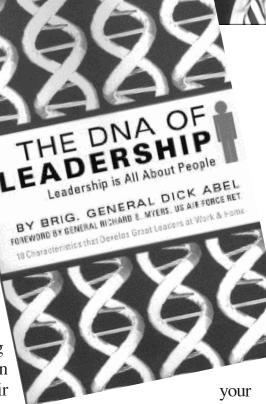
to guide their lives. Reading it can be a real thought provoker about who you think you are.

Like the checklists pilots use, it is concise - 115 pages; easy to read, and to the point. And, just like the cockpit checklists all aircraft have, it is aimed at keeping readers out of trouble by guiding them through a self-evaluation process. That process encourages them to develope the traits of character needed to be honest in dealing with everyone they meet in life from their families to their business associates.

Dick points out that our character is the DNA of who we are in our relationships and dealings with other. "Leadership is the outward expression of who we are," he states. "Your image is who you

want people to think you are; your reputation is who people think you are; and your character is who you really are."

He posits the key to effective leadership is knowing who you really are and being the same person to all you come in contact with, whether they are those who work for you -



subordinates; those you work for-your superiors; your friends, or your family.

Too many people look at themselves as 'managers,' equating management with leadership. "We lead people and manage resources. There is a very clear distinction between the two, Dick points out." We have to serve and respect all the people we come

> in contact with whether they work for us, we for them, or our friends and family. "When we try to manage people, we ultimately fail. You've seen it happen. When you come upon a leader interested in his people, that's when positive changes occur.

Managers must also be leaders if they are to be successful and need to realize the difference between managing and leading," he states. "Our challenge is to know the right thing to do, do the right thing, and do it for the right reason . . . We suffer from the pursuit of comfort rather than conviction - of accommodation rather than truth - of a pleasant life rather than a meaningful life. To lead and serve, one must be trustworthy and committed to the truth."

Being a person of conviction and good character is the key to effective leadership. Check yourself out against the 18 characteristics needed to be a leader that are outlined in Dick's book. Get it by going to the bookstore at: afpaaa.org and linking to amazon, part of the price will go to AFPAAA.

From The President's Pen

Can you believe it's 2009 already? It just doesn't seem that long ago that we were worrying about the difficulties we were going to face in the dreaded Y2K. Little did we know that the over-hyped Y2K was nothing compared to the changes that our nation has gone through since September 11, 2001.

The Air Force today is also not the Air Force most of us knew when we were wearing the blue suit or working as civil servants supporting the total force. The past year seems to have been exceptionally tough with many hits from the national news media about nuclear-related stories, abrupt changes in the senior leadership, and other headline-making issues. And, we have recently learned of another reorganization that affects SAF/PA and filters down to the rest of the career field.

Staffing for the Public Affairs, Broadcasting, Band and Multimedia career fields continues to be a major issue. I remember very clearly that when I was assigned to SAF/PA in 1992 as the Director of Resources, my first task was to oversee a cut in staffing to respond to a mandate from the Air Force Chief of Staff. We went over all the manning documents line by line, hoping to find positions to cut that would have the least impact on the mission. We cut deputies, numbered Air Force and major command positions, and other overhead slots. As it turned out, the cuts that I thought were painful would only be the start.

The bleeding has continued ever since, and, as we have heard from SAF/PA representatives who briefed us at our annual meetings over the years, it has been compounded by the increased number of deployments that everyone has faced. Now, we hear that some senior Air Force officers have privately admitted that the cuts to the PA community may have gone too far and they are considering ways to fix it. I hope that happens. How often do we have to learn that when things are getting tough, cuts to your public relations resources are not going to help you get through the problems?

On a much brighter note, all the plans are now in place for the next AFPAAA Annual Membership Meeting at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, April 30 – May 2, 2009. AFPAAA Chairman of the Board Pete Peterson and his planning committee have done an excellent job of putting together a great meeting. You'll find more details about the meeting on page one and a registration form on page seven of this newsletter. Mark your calendar now and make plans to attend. Also, call your colleagues and encourage them to attend what is sure to be another memorable meeting at a location that has a lot to offer.

As we begin 2009, on behalf of your board of directors, I wish all of you and your families a happy and healthy new year.

— Sam Giammo

General McDew To Head Merger Of Public Affairs & Strategic Communications; Stresses Career Core

SAF/PA director, Brigadier General Darren W. McDew, who has been selected for promotion to Major General, will be the new Director, Communication and Public Affairs, in the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force. He will oversee the development of a full spectrum communications capability. The realignment will enable the

Air Force to deliver its message more effectively internally and to the public via better coordinated communications.

The change recognizes that by having separate public and strategic communications efforts an integrated approach to communications was being thwarted. By combining strategic communication and public affairs organizations the Air Force is seeking to achieve a synergistic effect that will improve the conveying of information across the board.

In an interview with Air Force Times, General

McDew stressed the importance of progression in the career field to handle the work to be done. "I think it's important to completely professionalize this career field and have a career field that is sustainable and that will produce someone who understands the full spectrum,"

"The folks around me that have been doing this for 20-some-odd years are better at it than me. So we have got to get to the point where we can produce someone who does this for a career and will eventually grow up to be the director of public affairs."





Welcome Aboard To... Nicole Ashcroft, Erik Brazones, Clifton Douglas, Pamela N. Fenner, Karl V. Hines, Vincent King, Garry E. Mitchelmore, Christopher Moore, Elena O'Bryan, Michael J. Paoli, and Wendy Varhegyi.

Where Is Old Whatsisname? The current Air Force Public Affairs Staff Directory is available for download in the members only section of our web site as a .pdf file at: http://www.afpaaa.org/aamemonly/usaftoday.html Be sure you have your User ID and Password to access the file. If you don't have those, contact John Gura at: Gura@afpaaa.org

We Mourn. . . the passing of former Secretaries of the Air Force Robert Seamans, Jr., and Vern Orr. Seamans, the ninth Secretary of the Air Force, passed away on June 28 at the age of 86. He served as SEC/AF from February 1969 until May 1973; prior to that he was the deputy administrator of NASA. Orr, 92, the 14th Secretary of the Air Force died on November 27. He was SEC/AF from February 1981 until November 1985. Previously, was California director of finance and taught government finance at the University of Southern California Graduate School of Public Administration.

Movin' Up. . . former SAF/PA, Major General Fred Roggero, from Deputy Director of Air, Space and Information Operations, Headquarters Air Mobility Command, Scott AFB, to Chief of Safety, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C., and Commander, Air Force Safety Center, Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M.

Be Prepared . . . Our retired members who are about to renew or replace their or a member of their family's ID cards need to be aware of Homeland Security Directive 12. It requires that you produce two types of ID, one of which has a photo, to get your new card. You can use a drivers license or ID from a state or outlying U.S. commonwealth or possession; ID cards issued by federal, state, or local government agencies; school ID's that have a photo; voter's registration card; military ID, U. S. passport, or a citizenship or naturalization certificate. For those under 18 there are other acceptable forms of identification. Check out the complete list by downloading the document and going to page 4 of it at: http://www.uscis.gov/files/ form/I-9.pdf

Limber Up The Old Right Arm . . . In case you missed it, the Defense Authorization Act of 2009 has made it OK for veterans and active-duty military not in uniform to use a military-style hand salute while the national anthem is played. That change adds to legislation passed in 2007 that authorized veterans and those not in uniform to salute during the raising, lowering, or passing of the flag.

Joseph Lavigne

Joe Lavigne, who after retiring from active duty worked in the Strategic Communications Office of Southern Command in Miami, died November 8 three months after being diagnosed with cancer. Born in Adams, Massachusetts, Joe enlisted in the Air Force in 1975 and was on active duty for more than 30 years; retiring as a Chief Master Sergeant.

During his career, he excelled in a variety of career fields including, technical training instructor, recruiter, communications computer systems superintendent, career counselor, and public affairs. His last assignment was as the 2nd Bomber Wing's Command Master Chief, Barksdale AFB, Louisiana. After retiring from active duty, Joe moved with his wife, Barbara, an Air Force Master Sergeant, who was assigned to SOUTHCOM. Joe was the Public Affairs Officer for U.S. Army Garrison-Miami before moving to Southern Command.

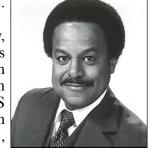
He is survived by his wife, two daughters; Jennifer Simmons and Jessica Ostrander, two grandchildren, Haydon and Alyza Ostrander; and a brother. Donations in Joe's memory may be made to the Ruskin Memorial VFW Post 6287, 5120 N US Highway 41, Ruskin, Florida 33572.

Rupert "Bob" Strickland

Better know in his Air Force and civilian careers as Bob Strickland, the veteran radio and TV broadcaster died of hypertensive cardiovascular disease September. 26

at his home in Washington, D. C. He was 72.

Bob was born in Rainbow City, Panama Canal Zone and began his career there as a radio announcer in 1952. He continued that career in the Air Force, attending DINFOS at Fort Slocum, New York, in 1959. Bob returned to DINFOS, then at Fort Benjamin Harrison,



Indiana, as an instructor from 1966-1969.

Strickland's last assignment was sergeant major of the Command Services Unit at Bolling AFB. While there he began his almost three-decade career at D. C.'s channel 9, WTOP, now WUSA. Starting as a general assignment reporter, he became a familiar face to viewers, ultimately anchoring the evening newscast. He earned three local Emmys for reports on fraudulent charities, shortages of ambulances and paramedics, and the lack of medical services in the Washington area. Among the major stories he covered were the Hanafi Muslims' rampage in D. C. and the FBI's arrest and trial of Mayor Marion Barry on drug charges in 1990.

Rupert "Bob" Strickland's many significant contributions to broadcasting in both the military and the civilian world were recognized in 1994 when he was inducted into the DINFOS Hall of Fame.

Lord Guard & Guide

Betty Jane "B. J." Williams

I wish to thank many of you who have expressed your sympathies and prayers for Aunt Betty since she was stricken ill. They were deeply appreciated and you have our heartfelt

thanks. Betty was my Aunt and the inspiration for my career in the Air Force. She was a friend, a confidant, a "sister", a peer and a patriot. But most of all, she was family to us all. Her contributions to the WASPS, the community, civic organizations,



educational institutions, the U.S. Military and to her Nation will be remembered and sorely missed. Please join with me, my wife Cheryl, and my family in saying a prayer for Aunt Betty and wishing her Godspeed as she flies her P-40 over St. Peter's gates.

- Scott F. Fenwick, SMSgt, USAF, Ret

Aviation pioneer Betty Jane Williams, who was a member of the Women Airforce Service Pilots in World War II and a founder of the post war WASP alumni group, died December 8, at the Tarzana Medical Center in California of complications following a stroke. She was 89.

B. J. was born in Kingston, Pennsylvania. She had a burning desire to fly and earned her pilot's license in a civilian training program in June 1941. During the early years of WW II she was a stewardess with Canadian Colonial Airlines before becoming a Link Trainer instructor, teaching navigation to military pilots.

She then joined the WASP, and graduated in 1944 in Class 44-W-6. B. J. was stationed at Randolph Field as an engineering test pilot. She flew refurbished

advanced trainers and the P-40 Warhawk to ensure they were airworthy.



She was in the Air Force Reserve and was called to active duty in a video production unit during the Korean conflict. B. J. retired in 1979 as a Lt. Colonel with 28 years of service. Her civilian career was as a film writer, director and producer for North American and Lockheed Aircraft.

In 2006 B. J.'s contributions to aviation were recognized when she was inducted into the Women In Aviation International (WAI) Pioneer Hall of Fame.

Directory Updates

Additions

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Registration Form

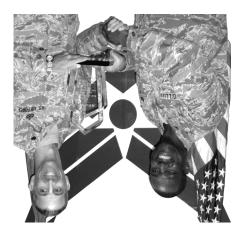
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Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio - April 30-May 2, 2009		
mail: Phone:	Cell Phone:	
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FPAAA Annual Reception and Banquet Buffet, Saturday, May 2.	Members Attending	x \$60= \$
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tional Events Dinner/Shopping Trip at The Greene, Friday, May 1, unsportation Free Space is limited – Dinner Not Included. Members	Guests Attending	
AFPAAA Golf Tournament, Thursday, April 30, Includes	Members Attending	x \$50= \$
nsportation, green fees, cart, prizes.	Guests/Non Members _	x \$50= \$
ease make your check or money order payable to: AFPAAA ail form and check/money order to: Christine Queen Attn: AFPAAA 400 Avondale Drive	Total Remitted	

Registrations are due by April 14, 2009.
Registrations received after April 14 will be charged a \$25 per person attending late fee.

East Peoria, IL 61611

Hotel: AFPAAA has negotiated a block of rooms at Hope Hotel & Conference Center, WPAFB, OH, at a rate of \$70 per night. Make your reservations by calling (937) 879-2696 and asking for discount code Air Force Public Affairs Alumni Association. The rate is available for 3 days prior to and 3 days after our meeting.

Additional information is at www.AFPAAA.org/annualmeet.html (activities, hotel, and directions).



Best Of The Best Award Presented At Kessler



P. O. Box 447 Locust Grove, VA 22508-0447 (Address Correction Requested)

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