



# UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

# Falcon Footnote

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## Inside this issue:

Commander's Corner	2
Harmon Lecture	3
Cadet Development	4-5
In, Out, and About	6-7
Hails, Farewells, and Awards	8-9

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## Visiting Professor: Reflections

By Dr. Nicole Etcheson

"How are we different from civilian students?" cadets in the Civil War class wanted to know last fall. Doug Leonard said I gave the wrong answer: that the cadets weren't, as a general rule, smarter or academically better prepared than the best students at the state universities where I have taught. And, despite their uniforms and commitment to a military career, they are still very much young Americans who share a culture with their civilian peers. They have the same sports and pop references, the same love of country, and the same anxieties that other young Americans possess. That doesn't mean, however, that the cadets are just like civilian students.

The difference isn't just the uniforms and the constant use of "ma'am." (I think I got called "ma'am" more in one year than in the decade I taught in Texas.) The average level of preparation and commitment is higher than at a civilian school. Cary Wintz and I expressed surprise more than once at the lack of those students who don't care, who simply can't do it, or who have behavioral issues.

What most amazes my colleagues at other universities is that cadets can't lie, and you get to grade them on respectfulness. I once asked a cadet what he was doing on his laptop. "I'm sorry, ma'am," he said, "I'm looking at my e-mail." Not for him the ever useful answer, "oh, nothing." Another cadet slept through our 7:30 a.m. Civil War class and sent me an e-mail apologizing for "this unprofessional behavior" which he promised would never occur again. In the civilian world, the student response is "I just can't do a morning class," morning being defined as anything before 1 p.m.

One profound difference between civilian students and the cadets is the cadets' preoccupation with food. One section of the Scholars Military History class met before lunch and another afterwards. Before lunch, there was much speculation on what would be served. After lunch, there were the reviews of what they had consumed. It took me awhile to figure out that "tennies" were chicken nuggets, not old gym shoes. I have not known students so concerned with lunch since



my son was in elementary school. But they don't have access to the food courts of civilian universities with their offerings of salad bars, sandwiches, and chains such as Pizza Hut and Taco Bell.

Having always taught at state schools, the geographic diversity of the classes was both a delight and a challenge. It was wonderful to have the different perspectives that cadets brought to the class. One cadet had gone to a high school named after Declaration of Independence signer Caesar Rodney. Another was distantly related to Confederate Civil War general and Texas revolutionary Albert Sidney Johnston. I tried to incorporate anecdotes about their homes into the course material. For a Canadian cadet in the Civil War class, I emphasized Canada's role as a refuge for slaves fleeing the United States. A cadet from Tennessee told us that the main street was named after Braxton Bragg. He was dismayed to learn that Braxton Bragg was not only a Confederate but a really bad general.

I feel very lucky to have had my first experience of teaching in the pandemic with the cadets, especially the Scholars. All of them stayed on track, kept in touch, did the work and finished out the semester despite iffy wifi, crowded homes, concerns for family members, disappointment at missing recognition, and the uncertainty of the times.

Students are the reason universities exist. USAFA is privileged to have some of the finest students in the country.

# Commander's Corner: Col Meg Martin



Happy summer DFHers near and far! As is custom in the summer, things have slowed here a little, but not as much as in past years. Just as it did on the rest of the country, COVID-19 has made its impact felt here as well. This spring's global health pandemic affected all of us and certainly has influenced our memory of the entire academic year. Fortunately, our current DFH instructors have remained healthy and in good spirits—we hope that all of you have remained safe and healthy these last few months. The Academy's COVID response caused dramatic changes to the end of our spring semester and will require us to make changes to the upcoming academic year as well. Nevertheless, many things remained the same; the success of our cadets and the camaraderie of our faculty are probably the most important of what has gone unchanged. Even during this upended year, DFH has much to celebrate and we are glad to share our news with you. As always, thanks to our faculty alumni, former cadets, and donors who have made opportunities possible for our department.

We were having an amazing academic year through about mid-March! Our most exciting news is the release of the second volume of Harmon Lectures (1988-2017), carefully edited by Lt Col Mark Grotelueschen (former DFHer, USAF, retired) and team. AU published it here: <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/AUPress/Display/Article/2144535/the-harmon-memorial-lectures-in-military-history-19882017/fbclid/IwAR1zPccvR6YqP4DdN8-JDcjhvZM7FRJPT8wFKV7p791odhXNI7A6VCGia8U/>

When COVID hit before Spring Break, the USAFA leadership determined to cancel the break, send home the lower three classes and to finish the semester via distance learning. The Superintendent refined that decision in the wake of two cadet casualties when he directed an accelerated semester in order to graduate the Class of 2020 in April. DFH, along with all of DF, executed a split semester; we compressed the semester for the first-class cadets to allow for an 18 April graduation date and then concluded the semester for the lower three classes on 29 May. In the months prior to March, the department accomplished many exciting things. We completed two civilian hires for professors who join the department this summer—Dr. Doug Kennedy transitioned into a traditional faculty slot and Dr. Justin Simundson just arrived from Texas Tech. Faculty members published, presented, and served on panels over 40 times including: Dr. Doug Leonard's first book *Anthropology, Colonial Policy and the Decline of French Empire in Africa* (Bloomsbury); Maj Miguel Lopez's article "The Survival of Auftrags-taktik during the Soviet Counterattack in the Battle for Moscow, December 1941 to January 1942" in January's JMH; Dr. John Jennings's keynote address to the "Drugs and the Politics of Consumption in Japan" seminar in Zurich; and an entire panel of DFHers—Dr. Doug Kennedy, Maj Jason Naaktgeboren, LT Tony Rush (USN), and Maj Myles Smith—who presented "Teaching Joint and Combined Operations at the US Air Force Academy" at the Annual Northern Great Plains Historical Conference in Manitoba. We also proudly recognized Dr. Sara Castro as a Wilson Center China Fellow for 2020 and Dr. Peter Villella's appointment as Executive Director of the American Society for Ethnohistory. The department also benefited from the collegiality and expertise of our two Distinguished Visiting Professors, Dr. Nicole Etcheson (Ball State University) and Dr. Cary Wintz (Texas Southern University), who both presented in support of the Academy Scholars Program. DFH members also supported wider Air Force requirements. Lt Col Michael Hamer deployed in support of contingency operations in Africa and Lt Col Ryan Menath flew the BACN mission in Afghanistan. Capt Kristen Patton also provided intel support to exercise PACIFIC SENTRY in Hawaii.

Our cadets remained active scholars as well. Air University published a paper titled "He said, Xi Said: The Difficulties of Strategic Communication between the United States and China" that came out of C1C Myles Arenson's (C/O 2020) summer '19 summer research program. <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Wild-Blue-Yonder/Article-Display/Article/2042195/he-said-xi-said-the-difficulties-of-strategic-communication-between-the-united/>. C1C Larry King earned honors as the Humanities Division Moore Award Winner, given to the best cadet researcher of the year, for his work at Los Alamos National Laboratories. C2C Jackson Ayers presented his own research at the Phi Alpha Theta Conference in San Antonio. We also had over 20 cadets planning to present research at the Missouri Valley Historical Conference, the SMH annual conference, and the annual Colorado Springs Research Forum (CSURF), which were all cancelled because of COVID. The Academy's research office posted a list of abstracts of planned CSURF presentations that can be found here: <https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/2020-Book-of-USAFA-CSURF-Abstracts.pdf>. DFH will also send seven cadets with history or FAS-history majors to graduate school this year. In addition to our three department sponsored Graduate Studies Program scholarship recipients, Lawrence King (New York University), Gail Muggill (Arkansas), and Connor Clancy (North Carolina State), Michael DeFazio (Lawson Scholarship, Southern Mississippi), Zachary Bradley (Wolfe Scholarship, Texas), Chipu Chu (DFF GSP, Hawaii), and Cooper Hawkley (Fulbright Scholarship, National Chengchi University - Taiwan) will all attend history MA programs this fall. This is great news for DFH and our graduates!

As alluded to above, COVID was a major disruptive force in the spring. Several departmental initiatives stalled. Local and external partners for research, presentations, travel, and outreach cancelled planned events. Because of telework expectations, collaborative projects and tasks have slowed significantly. DFH flexed from one hundred percent in-person teaching to fully on-line. Additionally, we are in the final planning stages of shifting the annual Harmon Memorial Lecture to the spring semester to account for the local COVID restrictions currently in place. This was a huge culture shift for all of USAFA and while we successfully completed "emergency remote teaching," we are now working with an eye towards improving our distance-learning environment and techniques. Our focus remains on developing our cadets both as budding historians and as leaders of character in service to our nation and our Air Force. Thanks to all of you for your continued support of DFH, its faculty members, and our cadets. As always, "Once a DFHer, always a DFHer!"



## 2019 Harmon Memorial Lecture

The oldest and most prestigious lecture series at the Air Force Academy, the Harmon Memorial Lectures in Military History originated with Lieutenant General Hubert R. Harmon, the Academy's first superintendent (1954-1956) and a serious student of military history. The Academy's leadership felt greatly indebted to General Harmon and sought to honor his accomplishments in some way. The Department of History proposed launching a lecture series to commemorate his efforts, and in 1959 the Harmon Memorial Lecture Series in Military History was born.

The Harmon Lecture series supports two goals: to encourage interest in contemporary military history and to stimulate in cadets a lifelong interest in the study of the history of the military profession. The lectures are published and distributed to interested individuals and organizations throughout the world and many are used in courses at the Academy. In this way, we continue to honor the memory of General Harmon, who during his lifetime developed a keen interest in military history and greatly contributed to establishing the U.S. Air Force Academy.

Brig. Gen. Alfred Hurley, former Permanent Professor and Head of the Department of History served as the initial action officer for the Harmon Lecture. Since his death in 2013, his estate has supported the annual lectures through the Air Force Academy Foundation.

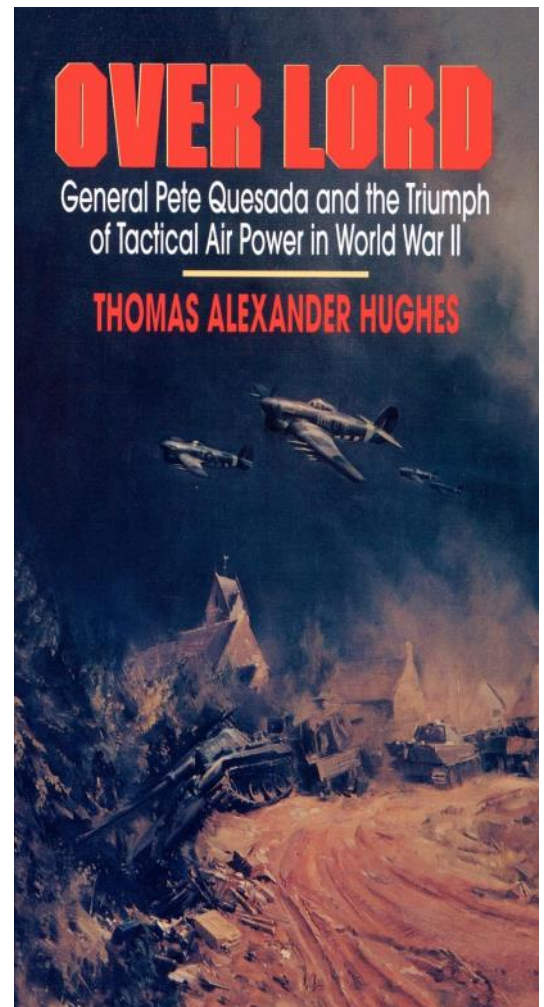


### **“Forgetting, and Remembering, D-Day, 75 Years On”**

#### **2019 Harmon Memorial Lecture**

**Thomas Alexander Hughes**

In commemoration of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Allied invasion of Normandy, which took place on 6 June 1944, Harmon Memorial guest speaker Thomas Alexander Hughes delivered a lecture entitled “Forgetting, and Remembering, D-Day, 75 Years On.” Dr Hughes, who visited the site on numerous occasions, shared his experience and knowledge about Normandy with cadets and faculty members at USAFA. Dr Hughes discussed the events that led to the crucial decision to land in Normandy and while doing so he discussed the crucial role that the combined Anglo-American bombers played immediately before the invasion. He reminded the audience how essential troops were transported to their location in the battlefield with help from the combined air force, and that numerous sorties were carried out over the region to ascertain that the skies were clear before the invasion. In addition, he shared with the audience the grim reality into which veterans of World War II returned after serving their country. He described the physical and mental state which made the veterans’ return to normal civilian life so daunting and the failure of American society to help the veterans reintegrate into civilian society. Both cadets and faculty members were enriched by their attendance.



## Cadet Research Trip to Eisenhower Presidential Library, Kansas City.



By Dr. Bob Wettemann

During the spring semester of 2020, the History Department sponsored a research trip for cadets at the Eisenhower Library, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas City. The escort was Dr. Bob Wettemann and he was accompanied by Major Nick Smith, C1C Myles Arenson, C2Cs Jackson Ayers, Teresa Kozak, and Mark Schell, and C3Cs Cole Resnick and Colton Layman. The cadets had the opportunity to conduct research at the Eisenhower Presidential Library in Abilene, Kansas and then went on a tour of the Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, and the National World War I Museum in Kansas City.

This research trip was designed to provide cadets with the opportunity to conduct archival research at a National Archives Facility at the Eisenhower Presidential Library, coupled with an opportunity to observe professional military education at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, and tour the National World War I Museum in Kansas City.

This trip continues to be a good opportunity for USAFA cadets engaged in meaningful research projects to find sources at the Eisenhower Archive. Cadets who attended courses such as History 200, History 499, and those who worked on personal projects benefitted the most from this trip. This trip is an ideal mentorship opportunity for the cadets and it is scheduled to take place next year.



Dr. Bob Wettemann (front left) and other DFH faculty successfully implement experiential learning during the Fall 2019 semester's World War I "Trench Warfare Exercise" in the F-1 Lecture Hall. Cadets experience firsthand the challenges and frustrations inherent in a wargaming scenario that closely approximates the evolving operational conditions on the Western Front from 1914-1918.



# Model Arab League

The West Coast Model Arab League conference was held at the University of La Verne in California on 6-8 March. Six of our cadets enrolled in FAS410/415 took part in it and they represented three Middle Eastern countries (Palestine, Jordan and Lebanon). The cadets participated in stimulating discussions that impressed everyone at the conference. They drafted resolutions and lobbied for their adoption by their committee. The results were outstanding: They won the Outstanding Delegation Award. In addition, every one of the participants won an individual award. Gail Muggill, Morris Ethan, Daniel Smith and Seven Knight won the Best Delegate Award. Sam Pisney and Ariana Clemente-Hunter won the Honorable Mention Delegate Award.



FAS410/415 involves academic simulation of the League of Arab States. It trains cadets to take part in the Arab League's debates on current events. For that purpose cadets need to develop effective communication skills that would enable them to discuss issues involving diplomacy and decision-making. Playing the roles of diplomats, political leaders and members of civil society, cadets simulate debates and crisis situations in the Arab League and in the country that they represent. Normally, 22 teams from leading American universities and colleges represent their assigned country in debates that simulate the activities of the Arab League and its special committees.

Cadets enrolled in FAS 410/415 attend two conferences (they are held sometime between February and April) where they debate, make resolutions on behalf of the Arab country that they represent and lobby for their adoption by the committee that they were assigned to. Normally, there are five committees in this conference (Joint Defense, Political, Economic, Palestinian and Environment). Cadets are trained to act as representatives acting in character as real representatives do in defense of their country and they discuss issues pertaining to their committee. This is an excellent training exercise in leadership and debate. Cadets participating in this program obtain experience and confidence in public speaking.

In preparation for these conferences cadets research their topics in advance and they are tested on their knowledge prior to departure. They are required to prepare resolutions in class, and simulate the work of the Arab League representatives. In the process they learn much about the Arab League, its structure, its operations and most importantly, about effective networking, negotiating tactics, decision making, and debating.



This is a fun course where cadets have the opportunity to meet students from other colleges and universities. The course is interesting as well as challenging, but the workload is similar to other courses at USAFA. Cadets who participated in this program won numerous group and individual awards for their performance. If this sounds interesting to you, please contact Dr Jacob Abadi by e-mail ([Jacob.Abadi@usafa.edu](mailto:Jacob.Abadi@usafa.edu), or 333-8612) and he will arrange for you to have it added to your schedule.

## FACULTY FAREWELL: Major Miguel Lopez



As I watched the movie *Memphis Belle* as a fourteen-year old, I never imagined that the passion for history and the Second World War that movie awoke would lead me to impart that zeal to future officers of the US Air Force. And my time in graduate school at Temple University and here at the Department of History has not only smoothed out some of the rough edges of my “history buff” days, it has brought dear colleagues into my life that I can call friends and mentors. Having a daily opportunity to interact with everyone in the department on countless topics has helped me continue my path toward

being a professional scholar. Everyone bouncing ideas, concepts, perspectives, and expertise over lunch and in the halls not only were some of my favorite times, but challenged my perspectives for the better and helped me be a better instructor and historian.

At the start of every semester, I told the new cadets that if they only learned one thing, it should be to appreciate history, even if they hated it. My favorite moments were always when I could see the proverbial lightbulb go on in a cadet’s mind; to see them make the historical connections to their current world, from the importance of the French Revolution to the Napoleonic Wars and the nineteenth century, to the Great War to World War II and today. I developed a motto to “break myths.” One vivid memory of such an opportunity came when I volunteered to teach about Operation Barbarossa during the summer offering of History 100: Introduction to Military History. A cadet leaned back in his chair with arms crossed and said: “I don’t care until the U.S. gets involved.” I responded back with a smirk: “Well ... let me tell you about this *little* operation called Operation Barbarossa (thick sarcasm poring through).” But there were difficult times as well from trying to reach a struggling cadet to meeting grading deadlines. I didn’t fully understand the workload required to effectively teach when I first arrived. But I am grateful for that experience.

As I return to the operational Air Force at Tinker AFB, OK, I expect to be able to bring not only my teaching experience and broader perspectives because of my colleagues and scholarship, but a better appreciation of historical insights, and improving the ties of tactical and operational levels of war to have effective strategy. And in the few years I have left on active duty, to prepare to enter graduate school again and pursue a PhD after I retire from the Air Force.

I want to thank everyone in the department for their friendship, example, leadership, and for accepting me as one of your colleagues. I will miss teaching history to the cadets. Of watching them mature and learn to appreciate those that came before them. It is an honor to be part of the Department of History at the US Air Force Academy. I hope to see all of you at the next Society for Military History Annual Conference.

## FACULTY PROFILE: Dr. Peter Villella



I am originally from Albuquerque, NM, and received a BA in History and Spanish from the University of Virginia (2001) and a Ph.D. in Latin American History from UCLA (2009). My scholarly focus is Latin America, and specifically the intellectual and cultural history of Mexico since the pre-Columbian era. I am the author of the widely unread *Indigenous Elites and Creole Identity in Colonial Mexico* (Cambridge University Press, 2016), and co-editor and translator of *History of the Chichimeca Nation: Don Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl's Seventeenth-Century Chronicle of Ancient Mexico* (Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 2019). My research has been supported by the American Council of Learned Societies, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Humanities Center, and several special collections, including the John Carter Brown Library and the Lilly Library at Indiana University. I have written articles for the *Hispanic American Historical Review*, *The Americas*, *Colonial Latin American Review*, and *Ethnohistory*. In recognition of the five-hundredth anniversary of the 1521 Spanish conquest of Mexico, I am currently co-editing a volume on how shifting memories of that war has shaped politics, historiography, and literature in Mexico and throughout the Atlantic world over the centuries, from Elizabethan England to Bourbon France, and from modern Spain to today's Hollywood. I am also working on my second book project, which examines how and why the Aztec Empire was remembered in the centuries following its collapse by both its descendants and its conquerors.

After over twenty years' experience with conventional universities, I am grateful and honored for the opportunity to contribute to DFH and its Core World History program. Becoming familiar and comfortable with the many idiosyncrasies of academic and professional life at USAFA has been a complex, yet often hilarious journey, and I've been lost in the vastness of Fairchild Hall more times than I'd like to admit. The portion of my memory dedicated to retaining acronyms has expanded exponentially, displacing older, now-useless functions such as the twelve-hour clock. I have also filled out some forms.

The second-best thing about coming to DFH is its culture of team-spiritedness, built on a shared commitment to our educational, civic, and military missions. My talented, selfless, and efficient colleagues are always eager to lend a hand, even to a clueless newcomer like me. We succeed or fail together, and it is an honor to lend my narrow skill-set to a greater purpose. But easily the most rewarding aspect of teaching at USAFA is the opportunity to interact daily with the cadets. Each one is gifted in his or her own way, but collectively they are dedicated and driven, with a spirit I find invigorating. I have always believed in the immediate relevance and importance of history; being able to guide USAFA cadets through the past to help them prepare for their future in leadership highlights and confirms this belief everyday. It is a rare opportunity for someone in my profession.

It is good to be back in the west, in beautiful Colorado Springs. I love mountains, blue skies, and skiing, and am eager to explore the wild spaces of the state with my wife, Judy, and my three daughters, Selma, Ruth, and Edythe. Beyond the outdoors, I enjoy watching and playing basketball and soccer and reading science fiction, and my long-term life project is to learn and play all 32 of Beethoven's piano sonatas before I die. I also like to cook, although as a native New Mexican, I find it precious and charming when Coloradans pretend to be experts on green chile.



## Farewells:

Part of being at USAFA is experiencing a level of faculty turn-over every year. Please join us in saying farewell to some of the DFH team to whom duty is calling them forward to new things!

Lt Col (ret) Michael Hamer: Retired—Back in Missouri with family  
 Lt Col (ret) Craig Morris: Retired—Thank you for your service!  
 Dr. Nicole Etcheson (DVP): Returned to Ball State University, IN  
 Dr. Cary Wintz (DVP): Returned to TX Southern University, Houston  
 Lt Col Thomas “Rage” Fugler: PCS’d to Kunsan AB, SK  
 Maj Miguel Lopez: PCS’d to Tinker AFB, OK  
 Maj Jason “Suit” Naaktgeboren: PCS’d to Osan AB, SK  
 Maj Philip “Myles” Smith: PCSing to Oxford University for PhD  
 Capt Kirsten Patton: Migrated to CAG office

## New Civilian Faculty:

Over the past year, DFH hired and onboarded 7 civilian professors, bringing the department’s total to an unprecedented 11 full-time civilians. Welcome aboard to:

Dr Peter Vilella	(Associate Professor)
Dr Jennifer Weber	(Associate Professor)
Dr Sara Castro	(Assistant Professor)
Dr Douglas Kennedy	(Assistant Professor)
Dr Douglas Leonard	(Assistant Professor)
Dr Cameron McCoy	(Assistant Professor)
Dr Justin Simundson	(Assistant Professor)

## Hails:

DFH is proud to welcome three new incoming faculty members this summer. Welcome to the team!

Dr. Justin Simundson: Arriving from Texas Tech University, Lubbock TX.

Lt Col Joseph “Matt” Dietz: Arriving from University of North Texas, Denton TX.

Capt Joel Mathews: Arriving from the 9th Air Support Operations Squadron, Fort Hood, TX.

## Academic Year 2019-2020 Teaching Awards

John F. Shiner Award (Military History Teaching Excellence): LT Tony Rush, USN

David H. Zook Award (International History Teaching Excellence): Capt Kirsten Patton

Jeanne Heidler Award (American History Teaching Excellence): Dr. Doug Kennedy

Stephen L. Orrison Award (Cadet Mentorship Excellence): Dr. Cameron McCoy

Outstanding Academy Educator: Maj Jason “Suit” Naaktgeboren





## **Academic Year 2019-2020 Cadet Awards**

**Andrews Award for the Top Overall History Major: Lawrence J. King**

**Bong Award for the Top Cadet in Military History: Timothy "Mike" DeFazio**

**7th Bomb Group Award for the Top Cadet in General History: Chipu Chu**

**Rupp Award for Interdisciplinary Studies Related to History: Natasha E. Weimer**

**Thiele Award for the Department's Graduate Studies Program Recipients: Lawrence J. King, Gail G. Muggill, Conner M. Clancy**

**Outstanding Cadet in American History: Myles T. Anderson**

**Air Force Historical Foundation Award for Best Cadet Paper on an Airpower Topic:  
Cole Resnik**

## **Air Force Academy Foundation Accepts Gifts for DFH**

The Air Force Academy Foundation is the organization "singularly charged with the abiding stewardship of donated funds" in support of the Academy's mission, providing margins of excellence beyond what federal funding can achieve.

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<http://www.afacademyfoundation.org>

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