



## **The Dennis P. Rando Cadet Humanitarian Fund**

The Rando Fund has been serving USAFA since 1996 and now has two missions, sustained solely by private donations:

- Cadet Honor Guard – when a current cadet passes away, six cadets may serve as USAFA's official cadet honor guard delegation to attend the funeral service. Enabling these cadets to participate in a fellow cadet's funeral accomplishes two things: It helps cadets during an emotional time to say a final good-bye to their close friend, and comforts the family involved when they see and meet a contingent of cadets honoring their son or daughter. The cadets also serve as the representative of all other cadets and cadet families at the hometown services. The honor guard cadets are reimbursed for travel expenses.
- Cadet humanitarian travel – the Rando Fund supports cadets if they must travel home to attend the funeral services for, or the critical illness of, a family member (defined as: parent, step-parent, sibling, grandparent, or legal guardian). Travel reimbursement is based on financial need, as determined and recommended by the cadet's AOC/AMT, or the Commandant's Office. Financial need is defined as the inability for the cadet and his/her family to provide for the cost of the cadet's travel expenses due to family financial hardship. As with the USAFA honor guard, cadets are not asked to repay the Rando Fund.

In 1996 C1C Dennis Rando perished in a USAFA training flight, along with his instructor pilot (one of three accidents caused by faulty design of a since-scrapped aircraft) and the cadet honor guard who went to his Boston funeral paid their own way. When the USAFA Parents' Association of Eastern Massachusetts learned of this, they chipped in to reimburse the cadets. This selfless gesture became the origins of the Fund, named in Cadet Rando's memory. Parents' Clubs around the country have joined in supporting this cause, as well as generous individuals. The Academy fully endorses the Rando Fund, as USAFA funding is unavailable for such purposes.

From 2000 through 2022, the late Jack Bernazzani P'03 led the Rando Fund. He oversaw the 2012 transition from a separate non-profit to engaging the Air Force Academy Foundation to handle all aspects of the Fund's administration. This enables the Fund to dedicate 100% of every donation to fund its missions in support of the cadets. The Rando Fund remains viable and can only continue to support these missions as a result of the generous donations that you and/or your parents' associations contribute.

In 2023-24 the Fund helped 29 cadets in the amount of \$23,248, far exceeding donations during that time. To replenish the Fund balance we invite tax-deductible donations. For a gift using a credit card, go to the Foundation's Rando Fund link: [www.randofund.org](http://www.randofund.org) You may also send a check made payable to: "Air Force Academy Foundation" with "Rando Fund" printed on the check memo line (please also tell us of your or your organization's name and address, for acknowledgment reasons). Thank you for your consideration.

Air Force Academy Foundation  
3116 Academy Drive  
USAF Academy, CO 80840-4475

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A long-range goal of the Rando Fund is to acquire enough gifts over time so the Fund can be endowed. This will ensure a solid financial base, allowing the Rando Fund to continue serving the Air Force Academy in perpetuity. A key method of creating an endowed Rando Fund is for individual benefactors to include the Fund as the recipient of future legacy gifts. This can be achieved through charitable bequests in a Will or trust, or naming the Rando Fund as a remainder beneficiary of a retirement, bank or brokerage account. For more information, members of your club may contact:

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Thank you. The Rando Fund is only able to provide this important humanitarian support through the generous donations from Parents' Clubs and individuals. We are very grateful for your gifts.

A letter received from the parents of a fallen cadet:

**Subject: Value of the Rando Fund? - priceless - please read**



Like many of you, shortly after we boarded the USAFA rollercoaster, we began to hear about the Rando Fund. It rang a bell only because at our first meeting with the Central FL Parent's Club, the Rando Fund was a line item on the budget. We didn't really know or understand what it was. When we did find out about it, our thoughts were basically, "it's nice they have that", and not much more. We bought our raffle tickets the first year and didn't give it another thought. We later heard how the Rando Fund had helped a local cadet get home to her family after their home was severely damaged in the Hurricanes of 2004...6 weeks, 3 hurricanes directly over their small town. Again, we thought "glad that was in place to help them". [That] year we bought our raffle tickets, and I actually won a quilt!

...we never in a million years thought there would ever be a reason for our family to benefit from the Rando Fund.

I can't say enough good things about the Rando Fund. With Lindsay's death over the Christmas holidays when travel is at its peak and airlines jack up the rates, we were surprised at the number of cadets who were able to come to Lindsay's service here in FL.

It was later that we learned the Rando Fund had helped. Even over the holidays, when a lot of USAFA was shut down, phone calls were made and the Chaplains helped out. I am not sure of the details of the "how", just that I know of at least two of her closest friends that were able to come because of the Rando Fund.

I can't begin to explain what it meant to have the people she was closest to the last few months of her life, there with us at the worst possible moments in ours. We cried, we laughed, we heard great stories....all courtesy of the Rando Fund.

Terri & Ross Brown  
Rockledge, FL

**Note:** C2C Lindsay Brown died in a December 2007 Florida automobile accident, caused by a drunken driver.