



UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY  
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

# Falcon Footnote

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## View from the Visiting Professor: June 2019

By. Jennifer Weber, Ph.D.

I came to DFH after a former graduate student and Air Force officer contacted me and asked if I were interested in being a visiting professor at USAFA. I write quite a bit about the military and teach classes on a couple of wars, but I have never been in the service. This seemed like an opportunity to learn more about the military, how it works, and its values. I quickly said yes. And that is how one of the richest experiences of my professional life began.

I arrived in June 2017 to a department stocked with smart, funny people who were always willing to drop what they were doing to explain something to me or help me. I had free run of the Academy, and I took advantage of that, making connections in other departments and mission elements over the year, participating in I-Day training, observing BCT, going on a fly-along in a glider, and taking an extensive leadership course.

My real introduction to the Academy began when classes started, though. That's when I got to meet and interact closely with the cadets. I could talk at length about them, but I have found them to be among the most extraordinary students I have ever worked with. The courtesies and the fact that they have to be in class are just the beginning. I have found a number of them hungry to learn, interested in taking in new information, even if that collides with beliefs they grew up with. History majors in particular are special because they have chosen to be historians in a college that stresses STEM. They are swimming a bit against the tide, and that makes them extra committed to our discipline. Their excitement about history is obvious in every class.

When Col. Martin asked me to stay a second year, I quickly said yes. Again. And I'm so grateful that I had the chance to spend a second year here. This year I had three students who did independent studies with me. All three had twigged at one thing or another in my Civil War class, and wanted to explore



that more deeply. Two of the cadets used the opportunity to write journal-length papers based on original research that they funded out of their own pockets. Both went back East to troll through the National Archives and the Library of Congress, among other places. They did this because they wanted to, not because I asked them. Their initiative was extraordinary, as was their work ethic. I have never taught undergraduates who worked so hard over such an extended period.

Now that I understood a little about how the Academy worked, I was also able to cadets to several Civil War battlefields over Thanksgiving. From what I heard from the cadets who were along, it was an eye-opening experience for them and gave them a new framework to think about warfare. I've continued to reach out to other parts of the Academy, traveling with the baseball team as a tutor and auditing a class on Constitutional law.

Really, though, it's about the cadets. I assume that at least one person in every class I teach will be a general officer, a CEO, or a member of Congress. To help young people with so much potential to think better, write better, and understand history better has been among the greatest privileges of my life. Thank you, Col. Martin, Gen. Armacost, and the Academy at large. But most of all, thanks to the cadets.

## Commander's Corner: Col Meg Martin



Greetings DFHers! Another academic year has zipped by at light speed, at least for the faculty; the cadets may have another take on events. Academic year 18-19 was an exciting year for DFH as we continued to see success in areas such as faculty development, cadet travel, and hiring. Our team has put together a great summary of events—I hope you will find them interesting. A new theme has emerged over the last few years: generous donations made to DFH through the Endowment and Association of Graduates have funded many of our cadet opportunities—from travel to cadet awards. Many thanks to those known and anonymous donors.

Cadet enthusiasm is over-the-top for travel experiences and as many of you know, their excitement energizes the department. Cadet participation in research and presentations continues to grow. Our participation in the Colorado Springs Undergraduate Research Forum was at a five-year high this spring. Cadet success outside the classroom is matched by outstanding performance in the classroom.

This year we graduated 28 history and foreign area studies-history majors. Out of that group, we had 6 history majors in the class of 2019 graduate as Academy Scholars; 4 graduated with academic distinction; 3 graduated with athletic distinction; 3 graduated with military distinction; and 1 history major graduated with both academic and military distinction. Additionally, Sean Harvey and Ellen Miota graduated as Distinguished Graduates (top 10% of the class). USAFA also sent six cadets with history or FAS-history majors to graduate school this year. In addition to our department sponsored Graduate Studies Program scholarship recipients, Jonathan Banks (Chapman) and Robert Mahoney (Kansas State), Ellen Miota (Wolfe Scholarship, Chicago), Charles Estep (Lawson Scholarship, Calgary), Pablo Vespaciano (DFF GSP, Florida), and Jennifer Hiddink (DFF sponsorship, Florida) will all attend history MA programs this fall. Our faculty pipeline is strong and growing!

Our military and civilian faculty members continue to be a source of strength for the department. Our participation at the Society for Military History Conference and other academic events around the world remains a high priority and we have been successful publishing as well. Highlights from many faculty works include Maj Jason Naaktegboren's article on US intelligence in the Pacific in the *Journal for Homeland and National Security Perspectives*, Lt Col John Roche's chapter in *America and the Just War Tradition*, and Major Tim Romans' article on Tokugawa Japan in the *Journal of World History*. We also completed 5 new hires of permanent civilian colleagues. This fall, Dr. Jenny Weber transitions from visiting professor from Kansas to full-time along with Dr. Cameron McCoy from BYU, Dr. Sara Castro from UNC Chapel Hill, and Dr. Doug Leonard, who is retiring from active duty. Our last new professor, Dr. Peter Villella from UNC-Greensboro, will arrive in time to begin teaching in the spring. As we look to the future, we are optimistic our new composition of civilian and military faculty members will allow us to continue to grow cadets into second lieutenants ready for service in a twenty-first century Air Force.

It has been my pleasure to meet many of you and correspond with others over this last year. As always, please let us know when you plan to be in town for reunions and other events. We are eager to host you and share the accomplishments of the department. As always, "Once a DFHer, always a DFHer!"

## 2018 Harmon Memorial Lecture



Professor Michael Nieberg, From the United States Army War College, spoke at the 2018 Harmon Memorial Lecture on Peacemaking 1919 and the Mistrust of History.” Professor Nieberg’s lecture was very lively and included many of the themes that our History 100 cadets were learning in class

at the time of the lecture. It was also timed perfectly with the 100th Anniversary of the armistice that ended World War One. More than just repeating what the cadets were already hearing in class, though, Professor Nieberg skillfully tied the history of World War One into ongoing themes that brought the audience from 1919 up through modern day Europe, Asia, the United States, and the Middle East.

We were particularly pleased with the post-lecture reception, where many cadets and faculty took the opportunity to interact with Dr. Nieberg in a relaxed environment. Dr. Nieberg enjoyed this time and it is always great to see our future leaders interacting with an award-winning scholar. It is just this sort of interaction that makes this lecture, our department’s flagship event, a success each year.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=my4olRVGf7A>

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 considered 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 USAFA Endowment.

## 60th Anniversary Lowry Staff Ride



On 25 August 2018 the USAFA History department led a Superintendent Staff Ride from the current site of USAFA back to the site of Lowry Air Force Base where USAFA got its start 60 years ago. The day was kicked off with a lively and engaging lecture from Dr. John Terino entitled Visions, Venues, Values and the Development of the Air Force Academy. He guided the large crowd at Arnold Hall through the politics and social atmosphere that built what became the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. Following the lecture, the crowd narrowed down a little as the Superintendent escorted current senior leaders and representatives of the original USAFA classes up to the Lowry site. While there a plaque was unveiled to

ensure future generations will understand the impact that site has had on the Air Force and the United States.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8pGnkNDP7WE>



# Educate with Experience: Pearl Harbor



Over spring break, five cadets from the World War II at Sea course and one cadet from The History of World War Two traveled to Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam to conduct an in-depth survey of the 1941 attack that forced the United States out of isolationism and into battle. The staff ride was designed to put cadets in the shoes of historic leaders, such as Yamamoto, Nagumo, Kimmel and Layton and planners in an effort to impart greater awareness of the physical limitations of military decision making. Cadets were assigned roles drawn from key participants in the Pearl Harbor raid, and its aftermath, and were called upon to explain the decisions of their characters, as well as offer their personal thoughts on the appropriateness of those decisions. The cadets then had the opportunity to critique the decisions and actions.

While in Hawaii, the cadets were able to see firsthand many of the locations and some of the equipment from that era, beginning with the USS Arizona memorial and a trip to Ford Island where stops were made at the final resting place of the USS Utah, the Pacific Aviation Museum, and the USS Oklahoma memorial, followed by a walk down " Battleship Row." Cadets were treated to a guided tour of the "Avenger of Pearl Harbor," the USS Bowfin, a Balao class submarine launched exactly one year after the attack that would go on to sink over 40 Japanese vessels. They hiked to the top of Diamond Head and visited Fort DeRussy to examine the coastal defense batteries designed to protect Oahu from a surface attack. Finally, the trip ended on the deck of the USS Missouri, where Japan signed the formal instrument of surrender on September 2, 1945.

Funding for the trip was made possible largely through donor support for the USAFA Endowment. For many of the cadets, ranging from sophomores to seniors, this was their first trip to Hawaii, and it was certainly a memorable one. Cadet Third Class Wyatt Lake described the event as "the opportunity of a lifetime."



## In, Out, and About



Cadets in the Survey of the History of Warfare (History 100) had the opportunity to get some hands on learning in a creative trench warfare exercise. Cadets took over a large lecture hall and demonstrated and learned the difficulties faced by soldiers in World War One.



The History Club's Historical Weapons Shoot is an annual event that provides History Club cadets the opportunity to learn the development of select US Army issued firearms from the Revolutionary War through the modern era. This opportunity is only available through funding by the USAFA Endowment.



Cadets discovered the joy of the archive and honed their research skills with an exciting visit to the archives at the Eisenhower Presidential Library in Abilene, KS during History Pit III. They engaged in a variety of individual research topics with material only available on-site.



Cadets from the History Department took advantage of the opportunity to present their original research at the Colorado Springs Undergraduate Research Forum. This is a collaborative event with the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs and Colorado College.



## 100th Anniversary of the Battle of St. Mihiel

It's always amazing to visit the battlegrounds of famous wars, but WWI is even more incredible. Given the importance of terrain in the Great War, seeing that actual terrain completely changed my view of the war. Seeing the difference between French and German trenches was an eye-opening experience. Visiting the Douaumont Ossuary and literally seeing the bones of the men who died in the Battle of Verdun--one of the world's deadliest battles--was unforgettable. All in all, the WWI Staff Ride was a once-in-a-lifetime experience that I will always remember.



~Cadet Second Class T. Michael DeFazio reflects on his opportunity to travel with the Department of History for the 100th Anniversary of the Battle of Saint Mihiel.

Opportunities to travel are dependent upon generous donor funding to the USAFA Endowment.

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## Reflection on the Value of Travel

By. Bob Wettemann, Ph.D.

During the last academic year, History majors from the Department of History have retraced the route of Pickett's Charge on the Gettysburg Battlefield, commemorated the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of St. Mihiel at ceremonies in Thiaucourt, France, joined Presidents Donald Trump and Emmanuel Macron and countless WWII veterans on the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the invasion of Normandy, stood on the deck of the battleship U.S.S. Missouri in Pearl Harbor, and immersed themselves in archival research at the President Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library. Collectively, these efforts represent the Department of History's continued commitment to an immersive historical education. Much of what we as a department does in the education of historically-minded cadets is often seen as confined to Fairchild Hall, the McDermott Library, or the physical space of the Department of History, with the vast majority of our time being spent in deriving meaning from words written on paper. However, by leaving the physical confines of the Academy and going to those spaces in which history was made, we provide our cadets with the opportunity to derive new meaning and understanding of the landscapes of history. By standing in the remains of World War I trenches in France, peering across a sandy stretch of Omaha Beach, or poring through documents signed by a former Presidents, we present our cadets with a unique opportunity to see history from a new perspective, one with a richness and dynamism that transcends the written word. Through continued engagement with the USAFA Endowment and the Association of Graduates, we it is our desire to continue to enrich the lives of USAFA History majors and present them with eye-opening opportunities that will change the way they consider the study of our nation's rich and complex heritage as we mentor them and prepare them a future as leaders of our nation's Air Force.





## Academic Year 2018/2019 Cadet Awards

**Andrews Award—Sean Harvey**

**Bong Award—Robert Mahoney**

**7th Bomb Group Award—Charles Estep**

**Rupp Award—Jacqueline Orcutt**

**Thiele Award—Robert Mahoney and Jonathan Banks**

**Air Force Historical Foundational Award—Raymond Metzger**

## USAFA Endowment Accepts Gifts for DFH

The United States Air Force Academy Endowment is a foundation "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.

If you're interested in learning more about the USAFA Endowment, visit their home page at

<http://www.usafa.org/UE>

Or write them at

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