



Dennis Rando, Class of 1997

The Dennis P. Rando Cadet Humanitarian Fund

**Helping Cadets At A Difficult Time:
Cadet Funeral Services or Family Emergencies**

A Compassionate Mission Since 1997 - The Rando Fund, supported solely by private donations, has a dual purpose. its primary role enables a Cadet Honor Guard representing the Academy to travel to the funeral service of a fallen cadet. The Rando Fund is also a secondary resource for cadets' travel for certain family member's funeral or sudden, serious illness.

The Rando Fund originated from tragic circumstances surrounding the mid 1990s passing of several USAFA cadets and their Instructor Pilots in flight training accidents. One of those cadets was C1C Dennis P. Rando of East Bridgewater, Massachusetts. At his funeral, it was learned that the Cadet Honor Guard who traveled to his funeral did so at the cadets' own expense. The Eastern Massachusetts Parents' Club sought donations to help reimburse cadets for their travel.

Response to the club's request exceeded the amount needed and in 1997 the club formed the Dennis P. Rando Cadet Humanitarian Fund to help in similar situations. As additional Parents' Clubs and individual donors stepped forward to provide support, the Rando Fund was able to add its secondary mission of offering need based financial assistance to cadets who do not have the resources to travel home for family emergencies.

When the volunteer board running the Rando Fund realized they needed professional management they turned to the Air Force Academy Foundation. Since 2012 the Foundation handles all administrative functions of the Rando Fund. Donations are eligible for a charitable tax deduction, and the Foundation dedicates 100 percent of the gifts to the Fund . An effort is underway to endow the Fund so it becomes self-sustaining, enabling it to fulfil its compassionate mission in perpetuity.

Contact

To learn more about the Rando Fund, contact the Air Force Academy Foundation's Office of Gift Planning at legacy.org, or through randofund.org

How to Make a Donation

To make a contribution go to: randofund.org.

An email received from USAFA to the Air Force Academy Foundation:

Thank you for all your help with coordinating the travel, lodging, and transportation arrangements for our cadets! We are so grateful that we were able to send them to Texas to honor and pay respects to our fallen teammate, Cadet Koonce, and her family... we wouldn't have been able to do that without your support. Please pass on our thanks and appreciation to the Rando Fund donors.

Very Respectfully,

WILLIAM J GLOJEK, Lt Col, USAF
Deputy Commander, Group 4
United States Air Force Academy

Note: C4C Avery Koonce passed away in September 2024

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 only 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, Florida

Note: C3C Lindsay Brown died in a December 2007 Florida automobile accident, caused by a drunken driver.