

USAF HERITAGE OF AMERICA BAND

LINEAGE

STATIONS

Langley AFB VA

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

Unknown 1941-1943

Maj James R. Berry, 1943

WOJG Robert B. Kay, 1943-1945

CWO Glynn A. Beckham, 1945

WOJG Wilbur H. Leadbitter, 1945-1946

Cpt Robert M. Bussel, 1946

1Lt Gordon W. Johnson, 1946

Cpt George B. Schold, Jr., 1946-1947

CWO Elmer Reade, 1947-1950

CWO Clyde C. Owens, 1950-1951

1Lt David H. Peery, 1951-1952

1Lt Gilbert W. Shrauger, 1952

1Lt Henry O. Sellers, Jr., 1952

CWO Adam B. Schaeffer, Jr., 1952-1954

Maj Walter M. Halsey (Acting), 1954-1955

Maj Robert W. Libell (Acting), 1955-1956

1Lt Arnald D. Gabriel, 1956-1959

CWO Eldridge G. Bunton, Jr., 1959-1960

CWO Eugene A. Dieter, 1960

Cpt Carl W. Costebbader, 1960-1964

CWO Eugene A. Dieter, 1964-1965

CWO Julius Sanger, 1965-1967

Maj Richard E. Thurston, 1967-1969

Cpt Lewis W. Stone (Acting), 1969

Maj Edward D'Alfonso, 1969-1974

Cpt Ron Carl, 1974-1978

Cpt David W. Rackley, 1978-1981

Cpt Richard A. Shelton, 1981-1984
Cpt Lowell E. Graham, 1984-1995
Cpt Larry H. Lang, 1995-2004
LTC Doug C. Monroe, 2004-Present

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The United States Air Force Heritage of America Band has a rich history of inspiring hearts and minds, building and sustaining American patriotism, and enhancing esprit de corps in the United States Air Force. It was one of the original Army Air Corps bands, created by order of the Secretary of War on October 1, 1941 and assigned to Barksdale Field, Louisiana. In June 1946, after a short stay at Brooks Field, Texas, the band arrived at Langley Air Force Base, Virginia, its current home.

For over half a century, it has represented the nation and the Air Force with musical and military distinction to the citizens of the Mid-Atlantic in live concerts, to the nation in televised events such as The Today show and the DESERT STORM National Victory Parade, to a worldwide audience through the Web and internationally-distributed video and compact disc recordings, and to heads of state such as the Queen of England, the President of France, the Shah of Iran, and several U.S. presidents.

The band's 45 men and women are assigned to two primary ensembles: the USAF Heritage of America Band (which doubles in concert and ceremonial roles) and the Blue Aces (a popular music ensemble). The concert band breaks down into seven touring ensembles: the Rhythm in Blue Jazz Ensemble (which also fields the Heritage of America Dixie Players), the Heritage Brass Quintet, the Langley Winds woodwind quintet, the American Clarinet Quartet, Heritage Aire Celtic ensemble, Sonic Boom percussion ensemble, and the Cirrus Trombone Quartet. Each year, the band's ensembles travel more than 30,000 miles to perform 340 concerts for a half million listeners across a seven-state region from Pennsylvania to South Carolina.

The USAF Heritage of America Band's exceptional musicianship has earned international critical acclaim and numerous honors: eight Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards, five Air Force Organizational Excellence Awards.

The U.S. Air Force Heritage of America Band plays approximately 25 concerts a year in venues from Pennsylvania to South Carolina, playing a variety of jazz, classical and patriotic music to an audience of retirees, children and families alike. Their mission is to reach out to communities and tell the Air Force story through the use of wind, brass and percussion instruments. Bridging the gap between the military and the public is a high priority, said the band members and something they try to accomplish with each bang of a drum or toot of the horn. During an eight-concert trip through North Carolina, the band touched crowds from Greensboro to Hickory and several points in between. "We have such a good time each performance," said Master Sgt. David Dell, an 18-year trumpeter for the Air Force. "We have a lot of folks who are excited to tell us how much they love the show, but also a lot of people tell us their story of when they were in the military." With a large population of military retirees dwelling in the central part of the state, during their performances here the band gave audience members a chance to remember the patriotic feeling of serving their country. "It fills me with great pride to come out and see members of the Air Force perform like this," said George East, a retired Air Force senior master sergeant from Stoneville, N.C. "This is great for these guys to go out on tour and entertain the public. I come out every year when they're in the area and it gives people a good chance to interact with members of the Air Force." The recent tour continued through Veteran's Day, and added an additional level of pride from military retirees, who stood and sang proudly during the band's rendition of the Armed Forces Medley. "Hearing the Air Force song brought back such great memories and made my spine tingle," East said. "I'm proud of every veteran and enjoyed waving my hat during the Air Force song." The majority of venues the band plays are miles from the nearest military installation and for many in the audience, the Airmen on stage are the only interaction they have with service members. Many bandsmen say they take great pride in being the face of the Air Force, bridging the gap between service members and the community and uphold the highest standards when performing. "We take on the persona of the entire military," Bell said when referring to those unfamiliar with the military. "It's important for us to have the best possible product out there. From the moment we step on stage, we conduct ourselves professionally. If we perform with excellence, the audience will tell people, 'if the band can be this great, then the Airmen at others bases must be incredible.'" Whether their audience is a crowd of five or 5,000, the members of the Heritage of America band said they hit every note with a sense of pride and worth knowing the musical message they deliver touches many different people, in many different ways. 2012

Air Force Order of Battle
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Sources

