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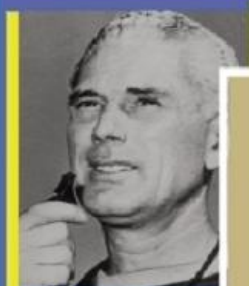
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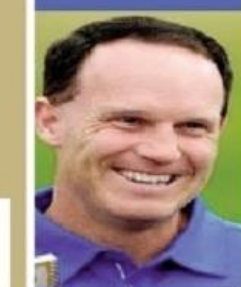
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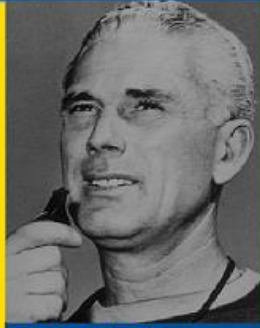
Great Players  
*in*  
***Air Force***  
***Football***

by  
**BRIAN KELLY**





**1. Robert V. Whitlow**



**2. Buck Shaw**



**3. Ben Martin**



**6. Fisher DeBerry**



**4. Bill Parcels**



**5. Ken Hatfield**



**7. Troy Calhoun**

**The United States Army Air Corps (USAAC) was the statutory forerunner of the United States Air Force. Renamed from the Air Service on 2 July 1926, it was part of the United States Army and the immediate predecessor of the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF), established on June 20, 1941.**

# Great Players

In

# Air Force Football

From the first players in Air Force football all the way to Coach Calhoun's latest team

This book is written for those of us who love the US Air Force Academy; the Air Force's Falcons Football Team, and the great players who played the game. You'll like all the stories from the players from the time of the Academy's founding on April 1, 1954 by the Secretary of the Air Force, Harold E Talbott. It was just under 65 years ago.

You will learn that like no other football team, the US Air Force Falcons are fierce and passionate competitors. From the stadium to the classroom to the research lab, the US Air Force Falcons always play to win.

You will learn that Air Force's first official football game was in 1955 long after American football had been completely defined. There was no Chad Hennings, (1987), or Carlton McDonald (1992) in those days.

From the first players onward, the book moves you one great Air Force football season at a time through the immortal players finding victory after victory. The history of their exploits in Air Force Football as told here is simply just fascinating.

In this book, we look at every season and we take the reader through great chapters about all the Air Force teams with great stories and the accounts of all 64 seasons worth of great Air Force players and coaches.

This book is your finest source for a great read on your favorite players in your favorite service academy college football team (Air Force's Falcons). We capture the action and all the memorable players in Air Force football and there are many of them. This book is for your reading pleasure, but it also serve as a reference tool for you when you want to learn about a well-known great player in Air Force Falcon football history.

If you are an Air Force Football fan. you will not want to put this book down.

## Brian Kelly



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**Title: Great Players in Air Force Football**

Editor: Brian P. Kelly  
Author Brian W. Kelly

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# Air Force Football Seasons by Year/Coach.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>Falcons Coach</u>	<u>Record</u>	<u>Conference Record</u>
1955	Robert V. Whitlow	4-4-0	
1956	Buck Shaw	6-2-1	
1957	Buck Shaw	3-6-1	
1958	Ben Martin	9-0-2	
1959	Ben Martin	5-4-1	
1960	Ben Martin	4-6	
1961	Ben Martin	3-7	
1962	Ben Martin	5-5	
1963	Ben Martin	7-4	
1964	Ben Martin	4-5-1	
1965	Ben Martin	3-6-1	
1966	Ben Martin	4-6	
1967	Ben Martin	2-6-2	
1968	Ben Martin	7-3	
1969	Ben Martin	6-4	
1970	Ben Martin	9-3	
1971	Ben Martin	6-4	
1972	Ben Martin	6-4	
1973	Ben Martin	6-4	
1974	Ben Martin	2-9	
1975	Ben Martin	2-8-1	
1976	Ben Martin	4-7	
1977	Ben Martin	2-8-1	
1978	Bill Parcels	3-8	<i>Conference</i>
1979	Ken Hatfield	2-9	<i>Record</i>
1980	Ken Hatfield	2-9-1	1-3
1981	Ken Hatfield	4-7	2-3
1982	Ken Hatfield	8-5	4-3
1983	Ken Hatfield	10-2	5-2
1984	Fisher DeBerry	8-4	4-3
1985	Fisher DeBerry	12-1	7-1
1986	Fisher DeBerry	6-5	5-2
1987	Fisher DeBerry	9-4	6-2
1988	Fisher DeBerry	5-7	3-5
1989	Fisher DeBerry	8-4-1	5-1-1
1990	Fisher DeBerry	7-5	3-4
1991	Fisher DeBerry	10-3	6-2
1992	Fisher DeBerry	7-5	4-4
1993	Fisher DeBerry	4-8	1-7
1994	Fisher DeBerry	8-4	6-2
1995	Fisher DeBerry	8-5	6-2
1996	Fisher DeBerry	6-5	5-3

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>Falcons Coach</u>	<u>Record</u>	<u>Conference Record</u>
1997	Fisher DeBerry	10-3	6-2
1998	Fisher DeBerry	12-1	7-1
1999	Fisher DeBerry	6-5	2-5
2000	Fisher DeBerry	9-3	5-2
2001	Fisher DeBerry	6-6	3-4
2002	Fisher DeBerry	8-5	4-3
2003	Fisher DeBerry	7-5	3-4
2004	Fisher DeBerry	5-6	3-4
2005	Fisher DeBerry	4-7	3-5
2006	Fisher DeBerry	4-8	3-4
2007	Troy Calhoun	9-4	6-2
2008	Troy Calhoun	8-5	5-3
2009	Troy Calhoun	8-5	5-3
2010	Troy Calhoun	9-4	5-3
2011	Troy Calhoun	7-6	3-4
2012	Troy Calhoun	6-7	5-3
2013	Troy Calhoun	2-10	0-8
2014	Troy Calhoun	10-3	5-3
2015	Troy Calhoun	8-6	6-2
2016	Troy Calhoun	10-3	5-3
2017	Troy Calhoun	5-7	4-4
2018	Troy Calhoun	5-7	3-5

**Air Force played originally as an independent Team.** In 1980, the team formally joined the Western Athletic Conference. In 1999, Air Force Moved to the Mountain West Conference.

**Record (W-L-T):** 384-325-12

**Conferences:** MWC, WAC, Ind

**Conf. Championships:** 3

**Bowl Record:** 26 Bowls, 12-13-1, .481 W-L%

**Total Games** 1,323

Seasons 62

**Total Wins** 384

**Total Losses** 325

**Total Ties** 12 \* Prior to Overtime Rules

**Stats from** 1967 through August 2019







# Acknowledgments:

I appreciate all the help that I received in putting this book together, along with the 193 other books from the past.

My printed acknowledgments were once so large that book readers needed to navigate too many pages to get to page one of the text. To permit me more flexibility, I put my acknowledgment list online at [www.letsGOPublish.com](http://www.letsGOPublish.com). The list of acknowledgments continues to grow. Believe it or not, it once cost about a dollar more to print each book.

Thank you all on the big list in the sky and God bless you all for your help.

Please check out [www.letsGOPublish.com](http://www.letsGOPublish.com) to read the latest version of my heartfelt acknowledgments updated for this book. Thank you all!

In this book, I received some extra special help from many avid football friends including Dennis Grimes, Gerry Rodski, Wily Ky Eyely, Angel Brent Evans, Angel Irene McKeown Kelly, Angel Edward Joseph Kelly Sr., Angel Edward Joseph Kelly Jr., Ann Flannery, Angel James Flannery Sr., Mary Daniels, Bill Daniels, Robert Garry Daniels, Angel Sarah Janice Daniels, Angel Punkie Daniels, Joe Kelly and Diane Kelly. Two other recent angels, always there to help are Jim Faller and Teddy O'Door .



## References

I learned how to write creatively in Grade School at St. Boniface. I even enjoyed reading some of my own stuff as a toddler.

At Meyers High School and King's College and Wilkes-University, I learned how to research, write bibliographies and footnote every non-original thought I might have ever had. I learned to hate *ibid*, and *op. cit.*, and I hated assuring that I had all citations written down in the proper sequence. Having to pay attention to such details took my desire to write creatively and diminished it with busy work.

As a highly published author, I know it is necessary for the world to stop plagiarism so authors and publishers can get paid properly, but for an honest writer, it sure is annoying. I wrote many proposals while with IBM and whenever I needed to cite something, I cited it in place, because my readers, IT Managers, could care less about tracing the vagaries of citations and their varied formats.

I always hated to use stilted footnotes, or produce a lengthy, perfectly formatted bibliography. I bet most bibliographies are flawed because even the experts on such drivel do not like the tedium.

I wrote 193 books before this book and several hundred articles published by many magazines and newspapers and I only cite when an idea is not mine or when I am quoting, and again, I choose to cite in place, and the reader does not have to trace strange numbers through strange footnotes and back to bibliography elements that may not be readily accessible or available. Academicians knowing all the rules of citation are not my audience. In this book, if you are a lover of Air Force football, you are my intended group of readers

Yet, I would be kidding you, if in a book about the Great Players in Air Force Football, I tried to bluff my way into trying to make you think that I knew everything before I began to write anything in this book. I spent as much time researching as writing. I might even call myself an expert of sorts now about the Air Force Falcons.

This team literally is America's team. Despite it being the third Service Academy to play College football, everybody in America has at one time watched and enjoyed Air Force football, especially when Air Force is having winning seasons, and more especially when they beat up on Army, Navy, and Notre Dame.

Without any pain on your part you can read this book from cover to cover to enjoy the stories about the many *Great Players in Air Force Football*.

It took me about two months to write this book. If I were to have made sure that a thought of mine was not a thought somebody else ever had, this book never would have been completed or the citations pages would more than likely exceed the prose. Everybody takes credit for everything in sports writing—at least that's what I have found.

I used Media Guide season summaries and recaps from whatever source I could to get the scores of all the games. I verified facts when possible. There is little opinion where facts are presented. There are many web sites that have great information and facts. Ironically most internet stories are the same exact stories. Who's got the original? While I was writing the book, I wrote down a bunch of Internet references and at one time, I listed them right here in this section. They were the least read pages. No more. Unless I am citing a reference in a section of the book, you will not see the URL.

I have no favorite source for information to put in my books. However, I continually hunt for articles written by students to amplify the text I present.

While I was writing this book, because I was not sure that my citations within the text would be enough, and I was not producing a bibliography, I copied URLs into some of the book text in those cases in which I had read articles or had downloaded material and had brought articles or pieces of articles into this book. Hopefully, this will satisfy any request for additional citations. If there is anything, which needs a specific citation, I would be pleased to change the text. Just contact me. Your stuff is your stuff.

Many of the facts in this book are also put forth in the Football Media Guides, freely available on the Internet. Our thanks for the use of this material for the accurate production of this book. This, however, is a unique book as you will find. It is not a copy of anything.

This book is a great source about Air Force football where you can find a ton of information about your favorite Air Force team.

Enjoy

# Preface:

This book is all about the great players who donned an azure and yellow uniform over the years, representing the Air Force Academy in Annapolis MD. Whether the team was playing as the Air Force, AFA, or the Falcons, it never seemed to matter to the fans or the players. We have the football history right as we begin this book.

In addition to the Falcons nickname, the Air Force also has a real live mascot. Aurora is the Air Force Academy's official and oldest mascot. On the school's falconry page, the bird is described as a white phase gyrfalcon, which is a "falcon species that is extremely rare in the wild and whose beauty will take your breath away."



Air Force Falcon

The Falcon creates quite a stir at games and is seen as a source of luck for the Air Force Falcons. In an incident surrounding last season's Army-Air Force game, attempting to change the luck of the AFA, a few West Pointers snatched the beautiful falcon and, though not intentional, created some serious injuries. West Point Officials took the matter quite seriously.

"The U.S. Military Academy sincerely apologizes for an incident involving U.S.M.A. cadets and the Air Force Academy Falcons," West Point said in a statement on its website. "One of the birds was

injured and the matter is currently under investigation. We are taking this situation very seriously.”

Sam Dollar, the Air Force’s falconry team adviser, told The New York Times that two West Point cadets took Aurora, the team’s official mascot, and Oblio, a younger Peregrine falcon, threw sweaters over them and put them into dog crates. They surrendered the birds Saturday morning and Aurora’s wings were bloodied, possibly because the bird thrashed inside the crate.



Aurora in better days

Everybody is hoping for a full-recovery. So far, so good. The 22-year-old bird named Aurora “was able to fly around in her pen” recently said Air Force Academy spokesperson Lt. Col. Tracy A. Bunko. In the 2018 Army v Air Force contest, the Army prevailed by a nip and tuck score of L (14-17) in a tough match.

Along the way to today’s Air Force Squad, we study the founding of Naval Academy in Colorado Springs, CO. Then we look at some preliminaries before Air Force football officially began, and then we delve right into the storied but young Air Force Football Program--its struggles; its greatness; and its long-lasting impact on American life. This takes us to the football careers of many great college players from the Air



Force as the 64 teams of great players engaged tough competition over the years.

Air Force has no National Championships yet to its credit, but it has been close a number of times.

Supporters who love Air Force Football as played by the US Air Force Academy will read this book and get an immediate burst of emotions such as warmth and love for their favorite team. You will love this book because it has it all. We cannot capture all the great players, but we do our best in finding them and describing them with whichever season in which they may have played . Go Sir Force!

This book walks you through the whole Air Force football journey. We examine players, and successes from the early teams to today. This period began in 1955 against Denver Colorado W(34-18).

The Falcons did not have an official stadium during the 1955 season and remained without one until the 1962 season when Falcon Stadium opened. They were led by first year head coach Robert V. Whitlow and played the first season for the Air Force falcons football program. The Air Force Falcons were independent and played only freshmen teams of other schools. Air Force finished with a record of 4-4.

Later the team joined football conferences to better highlight the team and make the seasons better. From 1955 to 1979, Air Force operated as an independent and then in 1980, they joined the Western Athletic Conference (1980-1998). In 1999, they signed up to play ball in the Mountain West Conference (1999-present)

At the front of this book, you saw the seven great Air Force coaches listed within the football seasons in which they coached--from the 1955 season #1 to season 64. Within those 64 seasons, at about 50 players per team, Air Force graduated more than 3000 great football players over those seasons.

In the season listings, we examine them chronologically, and especially in the early years, we make a special mention of the captain (s) as they were most often the best players on the teams. Then there are about 40 special tributes to special players who were hall-of-famers or all-Americans that are sprinkled within the seasons in which the games were played. I sure hope you enjoy this unique approach.

Before Troy Calhoun put together his great recent seasons, Fisher DeBerry literally put Air Force football on the map. These coaches and others produced some powerful teams with powerful players over the years. Air Force is now the top service academy on terms of victories in the yearly Commander in Chief competition. The Falcons consider those bragging rights as much more important than money.

## **Air Force is a relatively new football power**

Sixty-four going on sixty-five is not a very long time to be playing football. Yet, in its short time, Air Force has a history of being recognized as one of the finest teams in the nation. For many years, the teams were ready to win a national championship or at least, almost, at the drop of the next hat but the team has not gotten there as of yet. Nonetheless, the Falcons are still tough, and nobody can deny that. Nobody, even the vaunted ND Fighting Irish pushes Air Force around consistently.

You will be impressed as you look at the highlights of the games and the players as so many contributed to the many great Falcon football seasons. There's a lot of great reading in this book for sure.

With the current coach who has brought in great teams since taking the reins in 2007, and the most recent great players, would it not be wonderful for Air Force, the major defender of our Nation in the air, to bring home a nice football championship sometime soon

Your author would like you to know that when football season closes in the second week of January each year, there is now a great football item—this book—that is available all 52 weeks of the year and in fact all 365 days each year. It does not rely on the stadium gates being open for you to get a great dose of Air Force Football. Just begin reading right here.

You are going to love this book because it is the perfect read for anybody who loves the Air Force Academy's storied football program and wants to know more about the most revered athletes to have competed in one of the finest football programs of all time.

Few sports books are a must-read but Brian Kelly's [Great Players in Air Force Football](#) will quickly appear at the top of Americas most enjoyable must-read books about sports. Enjoy!

## Who is Brian W. Kelly?

Brian W. Kelly is one of the leading authors in America with this, his 193<sup>rd</sup> published book. Brian is an outspoken and eloquent expert on a variety of topics, and he has also written several hundred articles on topics of interest to Americans.

Most of his early works involved high technology. Later, Brian wrote a number of patriotic books and most recently he has been writing human interest books such as The Wine Diet and Thank you, IBM. His books are always well received.

Brian's books are highlighted at [www.letsGOPublish.com](http://www.letsGOPublish.com). Quantities from 20 to 1000 of any book can be made available from [www.letsGOPublish.com](http://www.letsGOPublish.com). You will see most of Brian's works by taking the following link [www.amazon.com/author/brianwkelly](http://www.amazon.com/author/brianwkelly). At this site, you can buy one book if you choose or a million, more or less. We'll print all you need.

The Best!

Sincerely,

Brian W. Kelly, Author  
Brian P. Kelly, Editor in Chief  
I am Brian Kelly's eldest son.



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# About the Author



Brian Kelly retired as an Assistant Professor in the Business Information Technology (BIT) Program at Marywood University, where he also served as the IBM i and Midrange Systems Technical Advisor to the IT Faculty. Kelly designed, developed, and taught many college and professional courses. He continues as a contributing technical editor to a number of technical industry magazines, including "The Four Hundred" and "Four Hundred Guru," published by IT Jungle.

Kelly is a former IBM Senior Systems Engineer. His specialty was problem solving for customers as well as implementing advanced operating systems and software on his client's machines. Brian was a certified Army Instructor before retiring. He is the author of 193 books and hundreds of magazine articles. He has been a frequent speaker at technical conferences throughout the United States.

Brian was a candidate for the US Congress from Pennsylvania in 2010 and he ran for Mayor in his home town in 2015. He loves Air Force Football and can't wait to see the Falcons have another great season in 2019 with another Commander-in-Chief's Trophy. God bless the Air Force Falcons!!!





# Chapter 1 Introduction to Air Force Football

## Air Force's 65<sup>th</sup> Year in 2019!



Falcons' head coach Troy Calhoun leads Air Force on to the field at Falcon Stadium, Sept. 5, 2015 to take on the Morgan State. Air Force devastated the Bears 63-7.

This book is about a great group of players who formed the crux of the Air Force football teams since 1955. The Air Force Falcons football team represents the United States Air Force Academy in college football. Air Force is currently a Division I Mountain West Conference member of the NCAA. The Falcons play their home games in Falcon Stadium. This is an outdoor football stadium in the western United States, located on the campus of the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. It has a current seating capacity of 46,692 though there are often more packed inside to see the games.

Everybody who knows Air Force knows the great Fisher DeBerry who coached the Air Force Squad before hanging up his whistle in 2006.

Another great coach followed DeBerry. The Air Force Falcons are currently coached by Troy Calhoun, who is in his 13<sup>th</sup> season as head coach. Air Force has never won a national championship, but they have come as close as you can twice and were ranked in the AP poll six times. Considering that of the 130 NCAA Division I teams, they have the sixth youngest program, Air Force has a lot of years to get their championships.

Officially the Air Force recognize a relatively short but great football history that dates back to 1955 when they played their first game. If you are from Army or Navy, you have to be kind. Such rivals know that Air Force born great and the Academy gets greater as the program prospered under a number of fine coaches.

Coach: Troy Calhoun's record after 2017 was (82-60) in 11 seasons at Air Force. In 2018, the Falcons were 5-7 bringing Calhoun's record to 87-67. In 2017, they tied for 4th in Mountain Division and they lost to both Army and Navy. In 2018, they came back and whipped Navy but lost by three points to Army. We know how important the service games are.

In 2017 QB Arion Worthman threw for 1,115 yards and 10 TDs and ran for 831 yards and 13 TDs last season), WR Ronald Cleveland claimed 418 yards and 3 TDs rushing, 261 yards and 2 TDs receiving, , RB Nolan Eriksen (averaged 5.7 yards a carry on 40 attempts in 2018), LB Kyle Floyd (Falcons' No. 4 tackler last year with 60), S James Jones (No. 5 tackler with 52).

Despite a few great games, both 2017 and 2018 were disappointing for Air Force, but the Falcons never give up.

We begin the rest of the Air Force football story in Chapter 2 with the founding of US Air Force Academy in April 1954 in Colorado. and we continue in subsequent chapters, right into the founding of the full Air Force football program in 1955.

In defining the format of the book, we chose to use a timetable that is based on a historical chronology. Within this framework, we discuss the great moments in Air Force football history, and there are many great moments. No book can claim to be able to capture them all, as it would be a never-ending story, but we sure do try.





**GAMEDAY AT FALCON STADIUM**



**At the base of the Rampart Range of the Rocky Mountains, game day at Falcon Stadium is truly a remarkable experience.**

**Pre-game fly-bys, the march-on, the Drum and Bugle Corps and the spirited cadet section, make Falcon Stadium the place to be on Game Day**





## Air Force Game Pageantry tops them all

Even if it is not an Air Force game



An A-10 Thunderbolt II does a show of force maneuver after locating a simulated downed pilot during Red Flag-Alaska 13-3, Aug. 22, 2013, at Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska. Two A-10s defended the pilot's position until members of the 210th Rescue Squadron could rescue him. The A-10 is assigned to the 163rd Fighter Squadron, Indiana Air National Guard, Fort Wayne, Ind. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Shawn Nickel)

No matter how great an Army or Navy or Notre Dame pep rally may be, there is nothing that compares with the tools the US Air Force has in its arsenal. The mission of the Falcons is to defend the country by air. And, of course when the Air Force decides to strut its stuff, no school and in fact, no nation in the world can compare—even another US service academy.

An example was this year's (2018) Notre Dame game when four U.S. Air Force A-10 Thunderbolts will perform a flyover before Vanderbilt and Notre Dame kick off on Saturday. The Falcons actually can take credit when the flyover is not for a Falcons game.

The following “Blacksnakes” from the 163rd Fighter Squadron performed the flyover: Lt. Col. Brian “Mad Dawg” Frazier, Maj. Rod “JOBU” Metzler, Lt. Col. Kurt “Kid” Martin and Maj. Travis “Spades” Walton. It was great.



Split second timing is the only way. The flyover occurred at 2:28 p.m. as the Band of the Fighting Irish concluded the National Anthem. Fans were able to watch the flyover live on Countdown to Kickoff, which aired from 1:30-2:30 p.m. Try to beat a flyover.

## HEAD COACH TROY CALHOUN



The purpose of the United States Air Force Academy is to develop young people of strong character who graduate and serve as outstanding leaders on active duty and beyond. It's a purpose Troy Calhoun thoroughly respects and realizes is necessary for our country. Calhoun left the Houston Texas of the NFL as an offensive coordinator in 2007 to embrace the mission of the Air Force Academy and accomplish what was once considered nearly impossible: building a service academy program that often earns a postseason bid while playing in one of college football's best conferences. Seven of his eight years Air Force has been to a bowl under Calhoun's guidance. The coach has guided Air Force to a 59-44 career record entering his ninth season.

Air Force student-athletes must complete the nation's most demanding academic curriculum while further embedding the heart and character that are crucial for serving America. Cadets at the Academy must work through courses that require finishing over 140 semester hours. Strong character traits, to include respect, teamwork, courage, spirit, discipline, honesty and toughness, are the bedrock of the leadership qualities Air Force football players utilize while serving as officers in the United States Air Force. Calhoun and his staff have come up with a way to manage the varied demands of their players and lead them into a cohesive team that has fared quite well both on and off the field in his eight seasons as head coach.

Calhoun's players are extraordinarily successful finishing their academic and leadership responsibilities. The Air Force football team's NCAA APR (Academic Progress Report) is annually amongst the finest of the 127 schools that play at the FBS level of college football. From May 2007 through the present, Air Force Football's multi-year APR has finished above the nation's 90th percentile six of the last eight years which is more than any sport at any service academy. Air Force football's most recent Graduation Success Rate (GSR) is 93 percent. In addition to being one of the nation's best in regards to the NCAA's APR and GSR, 169 of 170 seniors (99%) who have played for Calhoun since 2007 have graduated from the United States Air Force Academy and served as officers for our nation.

Calhoun is the only coach in the history of service academy team ball sports to lead teams to a post-season bid six consecutive years. They have done this while playing very strong opponents. Calhoun's 2009 Air Force squad was the only team in the last 50 years of service academy football to play at least four ranked teams and win a bowl game in the same season. In the



100-plus year history of service academy football, Calhoun is the first coach to lead teams to at least six wins and a bowl game in each of his first six seasons.

Calhoun's 2014 team finished 10-3 overall while having all 28 seniors graduate from the Air Force Academy. Calhoun was named as a finalist for the Maxwell National Coach of the Year. The Falcons qualified for their seventh bowl game in eight years, and by winning the Famous Idaho Potato Bowl, captured their third bowl championship since 2009. Air Force defeated Army and Navy to win a record 19th Commander-in-Chief's Trophy and its third CINC bid in the last five years. The Falcons were also one of just two teams nationally to beat two 10-win teams in the regular season. The Falcons beat Boise State and in-state rival Colorado State, who each won 10-plus games. Air Force's 10-win season was the first this century for the Academy and just

the ninth in the last 100 years of service academy football. The team finished 6-0 at home for just the third time in school history. Calhoun's 2007 squad also finished 6-0 at home.

Air Force earned a bid in 2012 to the Armed Forces Bowl. Air Force won its second straight Commander-in-Chief's Trophy (then-record 18th overall) in 2011, the first back-to-back titles at the Academy since 2001-02 and earned their fifth straight bowl game in the Military Bowl. The 2010 Air Force team finished 9-4 overall and won Air Force's 17th Commander-in-Chief's Trophy championship with wins over Army and Navy. The Falcons closed the 2010 season with a victory over Georgia Tech of the ACC in the Independence Bowl. Calhoun was named Coach of the Year by the Colorado Chapter of the National Football Foundation.

The 2009 Air Force team finished 8-5 overall and concluded with a convincing 47-20 win over 25th-ranked Houston in the Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl. Air Force set 13 Academy bowl team records in the dominant victory. The team also set six school records during the 2009 season. Calhoun was named Coach of the Year by the Colorado Chapter of the National Football Foundation for his efforts.

Calhoun's 2007 and 2008 Air Force teams finished 9-4 and 8-5, respectively, and both earned bowl bids. The 2007 Falcons were the only team in Air Force history to win road games at Notre Dame, Utah and Colorado State in the same season. The five-game turnaround from 2006, in which Air Force was 4-8, was the largest in the nation that season by a first-year



Troy Calhoun enters his ninth season in 2015

## Coach Calhoun's Note to Air Force Football Fans

*To the great fans of the Air Force Falcons,*

*Welcome to the United States Air Force Academy - one of the world's finest educational and leadership institution. The purpose of the Academy is to develop young men and women of strong character to serve as outstanding leaders for our nation. The integrity, pride, and purpose of our future officers will make you quite proud.*

*Beginning with the entry of the first Academy class back in July of 1955, intercollegiate athletics continues to provide a crucial vehicle contributing to the profound leadership and valiancy Academy graduates carry forth to active duty and in their civilian lives. Air Force football has a three-pronged aim: on-field competitive spirit, instilling within our cadets lifelong resolute character traits, and preparing each team member for service and leadership to help our country.*

*Your support, through purchases of season tickets, is crucial to the future sustainability of our cadet programs. Our commitment to our friends, cadets and supporters is to provide the nation's best fan experience. It includes ease of parking, unmatched pageantry and the finest ticket value in all of college football.*

*In conclusion, if you find the qualities of honesty, passion, toughness and service appealing, then you will be proud to embrace and support the 2015 Air Force Football team.*

*Thank you in advance for your unwavering commitment to the Air Force Academy and our exciting Falcons.  
Sincerely,*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Troy Calhoun". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Coach Troy Calhoun  
Air Force Football



# Chapter 2 The Founding of the United States Air Force Academy



US Air Force Academy Campus

Our deep thanks to the military for providing this great piece of history available publicly for your edification and enjoyment.

The United States Army was flying planes and providing tactical air service for a long time before the "Air Force" came into being.

## **Air Force News** *Early Years*

On Aug. 1, 1907, the U.S. Army Signal Corps established a small Aeronautical Division to take "charge of all matters pertaining to military ballooning, air machines and all kindred subjects."

The Signal Corps began testing its first airplane at Fort Myer, Va., on Aug. 20, 1908, and on Sept. 9, Lt. Thomas E. Selfridge, flying with Orville Wright, was killed when the plane crashed. He was the first military aviation casualty. After more testing with an improved Wright

Flyer, the Army formally accepted this airplane, identified as "Airplane No. 1," on Aug. 2, 1909.



In early 1913, the Army ordered its aviators who were training in Augusta, Ga., and Palm Beach, Fla., to Texas to take part in 2d Division maneuvers. In Galveston on March 3, the Chief Signal Officer designated the assembled men and equipment the "1st Provisional Aero Squadron," with Capt. Charles DeF. Chandler as squadron commander.

The 1st Provisional Aero Squadron began flying activities a few days later. On Dec. 4, general orders re-designated the unit as the 1st Aero Squadron, effective Dec. 8, 1913. This first military unit of the U.S. Army devoted exclusively to aviation, today designated the 1st Reconnaissance Squadron, has remained continuously active since its creation. Assigned a role in the Punitive Expedition of the Mexican border in 1916, this squadron became the first air combat unit of the U.S. Army.

Meanwhile, Congress created in the Signal Corps an Aviation Section to replace the Aeronautical Division. Signed by the President, this bill became law on July 18, 1914. It directed the Aviation Section to operate and supervise "all military [U.S. Army] aircraft, including balloons and airplanes, all appliances pertaining to said craft, and signaling apparatus of any kind when installed on said craft."

The section would also train "officers and enlisted men in matters pertaining to military aviation," and thus embraced all facets of the Army's air organization and operation.

The old Aeronautical Division continued to exist but operated as the Washington office of the new section.

When World War I broke out in Europe in August 1914, the 1st Aero Squadron represented the entire tactical air strength of the U.S. Army. It counted 12 officers, 54 enlisted men and six aircraft. In December 1915 the Aviation Section consisted of 44 officers, 224 enlisted men and 23 airplanes--still a tiny force when compared to the fledgling air forces of the European powers.

But the war in Europe focused more attention on aviation.

By this time the Aviation Section consisted of the Aeronautical Division, the Signal Corps Aviation School at San Diego, the 1st Aero Squadron (then on duty with the expeditionary force in Mexico), and the 1st Company, 2d Aero Squadron, on duty in the Philippines. In October 1916, Aviation Section plans called for two dozen squadrons--seven for the Regular Army, 12 for the National Guard divisions, and five for coastal defense -- plus balloon units for the field and coast artillery.

In December 1916 the seven Regular Army squadrons either had been or were being organized. All 24 squadrons had been formed by early 1917, but the 1st Aero Squadron remained the only one fully organized and equipped. Plans for still greater expansion of the Aviation Section were incomplete when the United States entered World War I on April 6, 1917.

## **World War I**

On May 20, 1918, President Woodrow Wilson issued an executive order transferring aviation from the Signal Corps to two agencies under the Secretary of War: The Bureau of Aircraft Production, headed by Mr. John D. Ryan, and the Division of Military Aeronautics, directed by Maj. Gen. William L. Kenly.

On May 24 the War Department officially recognized these two Army agencies as the Air Service of the U.S. Army. Three months later, on Aug. 27, the President appointed Mr. Ryan Director of the Air Service and Second Assistant Secretary of War.

The dispersal of aero squadrons among various Army organizations during the war made it difficult to coordinate aerial activities, which led to the creation of higher echelon organizations. At the front, squadrons with similar functions were formed into groups, the first organized in April 1918 as I Corps Observation Group. The following month the 1st Pursuit Group was formed, and in July 1918 the American Expeditionary Forces organized its first aircraft unit higher than a group--the 1st Pursuit Wing--made up of the 2d and 3d Pursuit Groups and, later, the 1st Day Bombardment Group. In November 1918 the AEF possessed 14 groups (seven observation, five pursuit and two bombardment).

Following the armistice, demobilization of the Air Service was rapid and thorough.

At war's end the Air Service possessed 185 aero squadrons; 44 aero construction; 114 aero supply, 11 aero replacement, and 150 spruce production squadrons; 86 balloon companies; six balloon group headquarters; 15 construction companies; 55 photographic sections; and a few miscellaneous units.

By Nov. 22, 1919, all had been demobilized except one aero construction, one aero replacement, and 22 aero squadrons, 32 balloon companies, 15 photographic sections, and a few miscellaneous units. Between Nov. 11, 1918 and June 30, 1920, officer strength plummeted from 19,189 to 1,168, and enlisted strength dropped from 178,149 to 8,428.

Following World War I, the strength of the Air Service matched what Congress considered satisfactory for peacetime.

## **Between Wars**

The Army Reorganization Act of 1920 made the Air Service a combatant arm of the Army and gave the Chief of the Air Service the rank of major general and his assistant chief the rank of brigadier

general. Tactical air units in the United States were placed under the nine U.S. Army corps area commanders where they continued to be employed primarily in support of the ground forces. The Chief of the Air Service retained command of various training schools, depots and other activities exempted from Army corps control.

During most of the 1920s, the total offensive strength of the Air Service in the United States consisted of one pursuit, one attack and one bombardment group. Overseas, the Canal Zone and the Philippines each had assigned one pursuit and one bombardment squadron with two squadrons of each type stationed in the Hawaiian Islands. The Air Service focused initially on observation and pursuit aviation, with major aeronautical development efforts concentrated in the Engineering Division at McCook Field, Dayton, Ohio.

The formal training establishment took shape during the 1920s. The Air Service concentrated flying training in Texas. Technical schools for officers and enlisted men were at Chanute Field, Ill. The Air Service (later, Air Corps) Tactical School trained officers to command higher units and taught the employment of military aviation. First located at Langley Field, Va., this school moved to Maxwell Field, Ala. in 1931.

The Air Corps Act of 1926 changed the name of the Air Service to Air Corps but left unaltered its status as a combatant arm of the U.S. Army.

The act also established the Office of Assistant Secretary of War for Air. The Air Corps had at this time 919 officers and 8,725 enlisted men, and its "modern aeronautical equipment" consisted of 60 pursuit planes and 169 observation planes; total serviceable aircraft of all types numbered less than 1,000.

In August 1926 the Army established the Air Corps Training Center in San Antonio, Texas. A few weeks later, on Oct. 15, the logistical organization was placed on firmer footing with the establishment of the Materiel Division, Air Corps, at Dayton, Ohio. A year later this division moved to nearby Wright Field, thereafter the primary base for air logistics.

On March 1, 1935, the General Headquarters Air Force, which had existed in gestation since Oct. 1, 1933, became operational and assumed command and control over Air Corps tactical units. Tactical units, less some observation squadrons scattered throughout the nine Army corps areas, transferred to this initial air force.

The three GHQAF wings were located at Langley Field, Va.; Barksdale Field, La.; and March Field, Calif. The Office of the Chief of the Air Corps and GHQAF existed on the same command echelon, each reporting separately to the Army Chief of Staff. The GHQAF Commander directed tactical training and operations, while the Chief of the Air Corps maintained control over procurement, supply, training schools and doctrine development. On March 1, 1939, the Chief of the Air Corps assumed control over the GHQAF, centralizing command of the entire air arm.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt acknowledged the growing importance of airpower, recognized that the United States might be drawn into a European war. Assured of a favorable reception in the White House, the Air Corps prepared plans in October 1938 for a force of some 7,000 aircraft.

Soon afterwards, President Roosevelt asked the War Department to prepare a program for an Air Corps composed of 10,000 airplanes, of which 7,500 would be combat aircraft.

In a special message to Congress on January 12, 1939, the President formally requested this program. Congress responded on April 3, authorizing \$300 million for an Air Corps "not to exceed 6,000 serviceable airplanes."

## **World War II**

Beginning in September 1939, the German army and the German air force rapidly conquered Poland, Norway, Holland, Belgium, France and within one year had driven the British off the continent. Leaders of the Air Corps now found themselves in the novel position of receiving practically anything they requested. Plans soon called for 54 combat groups. This program was hardly underway before revised plans called for 84 combat groups equipped with 7,800 aircraft and manned by 400,000 troops by June 30, 1942. All told, U.S. Army air

forces strength in World War II would swell from 26,500 men and 2,200 aircraft in 1939 to 2,253,000 men and women and 63,715 aircraft in 1945.

Both necessity and desire thus caused a blitz of organizational changes from 1940 through 1942. On November 19, 1940, the General Headquarters Air Force was removed from the jurisdiction of the Chief of the Air Corps and given separate status under the commander of the Army Field Forces. Seven months later, these air combat forces returned to the command of air leaders as Gen. George C. Marshall, U.S. Army Chief of Staff, established the Army Air Forces on June 20, 1941, to control both the Air Corps and the Air Force Combat Command.

Early in 1941, the War Department instituted a series of actions to create a hierarchy for noncombat activities. It set up a command eventually designated Flying Training Command to direct new programs for training ground crews and technicians. The next year, the new command assumed responsibility for pilot and aircrew training. In mid-1942 the War Department established the Air Corps Ferrying Command to fly aircraft overseas for delivery to the British and other Allies. As the functions of the Ferrying Command expanded, it was re-designated as the Air Transport Command.

The War Department reorganization on March 9, 1942, created three autonomous U.S. Army Commands: Army Ground Forces, Services of Supply (later, in 1943, Army Service Forces), and Army Air Forces. This administrative reorganization did not affect the status of the Air Corps as a combatant arm of the US Army.

Before 1939 the Army's air arm was a fledgling organization; by the end of the war the Army Air Forces had become a major military organization comprised of many air forces, commands, divisions, wings, groups, and squadrons, plus an assortment of other organizations.

Rapid demobilization of forces immediately after World War II, although sharply reducing the size of the Army Air Forces, left untouched the nucleus of the postwar United States Air Force (USAF). A War Department letter of March 21, 1946 created two new commands and re-designated an existing one: Continental Air Forces

was re-designated Strategic Air Command, and the resources of what had been Continental Air Forces were divided among Strategic Air Command and the two newcomers - Air Defense Command and Tactical Air Command.

These three commands and the older Air Transport Command represented respectively the strategic, tactical, defense, and airlift missions that provided the foundation for building the postwar, independent Air Force.

### **An Independent Force**

The National Security Act of 1947 became law on July 26, 1947. It created the Department of the Air Force, headed by a Secretary of the Air Force.

Under the Department of the Air Force, the act established the United States Air Force, headed by the Chief of Staff, USAF. On Sept. 18, 1947, W. Stuart Symington became Secretary of the Air Force, and on Sept. 26, Gen. Carl A. Spaatz became the USAF's first Chief of Staff.

### **Army Air Corps**

To recap, in the first major step toward an independent Air Force, the Army Air Service was re-designated, July 2, 1926, as advocates of air power fought for a separate branch under the Department of Defense, and others fought to keep the aviation assets within the Army command structure.

During this time, the primary mission of aviators was still to support troops on the ground and aviation assets still reported to ground forces commanders and not the Air Corps. The Air Corps staff was solely responsible for overseeing procurement, maintenance, supply and training.

The Air Corps also sought to grow the ranks of aviators and aircraft but never saw this to fruition because of a lack of funding during the Great Depression.



Although the Army Air Forces took the lead from the Army Air Corps in 1941, the Army Air Corps played a combat role in the Army and was not dissolved until 1947 - with the creation of the Air Force.

## **The Naval Academy Short Story: Courtesy of USAFA.af.mil**

Taken from a work published January 18, 2012

The U.S Air Force Academy was established April 1, 1954, the culmination of an idea years in the making. Airpower leaders, long before the Air Force was a separate service, argued that they needed a school dedicated to war in the air, to train Airmen. After September 1947, when the Air Force was established as a separate service, this idea finally had the legitimacy of the new service behind it.

In 1948, seventy years ago, the Air Force appointed a board, later named the Stearns-Eisenhower Board for its chairmen, to study existing military academies and the options for an Air Force academy. Their conclusions were strongly put: The Air Force needed its own school; they additionally recommended at least 40 percent of future officers be service academy graduates.

After Congress passed a bill establishing the Air Force Academy, the secretary of the Air Force appointed a commission to recommend a location. After traveling 21,000 miles and considering hundreds of sites, the commission recommended Colorado Springs as its first choice. The secretary agreed, and the purchasing of the thousands of acres began. The state of Colorado contributed \$1 million to the purchase of the land.

On July 11, 1955, the same year construction on the Academy began in Colorado Springs, the first class of 306 men was sworn-in at a temporary site, Lowry Air Force Base in Denver. Lieutenant Gen. Hubert R. Harmon, a key figure in the development of early plans for an Academy, was recalled from retirement by President Dwight D. Eisenhower to become the first Academy superintendent.

Two years later, Maj. Gen. James Briggs took over as the Academy's second superintendent. On Aug. 29, 1958, 1,145 cadets moved to the

Academy's permanent site from Denver. Less than a year later, the Academy received academic accreditation and graduated its first class of 207 June 3, 1959. In 1964, the authorized strength of the Cadet Wing increased to 4,417. The present authorized strength is approximately 4,000.

Perhaps the most controversial event in the Academy's history was the admission of women. President Gerald R. Ford signed legislation Oct. 7, 1975, permitting women to enter the military academies. Women first entered the Air Force Academy June 28, 1976. The first-class including women graduated in 1980 and included the Academy's first woman to be superintendent, retired Lt. Gen. Michelle Johnson.

The Academy celebrated the 50th anniversary of its inception April 1, 2004. Three noteworthy events occurred in connection with the celebration: a 37-cent commemorative stamp was issued honoring the Academy with the Cadet Chapel strikingly portrayed; the Academy was declared a national historic landmark with a plaque installed on the Honor Court to mark the occasion; and Harmon was officially named as the "Father of the Air Force Academy," honoring the pivotal role he played in its planning and establishment. Further anniversaries were marked during the next four years, culminating with the 50th anniversary of the first commencement at the Academy in 2009.

The Academy provides the Air Force with a corps of officers dedicated to upholding the high standards of their profession. The Air Force in turn provides a proving ground for these officers and sent back to its Academy dedicated staff members to educate and train future leaders. Fifty years after the first class entered, the Academy has graduated more than 50,000 officers intent on serving their country.

## Chapter 3 Air Force Fields & Stadiums

### Denver University's Hilltop Stadium



The Air Force Academy had no stadium in 1955 when it commenced its football program. So, until Falcon Stadium was built on the Air Force Academy Campus, football games and other sports were played not too far away in Denver University Stadium (DU) shown above.

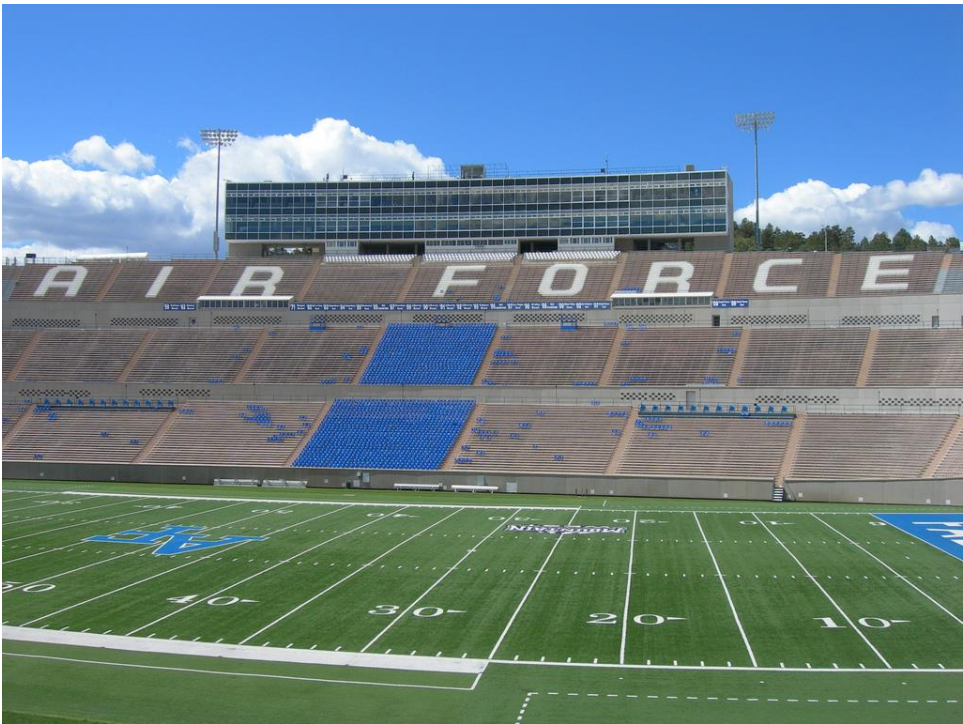
Denver University Stadium was a stadium in the western United States, on the campus of the University of Denver in Denver, Colorado. It was once known as Hilltop Stadium. Built in 1926, the crescent-shaped main grandstand design on the west sideline was based on other similar-sized stadiums from the same the time period, Brown Stadium and Cornell's Schoellkopf Field, both in the Ivy League. There were few original designs in the early years.

The Stadium hosted the DU Pioneers college football team until the program was discontinued in 1961, due to mounting deficits. The stadium had a seating capacity of 30,000 at its peak, and the natural grass field had a conventional north-south orientation at an elevation

of 5,350 feet (1,630 m) above sea level. Nearly a half century in age, it was torn down in the early 1970s. By this time, The Air Force Falcons had their own stadium on campus.

As noted, The U.S. Air Force Academy Falcons shared the stadium with DU until their Falcon Stadium opened in Colorado Springs in 1962. DU Stadium has some history of its own that you may find of interest. The professional Denver Broncos, then in the AFL, played 11 pre-season and 2 early regular season games at the DU stadium in the early and mid-1960s—after DU dropped football. The Broncos' home venue, Bears Stadium (later renamed "Mile High"), was shared with the Triple-A Denver Bears baseball club. For Air Force, it was an eternity but just seven years after its program began, the Falcons had their own modern (for the day) football stadium.

## Falcon Stadium





In recent times, newcomers to Falcon Stadium will see it as one of the premier college football stadiums in America. Falcon football veterans, on the other hand, may not even recognize their old stomping grounds. Prior to the 2006 season, FieldTurf was installed at a cost of \$750,000. The new turf covers 84,480 square feet with an additional 26,520 square feet of native grass surrounding it.

The stadium, which was built in a natural bowl, has a capacity of 46,692 and stands in the base of the Rampart Range of the Rocky Mountains.

Falcon Stadium opened on Sept. 22, 1962, when a then-overflow crowd of 41,350 saw Air Force defeat Colorado State, 24-0. AFA held a formal dedication on Oct. 20, 1962, when Air Force hosted Oregon. The Ducks won the game, 35-20.

The stadium was originally built solely for football, but lacrosse plays all of its home matches in the stadium and several non-athletic events, such as the Academy's annual graduation, are also conducted there.



# Chapter 4 Air Force: First Three Football Seasons

Coach # 1                      Robert V. Whitlow  
 Coach # 2                      Buck Shaw

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Record</u>	<u>Conf</u>	<u>Record</u>
1955	Robert V. Whitlow	4-4-0	Indep	
1956	Buck Shaw	6-2-1	Indep	
1957	Buck Shaw	3-6-1	Indep	



*(Whitlow in his P-51 which bears markings from his two aerial kills on November 26, 1944)*

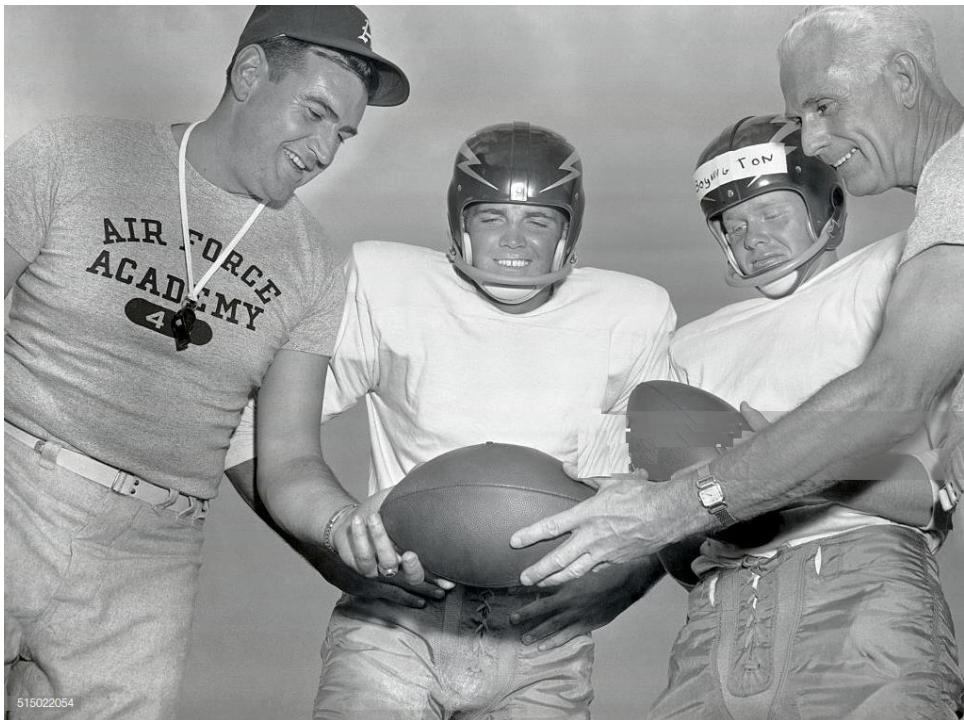
The format of the chapters in this book will be to briefly review each of the seasons and the highlights. Then, any identified special “great”



players are identified and highlighted within the last season in which they played.

Colonel Robert V. Whitlow ( picture on prior page) (November 7, 1918 – July 11, 1997) was the Air Force Academy's first football coach and their first athletic director. He was first an American military officer, and then a football coach, university athletic director, and sports club executive.

He served as the first head football coach and athletic director of the United States Air Force Academy in 1955. Whitlow had a twenty-year career in the United States Air Force, and during World War II, saw combat as both a bomber and fighter pilot. After his military service, he worked for the Chicago Cubs baseball franchise as its first "athletic director."



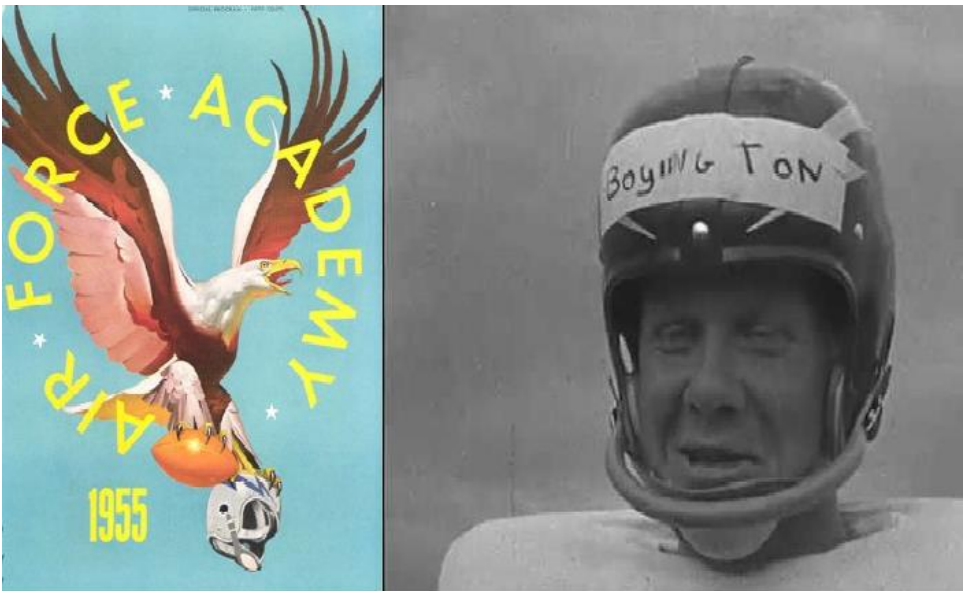
Robert Whitlaw, Eugene Vosika, Gregory Boyington, Jr., and Lawrence T. 'Buck' Shaw (Original Caption) Here comes the Air Force! Denver, Colorado: Since the Air Force has taken its place alongside the Army and Navy by having its own academy, it's only fitting that it should have a football team. The squad is located at its temporary home at Lowry Air Force base. These men for part of the power of the new team. Left to right are: Colonel Robert Whitlow, head football coach; Eugene Vosika, tackle of Bellevue, Nebraska and son of a Master Sergeant in the Strategic Air Command; Gregory Boyington, Jr., tackle of Burbank, California and the son of the World War II ace and Congressional Medal of Honor winner; and Lawrence T. 'Buck' Shaw, former coach of the San Francisco 49ers.

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The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1955 college football season. It was their first season of intercollegiate football.

The Falcons did not have an official stadium during the season and remained without one until the 1962 season when Falcon Stadium opened. They were led by first year head coach Robert V. Whitlow and played the first season for the Air Force Falcons football program.



The Falcons were independent and played only freshmen teams of other schools. Air Force finished with a record of 4-4. The Falcons a number of teams from the Southwest this year including Denver, Colorado State, Colorado, Kansas, Utah, Wyoming, New Mexico and Oklahoma's freshmen teams and finished with a record of 4-4 as an independent.

## The 1955 Football Season

All games but the November 19 encounter against the New Mexico Freshmen were played at the Denver U Field in Denver Colorado.

On Oct 8 against the Denver Freshmen, The Air Force Academy Falcons played their first game ever and grabbed their first victory when they defeated the Denver University Pioneers (Freshmen) W (34–18). They followed this with their second win in a row on Oct 15 against the Colorado State Freshmen W (W 21–13). Their first loss came by a shutout score of L (0-32) on Oct 22 when they were defeated by the Colorado Freshmen. Then on

Oct 29, the Falcons fell for the second time. Their opponent was the Kansas Freshmen and the result was a shutout loss L (0-33). That would be the lost shut out in 1955.

On Nov 5, the Utah Freshmen had just enough zip to barely beat the Falcons L (6-12). The Falcons began to win again on Nov 12, as they beat the Wyoming Freshmen W (21-13). The next outing was a nail-biter in which the Falcons prevailed on Nov 19 against the New Mexico Freshmen in a game played at Zimmerman Field, Albuquerque, NM W (7–6). The Falcons ended the year with a loss on Nov 26 against the Oklahoma Freshmen L (48–12).

Considering that many colleges in their first years of play were forced to play football clubs, Junior Colleges, and even High School teams, playing Freshmen teams of a fledgling program was not a bad idea. The Falcons did quite well, considering that many were playing football for the first time. Their 4-4 record was quite respectable for these officer cadets.

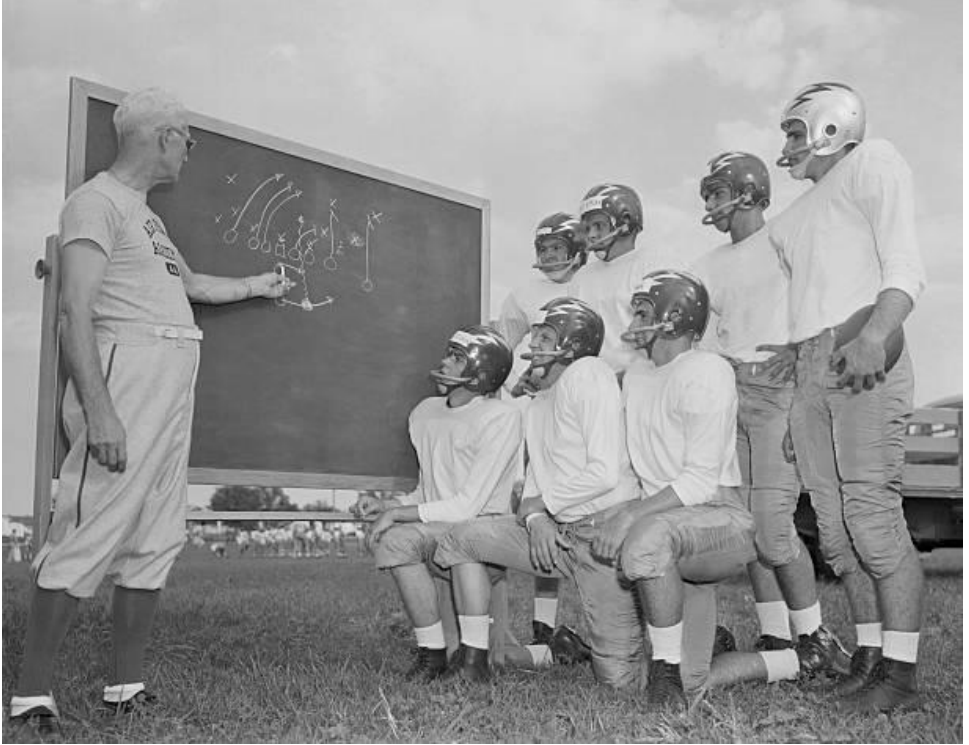
### 1956 Air Force Falcons Coach Buck Shaw

#### Who is Coach Buck Shaw?

Buck Shaw was born on a farm in Mitchellville, Iowa, on March 28, 1899. With exactly four games of high school football behind him, he matriculated at Notre Dame, where he starred as a 6-foot, 175-pound tackle for Knute Rockne.

At the time he came to the Air Force, the 56-year-old Shaw had been a star player under Head Coach Knute Rockne at Notre Dame (where he was a teammate of the legendary George Gipp) and, with Rockne's encouragement, went on to coach at Santa Clara, Nevada, and North Carolina State before moving into the pro ranks as the original head coach of the San Francisco 49ers in the AAFC in 1946.

### **Buck Shaw with his Air Force Academy Squad**



### **The 1956 season**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1956 college football season. It was their second season of intercollegiate football.

The Falcons still did not have an official stadium during the season and remained without one until the 1962 season when Falcon Stadium opened. They were led by first year head coach Buck Shaw and played the second season for the Air Force Falcons football program.

The Falcons were independent, and unlike their first year, they played varsity teams of other schools. Air Force finished with a great record of 6-2-1. The Falcons played a number of teams from the Southwest this year much like the prior year.

Falcons home games were played at Denver University DU.

On Sep 29 at San Diego, The Air Force was victorious in a blowout W (46-0). On Oct 6 at Colorado College's Washburn Field in Colorado Springs, CO, the Air Force prevailed in another blowout. The Falcons were off to a great start. On Oct 13 at home, the Falcons ripped apart Western State W (48-13) for three in a row. The Falcons picked up their fourth win in a row on Oct 20 against the Colorado School of Mines in another blowout W (49-6)

It was five in a row after the Oct 27 encounter at home with Eastern New Mexico W (34-7). The Falcons appeared to be unbeatable and on Nov 3, they extended their win streak to 6-0 against Northern Colorado at home in a shutout at DU Stadium W (21-0). The first blemish on the Falcons record came on a tie played Nov 10 at Whittier College in CA T (14-14).

The first loss was on Nov 17 when Idaho State beat the Falcons by one TD in Pueblo, CO L (7-13). In another losing effort, BYU beat the Falcons at home L (7-13) ending a great season for Buck Shaw's Air Force Falcons.

### **1957 Air Force Falcons Coach Buck Shaw**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1957 college football season. It was their second season of intercollegiate football.

The Falcons still did not have an official stadium during the season and remained without one until the 1962 season when Falcon Stadium opened. They were led by second-year head coach Buck Shaw and played the third season for the Air Force Falcons football program with a record of 3-6-1.

The Falcons were independent. After a great year in 1956, Shaw's team slowed down a bit in 1957 only to erupt with wins galore in 1958. Falcons home games were played at Denver University DU.

The Air Force Academy itself spent its first three years housed at Lowry Air Force Base, Colorado, adjacent to Denver, until August 1958. Air Force did not play Army or Navy this particular season; Army was first played in 1959 and Navy in 1960.

### **Games of 1957 Season**

Falcons home games were played at Denver University DU. On Sep 20, at UCLA in the L.A. Memorial Coliseum in Los Angeles, CA, the Bruins defeated the Falcons in a shellacking L (0–47) before 33,293. On Sep 28, at home AFA whipped Occidental W 40–6.

Then, on Oct 5, at home. The Falcons beat Detroit W (19–12). At George Washington's Griffith Stadium on Oct 11 in Washington, D.C., The Falcons were defeated in a shutout L (0–20) before 12,000. On Oct 26 at Tulsa in Skelly Stadium, Tulsa, OK, the Golden Hurricane beat UFA L (7–12). At Wyoming on Nov 2 in the War Memorial Stadium, Laramie, WY, the Cowboys tied the Falcons T (7–7). Then, on Nov 9 at Denver in DU Stadium, Denver, CO, the Pioneers beat the Falcons L (14–26). At Utah, on Nov 16 Ute Stadium, Salt Lake City, UT the Utes shut out the Falcons L (0–34).

Then, on November 23 at home, the Air Force beat New Mexico W (34–21). At home on Nov. Colorado State beat AFA in a rivalry match L (7–20).



## Chapter 5 Coach Ben Martin 1958-1967

Martin

Coach #3

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Record</u>	<u>Conference</u>	<u>Record</u>
1958	Ben Martin	9-0-2	Indep	
1959	Ben Martin	5-4-1	Indep	
1960	Ben Martin	4-6	Indep	
1961	Ben Martin	3-7	Indep	
1962	Ben Martin	5-5	Indep	
1963	Ben Martin	7-4	Indep	
1964	Ben Martin	4-5-1	Indep	
1965	Ben Martin	3-6-1	Indep	
1966	Ben Martin	4-6	Indep	
1967	Ben Martin	2-6-2	Indep	



NOVEMBER 8: Air Force Head Coach Ben Martin stands on the sidelines during an NCAA game against the Denver Pioneers on November 8, 1958 at DU Stadium in Denver, Colorado

Coach Ben Martin took the job of Head Coach for the Air Force very seriously and he spent a very productive 20 years with the Falcons. In this Chapter, we highlight his first ten seasons and in the next chapter, we cover his last ten.

Ben Martin, the former Air Force coach known widely as the Father of Air Force Football, was one heck of a football coach. He passed away on July 31, 2004 at the Village at Skyline in Colorado Springs. He was 83 years old.



### <<< Coach Martin

There is always a prime mover in the beginning of a new football program. Martin came along in year four of the program after two head coaches and a lot of administrators had gotten the Air Force program rolling. He was the coach that helped America see the Air Force program as not only viable but phenomenally competitive.

Like most early outings of new football teams, the Falcons were just breaking in their flight jackets when Martin arrived. Nobody denies that it was Ben Martin who put Air Force football on the map during his 20-year (1958-77) coaching tenure. His first season set the stage for nineteen more as he hit the ground running, or he hit the skies passing, no matter which way you put it with a spectacular 9-2 first-year coaching record. Whew!

His short, controlled passing game enabled the much-smaller but always tough Falcons to compete on a national scale. Martin engineered upset victories over national powers Nebraska in 1963, UCLA in 1964, Washington in 1966, North Carolina in 1969, Stanford in 1970 and Arizona State in 1972.

The coach led the Falcons to three bowl games, including the 1959 Cotton Bowl, 1963 Gator Bowl and 1971 Sugar Bowl. The Cotton and Sugar bowl games mark the only New Year's Day bowl games Air Force has participated in.

Martin's undefeated 1958 team, his first at Air Force, is still considered one of the top teams in college football history. The Falcons went 9-0-1 in the regular season before battling to a 0-0 tie with Texas Christian in



the Cotton Bowl to finish 9-0-2. The undefeated team is still the only one in Academy history.

That team featured the school's first consensus All-American, tackle Brock Strom. He and starting quarterback Rich Mayo went on to be inducted into the Verizon Academic All-American Hall of Fame in the 1990s. Wide receiver Ernie Jennings, a star on the 1970 team, also went on to earn consensus All-American honors and finished eighth in the Heisman Trophy balloting that year.

Martin's 20-year stint is the second-longest in-service academy football history and his 96-103-9 record at Air Force is the second-best in school history. Only long-time Falcon mentor Fisher DeBerry's 21-year tenure and 156-88-1 career record are better in each category.

### **1958 Air Force Falcons Coach Ben Martin**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1958 college football season. It was their fourth season of intercollegiate football when Ben Martin took control of the program. .

The Falcons still did not have an official stadium during the season and remained without one until the 1962 season when Falcon Stadium opened. They were led by first year head coach Ben Martin and played the fourth season for the Air Force Falcons football program.

The Falcons were independent, and just like when Buck Shaw took over in 1956, Air Force finished, not only with a great record, undefeated, of 9-0-2, it was a record that still to this day goes unmatched.

In 1958, the Air Force Academy made their first AP and coaches poll appearances, as well as their first bowl appearance in the Cotton Bowl against TCU, which ended in a scoreless tie. For want of a safety or a positive score of any kind, it is possible that Air Force would have been National Champions in 1958 in just their fourth year of operation.

As noted, Air Force did not play Army or Navy this season; Army was first played in 1959 and Navy in 1960.

The Falcons finished the season undefeated at 9-0-1 and were invited to the Cotton Bowl i



#8 Air Force played a great game on January 1, 1959 vs. TCU in the Cotton Bowl Stadium in Dallas, Texas in a bowl game known as (Cotton Bowl Classic). The game was so tough neither team, who had a number of high scoring game wins in their season could score a point and thus tied each other on CBS TV and the rest of the nation by a score of zip-zip, T (0-0) before 75,504

The 1959 Cotton Bowl Classic featured the TCU Horned Frogs and the Air Force Falcons. The game was played on January 1,

1959, at the Cotton Bowl in Dallas, Texas. There had never been a tie in the game. In eleven years of play, this was the first tie in the game. Worse than that for fan enjoyment, it was a scoreless tie.

It was our undefeated Air Force that had already played to a tie during the 1958 regular season, 13-13 to Iowa who competed in this game. The Iowa Hawkeyes went on to win the Big Ten Conference and the Rose Bowl. The Falcons were ranked in the polls for the seventh straight week, #8 for the second straight week. They made their first-ever bowl appearance. They always played tough but sometimes tough is not enough.

Although it had snowed two days earlier, the field was clear, and the weather was sunny and 44 °F (7 °C) for the 2:30 p.m. CST kickoff.[3][4]

## Game summary

In the end, it was six lost fumbles (out of 13 in total) and five missed field goals that decided the scoreless outcome. The Falcons at one

point had the ball at TCU's 6-yard line before being stuffed, but when they tried to kick a field goal from the 12, George Pupich's kick sailed wide left. Pupich missed two more --one from 34 and the other from 52—while TCU missed two of their own.

TCU went 3 for 11 on passing for a woeful 37 yards but had 190 yards rushing on 48 attempts. Air Force barely did better with 12 for 23 passing for 91 yards and two interceptions. Both teams finished with over 227 yards yet had more punts (16) than points. Dave Phillips of Air Force and Jack Spikes of TCU were named Outstanding Players. One thing for sure, this Cotton Bowl game was a real battle which nobody wanted to lose.

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## Great Air Force Player Rich Mayo 1957, 1958

Editor's note: In the Colorado Classics series, The Denver Post takes a weekly look at individuals who made their mark on the Colorado sports landscape and what they are doing now.

If Rich Mayo had followed his emotions after an unhappy first year at the Air Force Academy in 1957, one of college football's most inspirational stories may have never been told.

Mayo had come to the fledgling academy – in only its third year of existence – from Northern California. He had turned down a pre-med scholarship at Stanford and found his way to Lowry Air Force base in Denver, where the Air Force Academy had taken residence. But his football hopes were dashed when coach Buck Shaw moved him from quarterback to halfback.

“I was so disenchanted after my freshman year that I wasn't going to go out for football again and was seriously thinking about leaving the academy,” Mayo recalled, his thoughts going back 49 years to when he was 18 as he talked from his home in a Houston suburb where he lives today after retiring from a medical practice.



But then Ben Martin was hired to replace Shaw as Air Force looked ahead to the 1958 season and the final year of the academy's first senior class.

"I was adamant," Mayo said. "I wasn't even going to talk to the new coaches. They sent Jim Conboy, our trainer, to talk to me. Jim told me that the new coaches were fair, and they promised to give me every opportunity to play quarterback."

Conboy was a father figure to most of Air Force's athletes and his talk was convincing. Mayo not only returned, but he led Air Force to its most memorable football season. The 1958 Falcons went 9-0-2, establishing Air Force's only unbeaten season in football, and tied TCU 0-0 in the Cotton Bowl. Many college football fans had not even heard of the Air Force Academy at the time, but the record and the bowl game against a talented TCU team put the Falcons on the map in a hurry.

With Mayo completing 9-of-19 passes for 91 yards, the Falcons matched the Horned Frogs yard for yard. When it was over, Air Force had the yardage edge 231-227. Both teams lost

With Mayo completing 9-of-19 passes for 91 yards, the Falcons matched the Horned Frogs yard for yard. When it was over, Air Force had the yardage edge 231-227. Both teams lost three fumbles in the fierce defensive play. TCU punted nine times and Air Force seven.

"One thing that a lot of people didn't know about that team was that we had a vicious defensive unit," Mayo said. "It was a real key to our success. They just kept the other team from scoring while our offense just kind of muddled through."

Air Force was such an unknown that it had to get a special waiver from the NCAA to play in the bowl game because it had yet to graduate a senior class.

Even today, Air Force players talk of achieving an unbeaten season that would match the magical 1958 team that played TCU, whose roster included Bob Lilly, Jack Spikes and Sherrill Headrick, to a standstill.

The heroics of the 1958 team have remained a standard for the 48 teams that have followed. Air Force has gotten close to another unbeaten season, but 12-1 records in 1985 and 1998 were the closest the Falcons could get.

“It’s flattering to hear,” Mayo said. “It’s my fervent hope that there will be another unbeaten season at Air Force. I’d be thrilled. I really enjoyed our unbeaten season. There was a lot of enthusiasm and the cadet wing loved the football team.”

Mayo went on to fly fighter jets in the Air Force before turning to the medical profession. But his memories always go back to the football games.

“It’s strange to look back so many years and still have such vivid memories,” Mayo said. “Most of the games still stand out in my mind. It must be that way for all athletes. I’m kind of

“It’s strange to look back so many years and still have such vivid memories,” Mayo said. “Most of the games still stand out in my mind. It must be that way for all athletes. I’m kind of a nostalgic guy. I can be watching a game on television and flashbacks keep coming back to me. A lot of the stadiums still are the same, and I can say there’s the side of the field where our bench was.”

There were a lot of memorable games in 1958. The Falcons tied Iowa 13-13. They beat Oklahoma State 33-29, scoring the winning points with nine seconds left. While they played most of their home games at the University of Denver Stadium, the Falcons played Wyoming at Colorado College’s Washburn Field in Colorado Springs. They beat Colorado 20-14 in the final game of the season before going to the Cotton Bowl.

Mayo remembers the bowl bid was at stake against CU, and the Buffaloes were threatening to score the winning touchdown. CU had the ball on the 2-yard line, but defensive end Sam Hardage came to the rescue.

“Sam slashed straight down the line of scrimmage, met the ball carrier and caused a fumble,” Mayo said. “We recovered and it made our unbeaten season. How could you end a regular season any better than playing your state rival, who may even have been embarrassed to be playing us?”

Mayo remembers his first meeting with Martin and assistant coach Pepper Rodgers.

“I think I was Ben Martin’s kind of quarterback,” Mayo said. “Our game plans were magnificent and one of the big reasons for our success. Pepper Rodgers had us prepared for every game. Ben Martin was a genius.”

Does Mayo ever regret his decision in 1957 to spurn Stanford for Air Force?

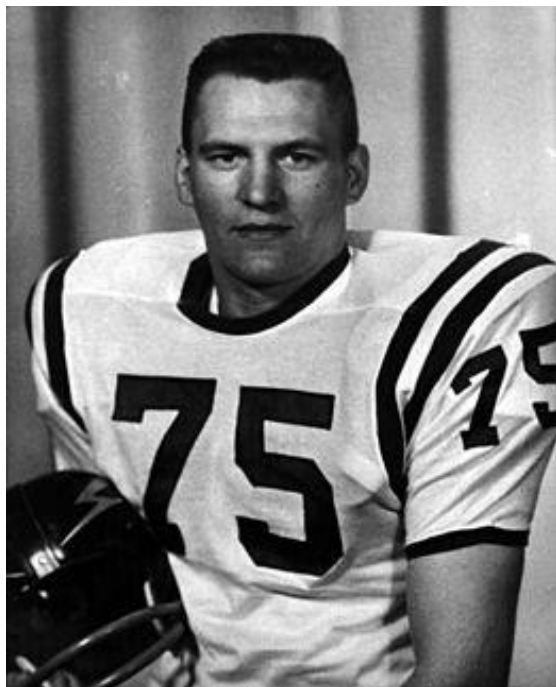
“I never second-guess,” Mayo said. “My days at Air Force were good days.”

## **Great Air Force Player 1958 Brock Strom**

The writer, Irv Moss can be reached at 303-954-1296 or [imoss@denverpost.com](mailto:imoss@denverpost.com). 10/15/2007 12:00:00 AM

### **Brock Strom part of inaugural Hall of Fame class at Air Force**

Brock Strom, the school's first consensus football All-American, will be inducted into the Air Force Academy Athletic Hall of Fame as part of the inaugural class this October.



The Hall of Fame induction dinner is Friday, Oct. 19, at the Broadmoor Hotel. A cocktail hour begins at 6 p.m. followed by a dinner at 7 p.m. Cost for the event is \$75 and there is a media opportunity during the final 30 minutes of social hour. Media wishing to attend the event and take part in the dinner may purchase tickets or arrive for the media session and stay to film the event. Registration for the event is available by calling the Air Force marketing

department at 719-333-2626 or online at [goairforcefalcons.com](http://goairforcefalcons.com).

Strom, a 1959 USAFA graduate, was the captain of AFA's undefeated football team in 1958 and helped lead the team to the Cotton Bowl. He was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 1985 and the Academic All-America Hall of Fame in 1991. Originally from Ironwood, Mich., he obtained his master's degree at MIT in aeronautical engineering and flew 90 missions as a navigator in Vietnam.

He earned his Ph.D. from Arizona State in aeronautical engineering and served as the Director of Engineering for the Global Positioning System. Strom directed the development of the Air Force Space Defense System. He also taught mathematics and management at the Academy as a visiting scientist. Strom is currently working with Home Front Cares, Inc. This organization provides support for the Pikes Peak Region's military families of all services who have been impacted by deployment in harm's way.

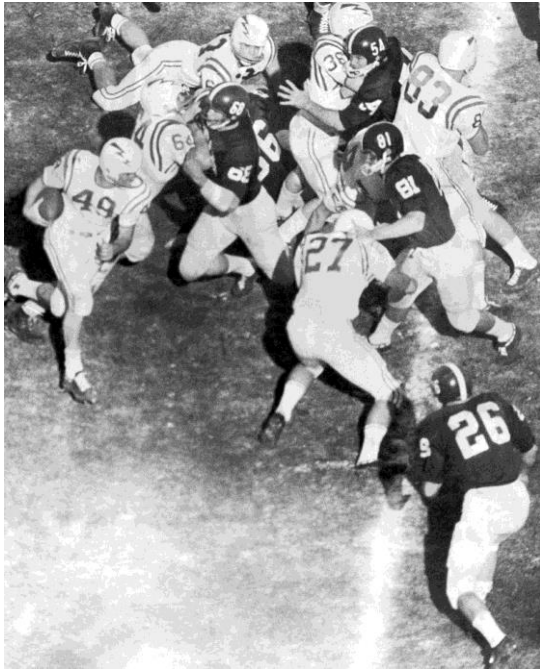
Strom joins Alonzo Babers, Bob Beckel, Col. John Clune Chad Hennings and Brig. Gen. Michelle Johnson in the inaugural class. The

six inductees represent one track athlete, one men's basketball player, one women's basketball, two football players and one athletic director. The group includes an Olympic Gold Medalist, a Super Bowl champion, two Air Force generals, three members of the Academic All-America Hall of Fame and a member of the National Association of College Directors' of Athletics Hall of Fame.

## Great Air Force Player 1958 Tom Jozwiak

Tight End Tom Jozwiak played on the historically second air force squad in 1956.

He earned his letters in 1956, 1957, 1958. He was a two-way player; a terror on both sides of the ball. He played O and D for the unbeaten 1958 team that played TCU to a scoreless tie in the Cotton Bowl.



Jozwiak led the Falcons in receptions in 1956 and 1957. One of his moments to remember was in 1958 when he recovered a key fumble in the 20-14 victory over Colorado. He picked Air Force after having been recruited by top college teams such as Notre Dame and Michigan.



## Great Air Force Player 1958 Dave Phillips



While playing on the defensive line, Dave Phillips excelled and earned his letters in 1956, 1957, and 1958 shortly after the formation of the team.

Phillips created a lot of memories on the gridiron, but he is best known for earning most valuable lineman honors in the 1959 Cotton Bowl. This was a game that included eventual NFL great Bob Lilly. He helped the Falcons secure an unbeaten season with a 0-0 tie against TCU.

He was a true stalwart on the 1958 defense that allowed 213.2 yards and 10.1 points per game. These are both academy records.

Along with cohort, George Pupich, Phillips stopped Colorado standout Eddie Dove cold at the goal line on fourth-and-goal with 16 seconds left to preserve a 20-14 victory over the Buffaloes in 1958.

### **1959 Air Force Falcons Coach Ben Martin**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1959 college football season. It was their fifth

season of intercollegiate football. It was Ben Martin's second year as head coach of the still fledgling Air Force Football Program.

The Falcons still did not have an official stadium during the full season, and they remained without one until the 1962 season when Falcon Stadium opened. They were led by second-year head coach Ben Martin and played the fifth season for the Air Force Falcons football program. The Falcons were independent of any conference, and again finished with a positive W/L record.

The Air Force were outscored by opponents 160–124 and finished with a record of 5 wins, 4 losses, and 1 tie (5–4–1). When they got beat, they got beat bad.

This was the first year the Falcons played Army. It was played to a respectable 13–13 tie before 67,000 at Yankee Stadium in New York City on Halloween Night. The two academies met in odd-numbered years (except 1961) through 1971 and have played annually in the competition (with Navy) for the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy, first awarded in 1972.

Following this year's Army game, the Falcons were at 4–1–1, but lost three of four in November. The AF Academy would not play Navy until 1960.

## **About the Commander-In-Chief's Trophy**

Since Air Force would now and forever be involved in the Navy football schedule, it is the right time to acknowledge the existence of the Commander in Chief's Trophy. We pause below to explain it.

The Commander-in-Chief's Trophy is awarded to each season's winner of the American college football triangular series among the teams of the U.S. Military Academy (Army Black Knights), the U.S. Naval Academy (Navy Midshipmen), and U.S. Air Force Academy (Air Force Falcons).

The Navy–Air Force game is traditionally played on the first Saturday in October, the Army–Air Force game on the first Saturday in November, and the Army–Navy Game on the second Saturday in

December. In the event of a tie, the award is shared, but the previous winner retains possession of the trophy. Along with the Florida Cup, the Michigan MAC Trophy, and the Beehive Boot, the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy is one of the few three-way rivalries that awards a trophy to the winner.

Through 2017, the Air Force Falcons hold the most trophy victories at 20 and the Navy Midshipmen have won 15. The Army Black Knights trail with only seven; their last came just a year ago in 2017. The trophy has been shared on four occasions, last in 1993.

The first Navy v Air Force game came in 1960.

### **1960 Air Force Falcons Coach Ben Martin**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1960 college football season. It was their sixth season of intercollegiate football. It was Ben Martin's third year as head coach of the Air Force Football Program.

The Falcons still did not have an official stadium during the full season, and they remained without one until the 1962 season when Falcon Stadium opened. They were led by third-year head coach Ben Martin and played the sixth season for the Air Force Falcons football program with home games played in DU Stadium. The Falcons were independent of any conference, and for the first time under coach Martin, finished with a negative W/L record.

They were outscored by their opponents 147–178 and finished with a record of 4 wins and 6 losses (4–6).

This was the first year the Falcons played Navy. They endured a 35–3 loss in mid-October in this first Navy encounter at Memorial Stadium in Baltimore. Heisman Trophy winner Joe Bellino was at his best, scoring three first half touchdowns. Bellino also had an interception. The two academies met in even-numbered years (except 1962 and 1964) through 1971 and have played annually in the competition (with Army) for the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy, first awarded in 1972.

### **1961 Air Force Falcons Coach Ben Martin**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1961 college football season. It was their seventh season of intercollegiate football. It was Ben Martin's fourth year as head coach of the Air Force Football Program.

The Falcons still did not have an official stadium during the full season, and they remained without one until the 1962 season when Falcon Stadium opened. They were led by fourth-year head coach Ben Martin and played home games in DU Stadium. The Falcons were in the University Division as an Independent and they played with no conference affiliation. Again under coach Martin, they finished with a negative W/L record.

They were outscored by their opponents 87–173 and finished with a record of 3 wins and 7 losses (3–7).

Both Army and Navy were off Air Force's schedule this season and the next, when the new Falcon Stadium opened.

### **1962 Air Force Falcons Coach Ben Martin**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1962 college football season playing as a University Division Independent. It was their eighth season of intercollegiate football. They were led by fifth-year head coach Ben Martin.

This was a big year for the Falcons as they got to play their home games at Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, Colorado. They outscored their opponents 173–171. They left their losing season streak behind and the team finished with a record of 5 wins & 5 losses (5–5).

### **1963 Air Force Falcons Coach Ben Martin**

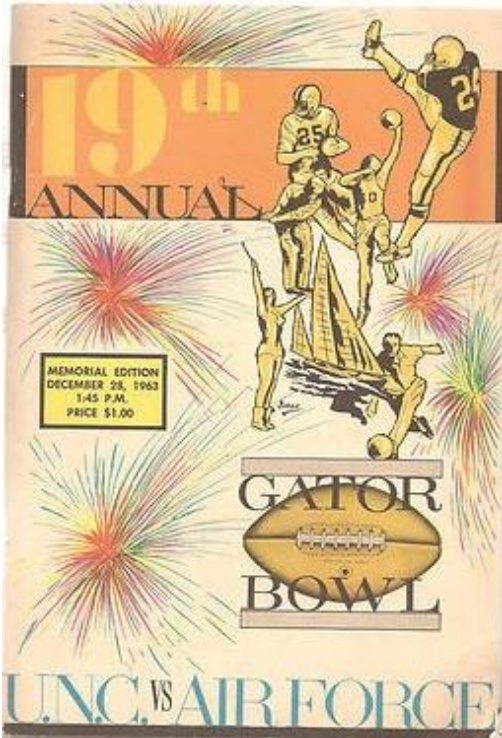
The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1963 college football season playing as a University Division Independent. It was their ninth season of intercollegiate football. They were led by sixth-year head coach Ben Martin.

This was the second year for the Falcons in their almost new Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, Colorado. They outscored their opponents 249–150. They left their losing and break-even season streak behind and the team finished with a record of 7 wins & 4 losses 7-4.



With seven wins this season, the Air Force qualified for a bowl game and were selected to play on December 28, 1963 vs. North Carolina in the Gator Bowl at Gator Bowl Stadium in Jacksonville, FL (Gator Bowl). The Tar Heels dominated and beat the Falcons L (0–35).

## 1963 Gator Bowl Highlights



It had been four years since the Air Force last played in a Bowl Game. The Tar Heels were co-champions of the Atlantic Coast Conference, which was their first conference title since the 1949 Southern Conference Title. It was NC's Conference title and their first bowl game 1950.

There was no scoring by the Air Force in this game so the play-by-play for scores is quite simple. The scoring included Willard's 1-yard and the kick was missed. Edge got a 6 yd TD run and this time the non-kick extra point did not work. Robinson scored on a 5-yard pass from Black. Kessler made

it in on a 1-yard run and finally Black scored on a 5-yard run and Chapman got the kick through this time. Willard was the game hero for NC with 94 yards on 18 carries.

It was a long time for either team to have luck in a bowl game. Air Force's next shot was in 1971, but the Falcons did not win a bowl game until 1982. North Carolina took its time also and were not back in a bowl game until 1970. The game was marred by rumors of a game party at the Hotel Roosevelt in downtown Jacksonville. 22 died in the fire. The game got the blame, but it was a false claim as an investigation proved that the participants had nothing to do with the game. It was an unfortunate situation but for years, the blame stayed with the game, though untrue.

North Carolina outplayed and outscored the AFA in this game as you can see by the game stats reproduced below:

Statistics	Air Force	North Carolina
First Downs	14	23
Rushing Yards	95	251
Passing Yards	165	119
Punts-Average	4-40.0	6-36.0
Fumbles-Lost	3-2	2-0
Penalties-Yards	3-42	3-35

## Great Air Force Players 1963 Joe Rodwell

Joe Rodwell was one of Air Force's best players, from his Offensive Line position. He earned his letters in the early days of Air Force Football in 1961, 1962, 1963. You would have him play on your own best of the best Air Force teams if you put one together.

He is best known for helping the 1963 AFA football team earn a berth in the Gator Bowl by winning seven games, which was the most since 1958. The season included great victories over Washington, Nebraska, UCLA and Colorado.





< Joe Rodwell.

Rodwell earned Helms All-America honors in 1963.

From his Center position, he anchored an offensive line that paved the way for the Falcons to average 4.6 yards per carry and score 30 points or more four times.

He was a powerhouse for sure.

## Great Air Force Players 1963 Terry Isaacson

They called Terry Isaacson a utility player because he showed utility at so many positions, He earned his Varsity Letters in 1961, 1962, and 1963. Terry is best known for being one of the best all-around football players, and in fact, overall athletes, in AFA history. He played quarterback and cornerback and he also handled punting and return duties for the Falcons.





His talents were well noticed as he was a Helms All-American in 1963 when he led the Falcons in rushing (801 yards), passing (946) and punting (39 average). He was a tough guy in other sports also as he was the AFA's only three-time wrestling All-American (1962-64). He was also a member of the second class inducted into the academy athletics Hall of Fame.

### **1964 Air Force Falcons Coach Ben Martin**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1964 college football season playing as a University Division Independent. It was their tenth season of intercollegiate football. They were led by seventh-year head coach Ben Martin.

This was the third year for the Falcons in their almost new Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, Colorado. They were outscored by their opponents 106–146 and finished with a record of 4 wins, 5 losses, and 1 tie (4–5–1).

### **1965 Air Force Falcons Coach Ben Martin**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1965 college football season playing as a University Division Independent. It was their eleventh season of intercollegiate football. They were led by eighth-year head coach Ben Martin.

Home games were played in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, Colorado. This year, the Falcons outscored their opponents 166–156 and finished with a record of 3 wins, 6 losses, and 1 tie (3–6–1).

### **1966 Air Force Falcons Coach Ben Martin**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1966 college football season playing as a University Division Independent. It was their twelfth season of intercollegiate football. They were led by ninth-year head coach Ben Martin.

Home games were played in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, Colorado. This year, the Falcons outscored by their opponents 154–161 and finished with a record of 4 wins and 6 losses (4–6).

### **1967 Air Force Falcons Coach Ben Martin**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1967 college football season playing as a University Division Independent. It was their thirteenth season of intercollegiate football. They were led by tenth-year head coach Ben Martin.

Home games were played in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, Colorado. This was Ben Martin's worst year with the Falcons. They were outscored by their opponents 86–173 and finished with a record of 2 wins, 6 losses, and 2 ties (2–6–2).

# Chapter 6 Coach Ben Martin 1968-1977

Martin

Coach #3

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Record</u>	<u>Conference</u>	<u>Record</u>
1968	Ben Martin	7-3	Indep	
1969	Ben Martin	6-4	Indep	
1970	Ben Martin	9-3	Indep	
1971	Ben Martin	6-4	Indep	
1972	Ben Martin	6-4	Indep	
1973	Ben Martin	6-4	Indep	
1974	Ben Martin	2-9	Indep	
1975	Ben Martin	2-8-1	Indep	
1976	Ben Martin	4-7	Indep	
1977	Ben Martin	2-8-1	Indep	



Coach Ben Martin

In this chapter we look at the second half of Ben Martin's stint as the head coach of the Air Force Falcons. Martin had his best season, undefeated at 9-0-2 year and his worst season, 2-6-2. He coached twenty years. In this Chapter we begin with his eleventh season which began a six-year clip of winning seasons before Martin's Air Force squad hit hard times again. His winning seasons included another 9-game winning season in 1970 when the Falcons went 9-3 and qualified for a bowl game for the second year in a row.

It helps to remember that when Martin became the coach at Air Force, he took over a fledgling football program, the academy's first class having entered in July 1955 at temporary facilities at Lowry Air Force Base in Denver. The football team had been coached by Buck Shaw during season 2 and 3.

#### **1968 Air Force Falcons Coach Ben Martin**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1968 college football season playing as a University Division Independent. It was their fourteenth season of intercollegiate football. They were led by eleventh-year head coach Ben Martin.

Home games were played in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The Falcons outscored their opponents 251-156 and finished with a record of 7 wins and 3 losses (7-3).

#### **1969 Air Force Falcons Coach Ben Martin**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1969 college football season playing as a University Division Independent. It was their fifteenth season of intercollegiate football. They were led by twelfth-year head coach Ben Martin.

Home games were played in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The Falcons outscored their opponents 267-177 and finished with a positive record of 6 wins and 4 losses (6-4).

## 1970 Air Force Falcons Coach Ben Martin

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1970 college football season playing as a University Division Independent. It was their sixteenth season of intercollegiate football. They were led by thirteenth-year head coach Ben Martin.

Home games were played in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, Colorado. This was Ben Martin's 2<sup>nd</sup>-best year with the Falcons. They outscored their opponents 366–239 and finished with a record of 9 wins and 3 losses (9–3), ranked 16th in the AP Poll.

This was the last season that Army was not on the Falcons' schedule; the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy was introduced two years later which matched the three academies annually. Previously, Air Force played Army in odd years and Navy in even years.

Bob Parker was the Falcon tossing the TDs this year. And, he tossed a lot of them. It was because of the passing of this great QB came the Falcons' notable wins over #9 Missouri, and #6 Stanford, led by Heisman Trophy winner Jim Plunkett. Stanford went on to upset #2 Ohio State in the Rose Bowl.

For the first time since the 1963 season, the Falcons appeared in a bowl game, but they lost by 21 points to #4 Tennessee in the Sugar Bowl in New Orleans on New Year's Day. The Volunteers were favored, and they jumped out to a 24–0 lead in the first quarter and the Falcons were not able to make up the difference.

After a great season at 9-2-0, the Falcons were invited to the Sugar Bowl to play #4 ranked Tennessee in Tulane Stadium in New Orleans LA on New Year's Day, January 1, 1971. The Volunteers were a bit more on this day than the Falcons could handle L (13–34).

What a season!

## Great Air Force Player Ernie Jennings

Ernie Jennings was a big part of Ben Martin and the AFA's successful 9-2-0 1970 season. He played as a Wide Receiver (WR) for the Air Force and in 1970, he made consensus First Team All-American. He was so good that he finished eighth in the 1970 Heisman Trophy voting. Bowl games are played in January of the year after football play and in any graduates senior season. Jennings led Air Force to their 1971 Sugar Bowl berth. He still holds every single-season and career receiving record at Air Force. He was quite a player



Jennings was born on my birthday, a year after me on January 30, 1949. He went to Kansas City Central High School in Kansas City, Missouri. He was drafted by San Francisco in the tenth round of the 1971 NFL Draft.[ When he joined the Air Force Falcons, his plans were to be a defensive back, but the coaches changed that and they

were right as he became a WR and was a consensus All-American in 1970.]

He led NCAA Division I football in receiving touchdowns in 1970 with 17. He continues as Air Force's all-time leader in receptions with 148, receiving yards with 2,392 and receiving touchdowns with 28. He had been on the 2014 ballot for induction into the College Football Hall of Fame but was not chosen. He was back again for the class of 2016. I hope eventually they get it right. Like most AFA graduates, Jennings spent time in the military after college and thus he did not get an early start for his pro-career.

Though he was not selected, he surely should have been . Former Air Force All-American wide receiver Ernie Jennings made the ballot for induction into the College Football Hall of Fame as part of the class of 2016.

As noted, Jennings was a consensus first-team All-American in 1970 who finished eighth in the voting for the Heisman Trophy. He helped lead the Falcons to the 1971 Sugar Bowl and holds every single-season and career receiving record at the Academy.

"It's an enormous honor to just be on the ballot when you think that more than 5.06 million people have played college football," said NFF President & CEO Steve Hatchell. "The Hall's requirement of being a First-Team All-American creates a much smaller pool of only 1,500 individuals who are even eligible to be on the ballot, so being in today's elite group means an individual is truly among the greatest to ever have played the game, and we are proud to announce their names.

The announcement of the 2016 Class was made Friday, Jan. 8, 2016. Despite Jennings being the best of the best at Air Force according to many pundits, he was not selected. Too bad. He should have been.

Once nominated for consideration, all player candidates are submitted to one of eight District Screening Committees, depending on their school's geographic location, which conducts a vote to determine who will appear on the ballot and represent their respective districts. Each year, approximately 15 candidates, who are not selected for the Hall of Fame, will be named automatic holdovers and will bypass the district

screening process and automatically appear on the ballot the following year. Additionally, the Veterans Committee may make recommendations to the Honors Court for exceptions that allow for the induction of players who played more than 50 years ago.

Of the 5.06 million individuals who have played college football since Princeton first battled Rutgers on Nov. 6, 1869, only 963 players, including the 2015 class, have earned induction into the College Football Hall of Fame, or less than two ten-thousandths (.0002) of one percent of those who have played the game during the past 146 years.

From the coaching ranks, 209 individuals have achieved Hall of Fame distinction.

### **1971 Air Force Falcons Coach Ben Martin**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1971 college football season playing as a University Division Independent. It was their seventeenth season of intercollegiate football. They were led by fourteenth-year head coach Ben Martin.

Home games were played in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Air Force tied in scoring with their opponents 187–187 and finished with a record of 6 wins and 4 losses (6–4).

The previous season ended in the Sugar Bowl in New Orleans on New Year's Day. This year, the Falcons began at 5–1 and were ranked 18th in the AP Poll in late October; Suddenly, and mostly unexplainedly, they dropped three of four, fell out of the polls, and did not play in the postseason.

This was the last season that the Navy was not on the Falcons' schedule; the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy was introduced the following year which matched the three academies annually. Previously, Air Force played Navy in even years and Army in odd years.



## Great Air Force Players Brian Bream



Tailback Brian Bream is another one of those who would be everybody's pick for his running back position. Bream got his letters in 1969, 1970, and 1971. His signature was rushing, and he was the best.



Brian Bream is now 68 years old, born on 07/07/1950. He lives in University Place, WA;. He answers to Brian B Bream and Bruce B Bream, and perhaps a couple of other names. Brian's ethnicity is Caucasian. His political affiliation is unknown; and religious views are Christian. He is married at this point and has no children.

When he played football, he was all football. He powered for more than 100 yards in nine straight games in 1970. He finished the year with 1,276 yards and 19 touchdowns (tied for second-most in a single season in academy history).

He is definitely among the all-time AFA football greats and is an often-pick when the pundits try to put historical all-star teams together. Brian Bream ranks eighth all-time at the academy in rushing (2,284 yards). During his three years, Air Force had some of its best years,

going 21-11 during the three seasons he lettered, including a 9-3 mark in 1970.

Among many great games and seasons, in October 1970 Air Force crushed Navy 26-3 and Brian Bream was a key man in the win. Bream, at the time was a junior halfback who broke his school's single game rushing record in this game with 207 yards on 36 carries. He on the ground along with Bob Parker the country's all-offense leader in the air, pulverized the middies' defense with precision passes.

Despite the overwhelming statistical margin in favor of Air Force, Navy still held the Falcons under their 1970 37-points a-game average and managed to play their more powerful rivals virtually even in the final quarter. But the story of this game was in the rushing figures: 308 yards for Air Force, 35 for Navy.

Bream was not the biggest Falcon, but he sure could fly well. The 5-foot-9-inch, 191-pound junior from San Leandro, Calif., who entered the game as the third best scorer in the country, scored the first and last of the three Falcons' touchdowns, a 1-yard leap over the line, his specialty. He also had a 38-yard dash round left end with a pitchout from Parker. It was a great game for Bream and the Navy for sure.

### **1972 Air Force Falcons Coach Ben Martin**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1972 college football season playing as a University Division Independent. It was their eighteenth season of intercollegiate football. They were led by fifteenth-year head coach Ben Martin.

Home games were played in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The Falcons had a fine year even considering the collapse at the end of the season. They outscored their opponents 303-183 and finished with a record of 6 wins and 4 losses (6-4)

This was first season for the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy. To anybody else but Army, Navy, and Air Force, the Trophy would not necessarily mean as much. However, from the time the terms for the trophy were announced all three service academies eagerly awaited the games in which they could compete for the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy. It is the most coveted trophy other than winning the Army-

Navy game. Obviously, the AFA came along over sixty years after Army and Navy were competing. Perhaps when and if the Space Force comes to being, there will be a fourth team and then perhaps a series.

The rules for the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy are simple. It matches the three academies annually, and a winner is determined based on game outcomes. Previously, Air Force played Navy in even years and Army in odd years. The Falcons lost both games this year and then Army beat Navy in December to take the first title.

## Great Air Force Player 1972 Orderia F. Mitchell

Thank you to the Indiana Hall of Fame for this submission



Orderia F. Mitchell was born in 1950 and he attended Elkhart IN High School. He graduated HS in 1968. Major Mitchell was inducted into the Indiana Hall of Fame on August 15, 1987 in South Bend, IN.

As an All-State Center, he played for the North team in Indiana's All-Star game. He was selected Most Valuable Lineman of the team in his senior year after lettering 2 years in football and 2 years in basketball.

He then attended the United State Air Force where he received many honors including football, He graduated from the Academy in 1973

He was named to the Sophomore All-American Team in 1970. He was co-captain in his senior year; 2nd Team All-American 1972; and the Black Sports Magazine All-American First Team in 1971.

He helped the AFA compile a 9-2 record as a sophomore and gain a spot in the Sugar Bowl. He was also named a finalist for NCAA Top Five Student-Athlete Award in his senior year. Additionally, he was selected to participate in the Hula Bowl. In addition to football, he also earned a varsity letter in basketball, starting several times at forward.

According to his Air Force Football Coach, Ben Martin, the 6 foot 3, and 232-pound Mitchell was probably the best lineman the AFA ever had in Falcon football.

“He can do it all.” Despite competing in football and basketball and maintaining a busy academic schedule, Mitchell was appointed Deputy Wing Commander in 1972, which made him the number two cadet at the Academy with the rank of Cadet Colonel and responsible for activities of 3,800 cadets.

## Great Air Force Players 1972 Eugene Oglivie



Gene Oglivie lived on the Defensive Line and he was very effective. Defensive Lineman Eugene Oglivie earned his Varsity Letters in 1970, 1971, and 1972. He is best known for: spearheading three Air Force defenses, all of which allowed fewer than 19 points per game. His 1970 unit helped the Falcons reach the Sugar Bowl.

Oglivie earned second-team UPI All-America honors in 1972, when he was a team captain, and third-team honors in 1971. Even today, he continues to share the Academy record for career fumble recoveries with nine.

### 1973 Air Force Falcons Coach Ben Martin

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1973 college football season playing as a University Division Independent. It was their nineteenth season of

intercollegiate football. They were led by sixteenth-year head coach Ben Martin.

Home games were played in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The Falcons had a fine year even considering another collapse at the end of the season. They were outscored by their opponents 223–239 and finished with a record of 6 wins and 4 losses (6–4) for a third consecutive season.

#### **1974 Air Force Falcons Coach Ben Martin**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1974 college football season playing as a University Division Independent. It was their twentieth season of intercollegiate football. They were led by seventeenth-year head coach Ben Martin.

Home games were played in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, Colorado. This was not a very good season for Ben Martin's Falcons. They were outscored by their opponents 178–215 and finished with a record of 2 wins and 9 losses (2–9).

Most football coaches will admit that there is a lot of luck involved in football game outcomes. There is no question that over all, the harder we work, the luckier we get, but with a small sample, we can have bad luck all day and not get any luckier. IMHO, Ben Martin's Falcons had an unlucky year. Look at the scores to the games. Six of the Falcon nine defeats in this season were decided by four or less points. That my friends, is why Ben Martin is still revered as a great coach. It was surely an unlucky year.

#### **1975 Air Force Falcons Coach Ben Martin**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1975 college football season playing as a University Division Independent. It was their twenty-first season of intercollegiate football. They were led by eighteenth-year head coach Ben Martin.

Home games were played in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Like the prior season, this was not a very good season for

the Ben Martin's Falcons. The Falcons were outscored by their opponents 156–265 and finished with a record of 2 wins, 8 losses, and 1 tie (2–8–1).

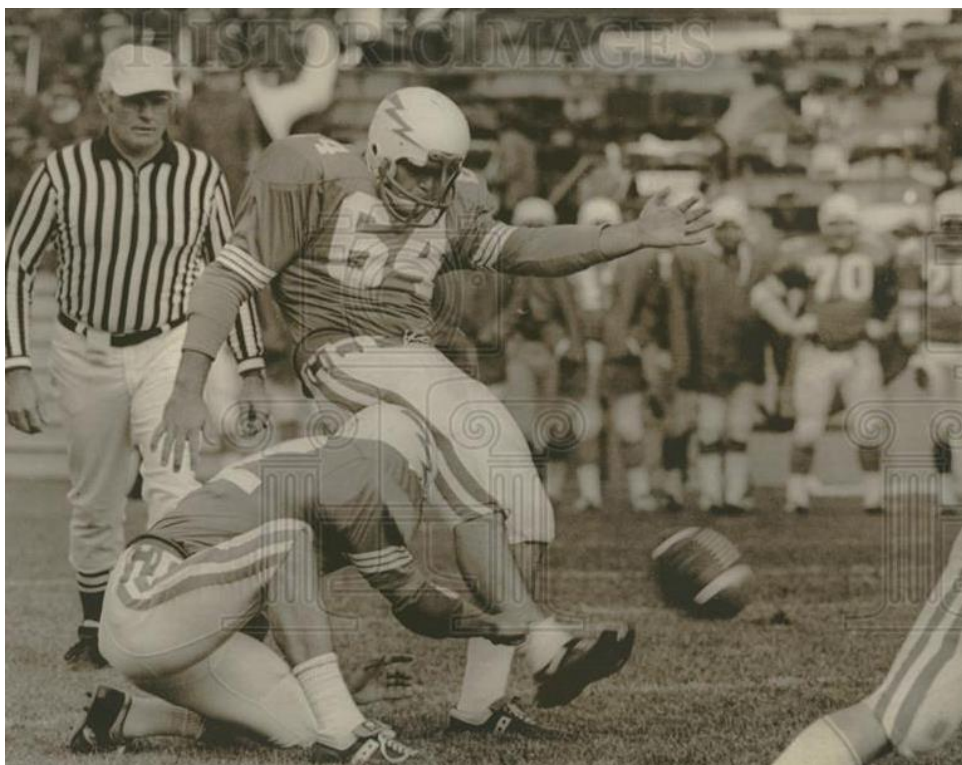
## Great Air Force Player David Lawson

One of the best players and top scorers in AFA football history is Kicker David Lawson. Lawson was a kicker in high school but kicked just one extra-point when he was the kicker on his high school football squad in Shawnee Mission, Kan. Lawson also won All-America honors in football.

As a defensive lineman, he never got to try a field goal in high-school, and he got the chance for the extra-point conversion only because the regular place-kicking specialist was hurt that day. How's that for luck?

And, so, he was not even considered for kicking when he began his varsity career as a freshman playing middle guard at the Air Force Academy. But the big senior at the Air Force Academy quickly became the out-standing placement kicker in college football history. In the 1975 season, Lawson bettered the record for the longest field goal in modern college play by booting 62-yarder and at the time in 1975. He later set a record today for total field goals in a career when Air Force met Notre Dame on Oct 18 at home in Falcon Stadium. Navy at Robert F. Kennedy Stadium in Washington.

Earlier in the season, Lawson booted two field goals, including a 58-yarder, and the extra point that tied the University of California, Los Angeles, 20-20, in a major surprise. This increased his field goal total to 42, equaling the National Collegiate Athletic Association record for a career set by Rich Garcia of Stanford, 1971 through 1973. Lawson kicks the ball the old-fashioned way—straight on



Check out Lawson's Number. It shows his other position

In his day, Lawson had been called the Best in Nation

Carson Long, the University of Pittsburgh's fine field goal specialist, is quoted as saying, "We have a lot of good goal kickers in the East this year—Chris Bahr of Penn State, Dave Jacobs of Syracuse, Don Bitterlich of Temple and Fred Steinfort of Boston College. But the best in the nation was, without a doubt, Lawson."

For the Navy game, George Welsh, Navy's coach, was obviously concerned that Air Force needed only a good 30 to 50-yard offense to get within scoring range for Lawson. The midshipmen, however, were off to their most impressive start in three seasons and they kept it going by defeating the Falcons L (0-17). So, Lawson had to wait two more weeks to get his new record set against Notre dame in a nail-biting L (30-31) losing effort.

When the ND game came, David Eugene Lawson, who was 21 at the time, a, senior at the U.S. Air Force Academy, kicked three field goals

of 45, 52 and 41 yards against Notre Dame. He became the most prolific placekicker in college football history. For the moment at least.

He had booted 45 field goals in four years, which broke the NCAA record. Having him very much alive and kicking with  $\frac{1}{2}$  the season left at the time, meant he could kick even more. Earlier this season, as noted previously, through a cross-wind in Ames, Iowa, Lawson kicked a 62-yarder. This was a major-college record for distance. His 19 field goals in 1974 were a record for one season, but at the time as kicking was becoming more part of the strategies in college games, it was not expected to last very long. You see, Lawson was not kicking alone.

It was not too long after that his record was broken. Right now, the longest field goal in NCAA history is 67 yards, accomplished four times, most recently by Tom Odle for Fort Hays State in 1988. But, in 1975, Lawson was the best there ever was.

You may know that in 1959 the colleges widened their goalposts by about 5 feet (to 24 feet), which of course invited all kickers to begin kicking more often. That year 199 field goals were kicked, an increase of 93.2% from 1958. In 1969 there were 669 field goals, a 336% increase in 10 years. In 1973, there were 958, which is the record that will, at the present rate, was set to be broken by November 2014

As noted, in 1975, Lawson already has a 58-yarder to go with his 62-yarder and he had one of 60 yards last year. In 1975 when Lawson competed, no other major-college kicker has ever made two in the 60s.

Lawson also won a letter in track by throwing the javelin, and in handball, and he was the Air Force Academy's heavyweight boxing champion. When he played, he was a rare placement specialist because he also was a regular at middle guard, serving double duty on the football team.

In his time, he scored 191 points by kicking. That total was just 21 points short of the N.C.A.A. record for a career and he was just 7 points shy of the Air Force career scoring mark set by Ernie Jennings, a great wide receiver of the early 1970's. He set the college mark of 19 field goals in a season last year. When he graduated, Lawson played for a while with the New York Giants



**1976 Air Force Falcons Coach Ben Martin**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1976 college football season playing as a Division I-A Independent. It was their twenty-second season of intercollegiate football. They were led by nineteenth-year head coach Ben Martin.

Home games were played in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Like the prior season, though a little better, this was not a very good season for the Ben Martin's Falcons. They were outscored by their opponents 180–273 and finished with a record of 4 wins and 7 losses (4–7).

**1977 Air Force Falcons Coach Ben Martin**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1977 college football season playing as a Division I-A Independent. It was their twenty-third season of intercollegiate football. They were led by twentieth-year head coach Ben Martin in his last season.

Home games were played in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Like the prior season, though a little better, this was not a very good season for the Ben Martin's Falcons. They were outscored by their opponents 114–296 and finished with a record of 2 wins, 8 losses, and 1 tie (2–8–1).

**Ben Martin passes torch from the Hall of Fame**

<https://www.coloradosports.org/hall-of-fame/athletes/1978-inductees/ben-martin/>



Ben Martin, the handsome Air Force Academy football mentor, is best noted for having established an excellent football program, for giving the academy a viable residence in the major college football neighborhood, and for consistently administrating at a first-class level. A native of Prospect Park, Pennsylvania, Martin attended Hill Preparatory School and Princeton University before his appointment to the Naval Academy in 1943. He started every varsity football game at Navy for three seasons as an end and halfback, and he graduated sixth in his class in 1946.

In 1949, Martin joined Eddie Erdelatz as assistant coach at Navy and in 1956 took over the head-coaching job at Virginia. Two years later, Martin replaced Buck Shaw at the Air Force Academy.

Martin was never able to match the unbeaten, 9-0-2, record his first AFA team accomplished in 1958 when the young academy fielded its first seniors. But he did bring credibility to the academy, and season after season he punctuated his schedule with remarkable upsets, including those over such powerhouses as UCLA, Nebraska, Colorado, Iowa, Oklahoma State, Army and many more.

By this time, the AFA was recognized as a companion academy with both Army and Navy, and Martin's football headlines did much to make this possible. People no longer asked, "What's an Air Force Academy?"

"I have a job to do", Martin said after being informed of the 1965 scandal that trimmed several blue-chip players off his roster. "Sure it's one of the biggest challenges of my life, but you've got to live a long time to run out of challenges."

Martin's twenty-year record at the Air Force Academy included ninety-six wins, 103 losses and nine ties. No deadlock was more surprising and did more to keynote his 1958 club than a 13-13 tie with the powerful Iowa. The Hawkeyes were forced to come from behind in the final two minutes.

Besides having the longest tenure of any coach in service academy history, Martin, in 1977, served as president of the American Football Coaches Association. Both were milestones in his career. In 1978, he was inducted into the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame.

One of the most astute public speakers in sports, Martin has authored two books on football, Ben Martin's Flexible-T Offense, and End Play. He also coached all-star teams in post-season competition, notably the North-South game and the East-West Shrine game in San Francisco.

During Martin's career, he was wooed by several other colleges and by professional teams in both the American and National Football Leagues. But Martin vowed he would never leave the academy. It was the only coaching job he wanted. Had he gone into the competitive area of college ranks with unlimited recruiting available, it is safe to say his won-lost record would rank with Woody Hayes, Bear Bryant and the other gridiron greats.



## Chapter 7 Coach Bill Parcells 1978-1978

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Record</u>	<u>Conference</u>	<u>Record</u>
1978	Bill Parcells	3–8	Indep	



From the Denver Post

By IRV MOSS | [imoss@denverpost.com](mailto:imoss@denverpost.com) |

PUBLISHED: August 13, 2013 at 2:52 pm | UPDATED: April 29, 2016 at 8:24 pm

A few days after Bill Parcells experienced what he called the ultimate reward from his life in football, he talked for a few minutes about the past.

The pleasure of being inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame was evident in his voice. He didn't stop to go over his career step by step,

preferring to let the record speak for itself. Besides, the Super Bowl victories and other trophies earned along the way were secondary to his time at the podium Aug. 3 in Canton, Ohio.

“The Hall of Fame is the ultimate for me,” Parcels said in a phone interview. “Winning Super Bowls were important pieces of the puzzle. Football has been a good life for me.”

With all that big stuff, does he remember 1978, the year he spent as the head football coach at the Air Force Academy?

“That was a difficult year for me,” Parcels said. “It was my first time as a head coach. I remember it.”

Parcells took on the task of following Air Force coaching legend Ben Martin, who had become a coaching institution at Air Force. Martin had taken over the Falcons’ program in 1958. His first team posted a 9-0-2 record, tying Iowa 13-13 during the regular season and tying TCU 0-0 in the Cotton Bowl.

The first Air Force team under the direction of Parcels won its first two games, both on the road, 34-25 at Texas-El Paso and 18-7 at Boston College. But they won only once more, against Kent State, to finish 3-8.

Parcells resigned and initially planned to move to the staff of the New England Patriots. However, he turned down the job in New England and remained in Colorado Springs and out of coaching for a year.

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### **1978 Air Force Falcons Coach Bill Parcells**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1978 college football season playing as a Division I-A Independent. It was their twenty-fourth season of intercollegiate football. They were led by first-year head coach Bill Parcells. Future National Football League (NFL) head coach Bill Parcells replaced Ben Martin as head coach in his only season as Air Force head coach.

Home games were played in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Like the prior season, even with a new head coach, this was again, not a very good season for the Falcons. Air Force finished the season with a record of three wins and eight losses (3–8) and a lot of great lessons from their master coach, Bill Parcells. Two of Parcells' young assistants would go on to be revered AFA coaches.





## Chapter 8 Coach Ken Hatfield 1979-1983

Hatfield

Coach #5

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Record</u>	<u>Conference</u>	<u>Record</u>
1979	Ken Hatfield	2-9		
1980	Ken Hatfield	2-9-1	WAC	1-3
1981	Ken Hatfield	4-7	WAC	2-3
1982	Ken Hatfield	8-5	WAC	4-3
1983	Ken Hatfield	10-2	WAC	5-2



Air Force soared to new heights in the early 1980s under Ken Hatfield, posting two bowl wins, the first over Vanderbilt in the 1982 Hall of Fame Bowl. Now 63 and living in Houston, his last game at Air Force was the 1983 Independence Bowl, a win over Ole Miss.

### Making most of options

*Bill Parcells hired Ken Hatfield as a young assistant in his one-year at AFA in 1978. He also indirectly hired Fisher DeBerry who will*

*get a lot of press in this book soon after Mr. Hatfield. There are no McCoy's in either story, but we can't swear that there are not some relationships in the past. These two acts of Parcels alone kept Air Force on the map—yes, the big US football map after the Ben Martin years.*

*We have a saying in Scranton PA that goes like this: "Nothing happens overnight in Scranton." Let the saying go as it is because it applies to a lot of life situations that require time. Impatient creatures that humans are, often we are not willing to give time to gearing up to win. We just want to win. It is a human fault. We just want to win. The Rolling Stones, not known as modern day philosophers got it right in the song, in fact, right in the title, "You can't always get what you want." True in football, true in life.*

*Even "the Tuna" could not turn AFA around in one year but he tried. You can't always get what you want but then again, nothing in life worth having is easy. By the way, it was with the Pats that Parcels earned the nickname "BigTuna." Said Parcels, "the players pulled a practical joke and I said, 'Do you think I'm Charlie the Tuna, like a sucker?' After that, they called me Tuna." Apr 1, 2014*

*So when Ken Hatfield noticed Air Force was not Army or Navy, and that his mentor Bill Parcels won just three games, he knew life could not be easy as head coach to turn a big over-officered program around. But, kids think they can do anything. Hatfield finally got enough time to get the job done without being fired. DeBerry, when he became miffintiff, had Hatfield's legacy to lean on as he gained more and more prominence within the Air Force Hierarch (i.e. the bosses)*

Irv Moss, of the Denver Post has written magnificent pieces about the Air Force Falcons. The following is another one of them. Thank you, Irv Moss, for sharing your work with us all:

<https://www.denverpost.com/2006/10/15/making-most-of-options/>

“When Ken Hatfield thinks back to 1979 and his first season as football coach at Air Force, he can’t help but remember having a sense of urgency.

It wasn’t that he was anticipating a bowl bid. Far from it. He knew his team would struggle and it did, starting 0-8, with a 13-9 loss to Navy as close as the Falcons would come in the first two months.

“I thought I was going to get fired in a hurry,” Hatfield recalled. But he had the full support of Air Force athletic director John Clune.

“I think (he) kept me alive and on the job,” said Hatfield, who had ascended to head coach at a time when the academy’s football program was in a state of turmoil. Ben Martin had retired after the 1977 season after 20 years at the helm, with his last four teams posting losing records.

Bill Parcels replaced Martin in 1978 but stayed only one season, going 3-8. Hatfield was the offensive coordinator under Parcels and was elevated to head coach when he left.

But after eight games, it appeared there was little to be hopeful about. In the ninth game, the Falcons played Army, then coached by Lou Saban. Hatfield put in some running plays specifically designed for quarterback Dave Ziebart and Air Force upset Army, 28-7, to end an 11-game losing streak.

But more important, Ziebart’s performance added fuel to Hatfield’s growing realization that revamping Air Force’s offense was the way of the future. He knew it would be a controversial decision, but he decided to introduce the triple option wishbone attack full time the following season.

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Irv Moss is a great writer. Thank you Irv. Mr. Moss can be reached at 303-954-1296 or [imoss@denverpost.com](mailto:imoss@denverpost.com). What a guy!

**1979 Air Force Falcons Coach Ken Hatfield**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1979 college football season playing as a Division I-A Independent. It was their twenty-fifth season of intercollegiate football. They were led by first-year head coach Ken Hatfield. Hatfield replaced future National Football League (NFL) head coach Bill Parcells in his first season as Air Force head coach.

Home games were played in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Like the prior season, even with a new head coach, this was again, not a very good season for the Falcons. Air Force finished the season outscored by their opponents 127–253; the Falcons lost their first eight games, but finished by winning two of their last three, finishing 2–9.

**1980 Air Force Falcons Coach Ken Hatfield**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1980 college football season playing as a Division I-A Independent. It was their twenty-sixth season of intercollegiate football. They were led by second-year head coach Ken Hatfield. Hatfield replaced future National Football League (NFL) head coach Bill Parcells in his first season as Air Force head coach.

Home games were played in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Like the prior season, even with a new head coach, this was again, not a very good season for the Falcons. Soon, with Ken Hatfield, their bad luck streak would end. Air Force finished the regular season with a 2–9–1 overall record and a 1–3 record in Western Athletic Conference

**1981 Air Force Falcons Coach Ken Hatfield**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1981 college football season playing as a Division I-A Independent. It was their twenty-seventh season of intercollegiate football. They were led by third-year head coach Ken Hatfield. Hatfield was about to suffer his third poor season, but Air Force was about ready to leave its funk and renew its excellence on the field in the following year.

Home games were played in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Like the prior season, even with a new head coach working through his third year at the helm, this was again, not a very good season for the Falcons. Soon, with Ken Hatfield, their bad luck streak would end. Air Force finished the regular season with a 4–7 overall record and a 2–3 record in Western Athletic Conference games.

## Great Air Force Players 1981 Johnny Jackson



### << Johnny Jackson

Keeping the passes of the bad guys from becoming big gainers and/or touchdowns, safety Johnny Jackson earned his Football Letters in 1978m 1979, 1980, and 1981.

Jackson is best known for being a physical player who hits like a linebacker. He became the first Air Force player to earn first-team all-league honors (all-Western Athletic Conference first team in 1981).

His play caused the pundits and prognosticators to notice. For example, he was first-team All-American and an Associated Press second-team choice in 1981. In 1980, he led the AFA team with 123 tackles. Jackson was the man.

### 1982 Air Force Falcons Coach Ken Hatfield

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1982 college football season playing as a Division I-A Independent. It was their twenty-eighth season of intercollegiate football. They were led by fourth-year head coach Ken Hatfield. Hatfield was about to show that after waiting for results, the time had come, and he was ready to deliver. Air Force was about ready to leave its funk and renew its former excellence on the field. Coach Hatfield's patience had paid off.

Home games were played in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Like the prior season, even with a new head coach working

through his third year at the helm, this was for the first time in years, a fine season for the Falcons. The bad luck streak was over. Air Force played home games at Falcon Stadium. The team finished the regular season with a 7–5 overall record and a 4–3 record in Western Athletic Conference games. The AF squad was selected to play in the Hall of Fame Classic, in which it defeated Vanderbilt 36–28.

On December 31 (New Year's Eve), playing in the Holiday Hall of Fame Classic against Vanderbilt in Legion Field, Birmingham, AL, the Air Force Falcons won their first Bowl Game W (36–28). Go Air Force.

### **1983 Air Force Falcons Coach Ken Hatfield**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1983 college football season playing as a Division I-A Independent.

It was their twenty-ninth season of intercollegiate football. They were led by fifth-year head coach Ken Hatfield in his last year at Air Force. Hatfield had already proven his teams could win and this year, they proved they could win big.

After waiting three years for positive results from coach Hatfield, the time had come, and he delivered in 1982 and he delivered again this year in 1983. Air Force had left its funk in 1982 and they renewed their former excellence on the field. Coach Hatfield's patience had paid off. In Ken Hatfield's last year, Air Force was delivering and with Fisher DeBerry coming up next, the Falcons years never shone so bright.

Home games were played in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The bad luck streak was over. The team finished the regular season with a phenomenal 9–2 overall record and a 5–2 record in the Western Athletic Conference games. The team was selected to play in the Independence Bowl, in which it defeated another long-term great team, Ole Miss 9–3

At San Diego State on Nov 26, the #18 ranked Air Force Squad defeated the Aztecs at Jack Murphy Stadium • San Diego, CAW 38–7. Ranked #16 for the Season Finale, on Dec 10, the Falcons edged out Ole Miss at Independence Stadium, Shreveport, LA W (9–3).

## **The Independence Bowl**

For the Second year in a row with Ken Hatfield, the Falcons made it to a bowl game. This year's game was early on Dec 10 and the Air Force took on the Rebels of Mississippi. The Rebs had tied for third place in their Southeastern Conference. It was their first bowl encounter since 1971.

The Falcons had another good year and had gained the #2 spot in the Western Athletic Conference right behind BYU, who had defeated the Falcons in the regular season. This was the Falcons 2nd straight bowl game. It marked the first time Air Force had made consecutive bowl games in school history. This was the first Independence Bowl in which either team competed.

The game conditions were a ton less than ideal with rain and a drenching as the order of the day. The Air Force got the lead at 6-0 on two field goals by Sean Pavlich from 44 and 39 yards out. Ole Miss cut this in half on a 39-yard field goal from Neil Teevan in the 3rd, but then Falcons' Pavlich's 27 yarder in the same quarter proved to be the last score of the game.

QB Marty Louthan was 6-of-7 for 71 yards, and Buford McGee rushed 22 times for 111 yards for the Falcons. In a losing effort for the Rebels, Mike Brown ran for 91 yards on 12 carries. Kelly Powell threw 11-of-27 for 138 yards, with 2 interceptions. The Air Force picked up its second bowl win in two years.

## **Dec 22, 1983, Ken Hatfield Leaves AFA for Arkansas**

We thank UPI for this article from their archives

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark.



Ken Hatfield, formerly football coach at the Air Force Academy, Thursday was named coach at the University of Arkansas. The move ended a four-day search that began Sunday with the unexpected resignation of Lou Holtz.

The announcement was made by Arkansas athletic director Frank Broyles after a meeting with university officials. Broyles stated earlier he would

wait until after the Jan. 2 bowl games to announce a choice but said Thursday the 'situation was too volatile' to wait that long.

...

Meanwhile, Hatfield's Air Force team was wrapping up a 10-2 campaign, marking the first time since 1905 that the Falcons had won as many as 10 games in a season. Until last year's 8-5 mark, the Falcons had endured five straight losing seasons, and Hatfield was recognized generally as the biggest factor in the turnaround.



## Great Air Force Player 1983 John Kershner



If someone picked a best of the best team for Air Force players, a fullback from the 1980-1983 era, John Kershner earned his Letters in 1981, 1982, and 1983. Kershner is best-known for becoming the first great fullback of Air Force's option era and setting the mold for all future Falcon fullbacks with his bruising, punishing style of play.

There is a great quote from an Air Force coach that described Kershner in his playing days and captured it all. The coach said Kershner was “a man playing with children.” He proved it every day on the field. He led the Falcons in rushing in 1981 (685 yards), 1982 (1,056) and 1983 (934).

Kershner was a Football News third-team All-American in 1983. He ranks third all-time at academy (and first among non-quarterbacks) in career rushing yardage with 2,726.



# Chapter 9 Coach Fisher DeBerry 1984-1995

## Part 1 1984 to 1995

Fisher DeBerry      Coach # 6



Year	Coach	Record	Conf	Record
1984	Fisher DeBerry	8-4	WAC	4-3
1985	Fisher DeBerry	12-1	WAC	7-1
1986	Fisher DeBerry	6-5	WAC	5-2
1987	Fisher DeBerry	9-4	WAC	6-2
1988	Fisher DeBerry	5-7	WAC	3-5
1989	Fisher DeBerry	8-4-1	WAC	5-1-1
1990	Fisher DeBerry	7-5	WAC	3-4
1991	Fisher DeBerry	10-3	WAC	6-2
1992	Fisher DeBerry	7-5	WAC	4-4
1993	Fisher DeBerry	4-8	WAC	1-7
1994	Fisher DeBerry	8-4	WAC	6-2
1995	Fisher DeBerry	8-5	WAC	6-2

## About Coach DeBerry

Fisher DeBerry had a long coaching career by the time he got the head coaching job at Air Force. Reading bio tracks and great articles over the years about DeBerry, he was so significant for Air Force, it might appear to the uninformed that he was born and then he became the Air Force Coach as Air Force is where his prominence as a person and as a coach was really highlighted.

Like many great legendary head coaches before and after him, however, DeBerry spent his requisite time in the low-level jobs before emerging in the big time. For DeBerry, who was born in Cheraw, South Carolina in 1938, his sports affiliation began as a four-sport varsity letter winner. Name the Sport and he was a star—not just a player—a star. He even lettered , five times in baseball. Add to that his three letters each in football and basketball and two in track, and you have one heck of a sports figure before he got out of high school.

He was also all-state in baseball and football. DeBerry. After HS, he went to Wofford College in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Again, he lettered in football and baseball. He graduated in 1960. And pre-graduation had time to be active in the Kappa Sigma Fraternity while in college.

...

DeBerry's squads nailed three Western Athletic Conference championships: 1985, 1995, and 1998. The 1998 team's outstanding 12–1 record completed the first back-to-back 10-win seasons in school history, and the team finished the season ranked 10th nationally.

As you know, the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy is very meaningful to the players and all members of the service academies. Under DeBerry, Air Force dominated the series with arch rival military academies Army and Navy by winning the trophy 14 times and sharing it once in DeBerry's 21 seasons. Army and Navy were sure pleased when he retired.

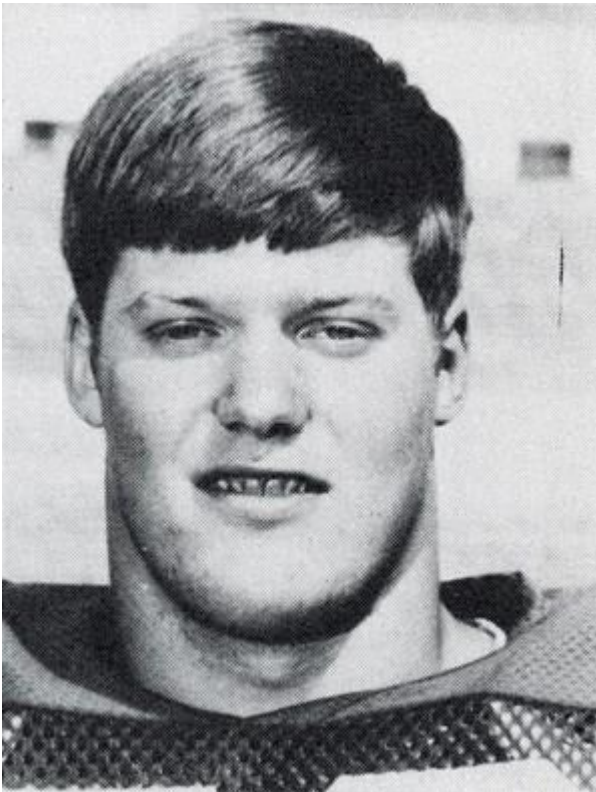
Do all good things have to reach an end? DeBerry's last four Air Force squads lost their AF-Navy games and, subsequently, the CIC trophy each of his last 4 years at Air Force. He was a combined 34–8 against

the Black Knights and Midshipmen and is the winningest coach in service academy history. DeBerry led the Academy to 12 bowl games, in which he had a respectable 6–6 record against the nation’s best.

...

## Great Air Force Players 1983 Dave Schreck

Offensive Line Standout Dave Schreck earned AFA Football Letters in 1980, 1981, 1982, and 1983 He is best known for being a major factor in the resurgence of Air Force football in the early 80s.



### << Dave Schreck

For example, the Falcons went 2-9-1, 4-7, 8-5 and 10-2 in his four years. Schreck had the distinction of becoming the academy’s first all-conference offensive lineman.

Dave Schreck earned third-team Associated Press All-America and first-team all-Western Athletic. He also received Conference honors in 1982. As a player, he helped pave the way for an option attack that averaged 323.5 rushing yards per

game during the 1982 and 1983 seasons. He was the type of player to stay away from on the field.

A Second Team All-American and First Team All-WAC selection from Air Force, offensive lineman Dave Schreck led the Falcons to an 8-5 record and a 36-28 victory over Vanderbilt in the Hall of Fame

Classic. Voted the Air Force Male Athlete of the Year, he was selected to play in the Hula Bowl.

As a First Team Academic All-WAC selection, Schreck compiled a 3.47 GPA in electrical engineering and made the Dean's List five times. He earned his master's in electrical engineering from the University of Illinois in 1985 and spent 22 years in various positions with the U.S. Air Force. Since 2006, Schreck has worked his way up to his current post as senior director of marketing & strategy for Rockwell Collins, a pioneer in the design, production and support of innovative solutions in aerospace and defense.

#### **1984 Air Force Falcons Coach Fisher DeBerry**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1984 college football season playing as a Division I-A Independent. It was their thirtieth season of intercollegiate football. They were led by first-year head coach Fisher DeBerry in his first year at Air Force. Hatfield had already proven modern Air Force teams could win and this year, Fisher DeBerry kept it going,

Air Force had left its funk behind in 1982, renewed its former excellence on the field, and during Fisher DeBerry's tenure, they never looked back. The Falcons light never shined so bright.

Home games were played in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The bad luck streak was over. Air Force finished the regular season with a 7-4 record overall and a 4-3 record in Western Athletic Conference games. The team was selected to play in the Independence Bowl, in which it defeated Virginia Tech

On Dec 31, New Year's Eve, the 7-4 Falcons beat the Hokies of Virginia Tech in Independence Stadium, Shreveport, LA in the Independence Bowl, W (23-7), finishing the full season at 8-4. The writeup from Virginia's web site gives the highlights of the game <https://hokiesports.com/sports/2018/4/30/1984-independence-bowl.aspx?id=171>

## Great Air Force Players 1984 Chris Funk

Defensive Lineman Chris Funk He earned his Varsity Letters in 1981, 1982, 1983, and 1984. Chris was everywhere on defense and was well known by AFA opponents.



One of his great moments was when he blocked a 31-yard field goal attempt in the final seconds of the Falcons' game in South Bend in 1983. This gave the Falcons a well-earned 23-22 victory over Notre Dame.

Chris was named the Western Athletic Conference's Defensive Player of the Year in 1984. He made 151 tackles in his junior and senior seasons and he helped the 1984 defense allow just 315 yards and 17.4 points per game. When he put his AFA uniform on, he was ready to play.

## Independence Bowl

**AIR FORCE 23, VIRGINIA TECH 7**

**December 15, 1984 - Shreveport, La.**

**Independence Stadium - Attendance: 41,100**

SHREVEPORT, La. - Quarterback Bart Weiss got Air Force's wishbone attack going in the second half and led the Falcons to a 23-7 victory over Virginia Tech in the Independence Bowl.

Tech took a 7-3 lead in the first quarter on a 10-play, 72-yard drive that featured a 32-yard run by tailback Eddie Hunter. Maurice Williams, who alternated at the tailback spot with Hunter, capped the march with a 3-yard touchdown run.

The complexion of the game changed drastically midway through the second quarter when the Falcons forced and recovered a fumble at the Tech 3. Halfback Jody Simmons took a pitchout to the left and put Air Force ahead.

The Hokies missed a great chance to regain the lead before the half, and found themselves trailing 10-7, despite having 192 yards of offense and 11 first downs to Air Force's 73 yards and three first downs.



The news got worse for Tech in the second half when Weiss got the Falcons' ground attack going. Neither team scored in the third quarter, but Air Force controlled the football for all but eight plays of the quarter. The Falcons got a break in the fourth quarter when a halfback pass by Hunter was intercepted. From their own 38, the Falcons scored on a classic wishbone drive that ate up seven minutes and put them ahead 17-7 with just six minutes remaining in the game.

Tech's comeback hopes ended when a fumble at its own 30 set up another Air Force score. Weiss, who was named the game's most valuable offensive player, put the finishing touches on the Falcons' win with a 13-yard touchdown run.

Tech linebacker Vince Daniels, who was credited with 15 tackles, was named the game's most valuable defensive player. The scores of the game came as follows:

- AF (6:05 re 1st) - FG Maetos 35
- VT (1:42 re 1st) - Williams 3 run (Wade kick)
- AF (8:50 re 2nd) - Simmons 3 run (Maetos kick)
- AF (6:00 re 4th) - Brown 2 run (Maetos kick)
- AF (2:08 re 4th) - Weiss 13 run (kick failed)





## 1985 Air Force Falcons Coach Fisher DeBerry

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1985 college football season playing as a Division I-A WAC. It was their thirty-first season of intercollegiate football. They were led by coach Fisher DeBerry in his second year at Air Force. Fisher DeBerry was moving an already-started program forward.

After beating the Texas Longhorns in the Bluebonnet Bowl, the Falcons ended the year 12-1 and ranked #5 in the country. Air Force was a force with which to contend.

We went through the bad years above, and, we who appreciate the hard work of the Falcons know that the team left its funk behind in 1982. With Coach DeBerry, they moved forward with winning as the objective and winning as the verdict in most of their games. Home games were played in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

There would be no more bad luck for many years. Air Force finished the year ranked #5 with a phenomenal 12-1 record overall and a 7-1 record in the Western Athletic Conference (WAC) games. The team was selected to play in the Bluebonnet Bowl, in which it defeated the Texas Longhorns.

In 1985, the year about which we are having discourse, the Falcons came within one victory of playing for the national championship. Why was that? This year it was the Nov 16 loss to BYU L (21-28). That pesky BYU team kept getting the upper hand on Air Force. Without BYU this particular year, Air Force would have been undefeated.

In the post-season Bluebonnet Bowl on Dec 31 v Texas, the #10 Air Force Falcons marched into Rice Stadium in Houston, Texas, expecting a victory and due to grit and determination, they achieved their goal winning the bowl game W (24-16) before 42,000

Coming into the New Year's Eve Bluebonnet Bowl game at Rice Stadium in Houston Texas, with an 11-1 record (just a one-TD loss to BYU), the Air Force took on the Longhorns of Texas and proved again that Fisher DeBerry teams are for real. When the game was

over, the Falcons had the victory by W (24-6) over the Longhorns and were crowned Bluebonnet Bowl Champions.

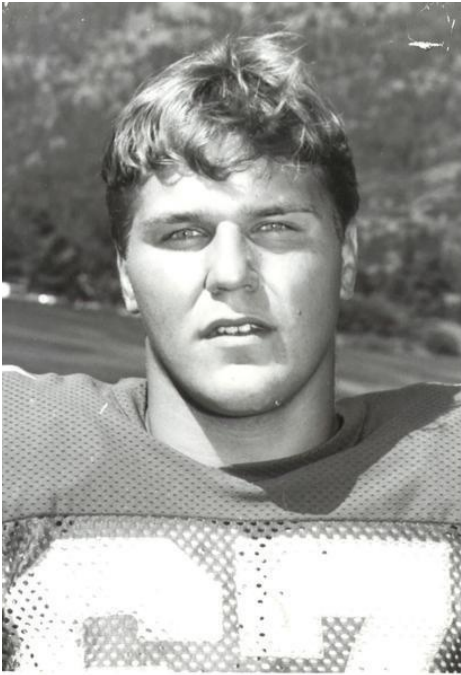
The Falcons counted on their unique wishbone offense after having amassed the most regular season victories in program history with eleven. We keep mentioning the one conference loss to rival and defending national champion BYU at Provo on November 16 which cost the Air Force a shot at the national title and an outright Western Athletic Conference (WAC) title. So close!

The Falcons were on a roll for sure with a fourth consecutive bowl appearance with the previous three having been victories. Unranked Texas tied for second in the Southwest Conference(SWC) but had lost to rival Texas A&M to end the regular season. It was their Texas' ninth straight bowl appearance and its first Bluebonnet Bowl in five years.

This game itself was the first Bluebonnet Bowl at Rice Stadium since 1967; the previous seventeen editions (1968–1984) were at the Astrodome. Nearly a dozen years earlier, Rice Stadium hosted Super Bowl VIII in January 1974). The kickoff was at 1:45 pm CST and about three hours late Air Force had the victory in hand.

## **Great Air Force Players 1985 Terry Maki**

Linebacker Terry Maki played for the Air Force Academy in 1983, 1984, and 1985. Pundits remember him for his tackling abilities. He made lots and lots of tackles.



Maki holds academy records for tackles in a career (475), a season (195 in 1986) and a game (30 against Notre Dame in 1985). In 1986 was named a first-team All-American by Kodak, a second-teamer by Football News and a third-teamer by the Associated Press.

Maki was also a first-team all-Western Athletic Conference performer in 1985 and 1986. Late in the Falcons' 1985 game against Notre Dame, he gave it what he had and was able to block a 37-yard field goal into the hands of A.J. Scott.

Scott returned it 77 yards for a touchdown that gave Air Force a 21-15 victory.

## **Great Air Force Player Scott Thomas 1985**

### **Air Force to honor 'American hero' Scott Thomas**

<https://www.mysanantonio.com/sports/article/Air-Force-to-honor-American-hero-Thomas-1379227.php>

By Jerry Briggs [jbriggs@express-news.net](mailto:jbriggs@express-news.net)



Jay High School product Scott Thomas played football at Air Force and lived to tell about ejecting from a crippled plane over Iraq in 1991. COURTESY PHOTO

Scott Thomas seemingly lives his life one contingency plan at a time. Adversity doesn't hurt him, as much as it provides incentive to identify alternate routes to success.

For instance, Thomas says that the Texas Longhorns once offered him a scholarship to play football, only to pull the deal off the table.

This happened in 1982, in Thomas' senior year at Jay.

The All-City running back promptly changed his plan and decided to attend the Air Force Academy.

"Best decision I ever made," said Thomas, who will be inducted into the academy's Athletic Hall of Fame tonight in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Nine years later while serving his country in the first Gulf War, another issue emerged, carrying with it the potential for much greater harm than a recruiting snub.

### **Thomas' F-16 fighter jet malfunctioned at 32,000 feet.**

Worse than that, the former All-American safety for the Falcons was in Iraqi airspace. He ended up ejecting from the crippled plane behind enemy lines.

Once again, the 20-something fighter pilot survived the experience, coming out of it with only a cut on his chin.

Altogether, he served 7 1/2 months in combat, earning a Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism.

"Nothing Scott Thomas did surprised me, because he was a tough son of a gun," former Air Force football coach Fisher DeBerry said. "I knew if he ever got in a pickle, he'd be OK." Now 47, Thomas lives a good life in Wichita Falls, working out of Sheppard AFB, training pilots.

His journey from the practice fields at Jay, to college football stardom in Colorado Springs, then to wartime heroism in Iraq is a tale worth telling.

It started 29 years ago when the phone rang at the Thomas home in San Antonio. A UT assistant coach was on the line. He told Thomas, "We're overextended, and we can't offer you that scholarship."

A teenager with dreams, Thomas was crushed.

## **EMERGENCY AT 32,000 FEET**

When Scott Thomas' F-16 fighter jet malfunctioned during Operation Desert Storm, his instincts and training kept him alive as he bailed out and parachuted into hostile territory in Iraq.

## **AIR FORCE ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME**

What: Class of 2011 induction ceremony

When: 8 p.m. today

Where: Colorado Springs, Colo.

S.A. connections: Scott Thomas, All-American in football in 1985, a former All-City running back at Jay; San Antonio resident Bob Nieman, a two-time All-American in swimming (1969-70), later a world champion and Olympian in modern pentathlon; the late Jim Conboy, athletic trainer (1955-98), father-in-law of Spurs coach Gregg Popovich. Other inductees: Gail (Conway) Gray, track and field; Chuck Delich, hockey

## **SCOTT THOMAS**

Age: 47

Rank: Lieutenant colonel, U.S. Air Force reserve

Rundown:

Former Jay High School and Air Force football player serves as 80th Operations Group deputy commander at Sheppard AFB in Wichita Falls. Serving in U.S. Air Force reserve, Thomas assists group commander in supervising operations of T-6 and T-38 undergraduate pilot training.

Family: Wife Kelly; daughter Emily (age 21), son Peter (15)

Football career: Former running back/defensive back at Jay earned All-City honors as senior in 1981. ... Went on to Air Force, where he

played free safety and special teams for coach Fisher DeBerry. ... In 1985, named first-team All-American by Kodak, Walter Camp and Football Writers Association, second team by Associated Press.

"I finally gathered myself and looked at a few small schools, and then I went back to Air Force, and I reflected (on everything)," he said. "Everything they told me was true. It was honest. It was realistic. They told me how it was going to be, that it was going to suck for the first year.

"But I had the opportunity to play Division I football. I finally decided, 'You know what? I'm going to go where they want me.'"

In his senior year, his talents blossomed. Playing safety and special teams for the Falcons, he distinguished himself as one of the few players in NCAA history to score touchdowns off returns of an interception, a punt and a kickoff in the same season.

His 100-yard kickoff return against Utah in 1985 was a highlight for the Falcons, who soared to a 10-0 record and a No. 4 national ranking before finishing 12-1. In a sweet conclusion to his career, Air Force beat Texas 24-16 in the Bluebonnet Bowl.

Looking back, Thomas said he enjoyed the camaraderie of his teammates and the feeling that people at the academy were taking care of him.

"You just knew," he said. "You knew you had guys all around you who were looking out for you."

Likewise, Thomas always seemed to have someone watching his back during his active-duty military career. Take, for instance, the story of how he survived a horrible day in February 1991 in the first Gulf War.

It started when he heard a "thunk" in the engine of his F-16 fighter while cruising high above the clouds. His day went on to include a chaotic ejection from the burning jet, a parachute ride from 12,000 feet, a two-hour wait in the darkness in the desert, and then a ride to safety in a U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter.

Thomas credited "superior" combat training for allowing him to remain calm during the ordeal.

"Surprisingly, I never felt scared," he said. "I never felt like I would die or be hurt."

DeBerry isn't surprised that Thomas survived.

"He was always a tremendous competitor," the coach said. "What he was able to achieve is no surprise to me whatsoever."

Thomas' friend, Air Force pilot Eric Dodson, was credited with playing a key role in the rescue.

Flying in tandem with Thomas, Dodson talked to his buddy on radio to keep him calm minutes before the ejection. Later, he flew low into the region to mark the location for rescue teams. His actions sent him into range of enemy missile fire.

"My wingman did things that, you know, when he woke up that morning, he really didn't want to do," Thomas said.

Likewise, Thomas really didn't feel like spending the early evening hours sitting in the desert, with enemy troops in the vicinity.

Practicing caution, Thomas stayed off his radio.

"I always heard the faint noise of jets overhead, out of sight, (and) that provided comfort," he said.

According to his memoirs, he hunkered down underneath a one-man life raft. Air Force pilots carried inflatable rafts in emergency packs because they flew so many missions over the Persian Gulf.

Thomas used his raft as a "lean-to." Befitting his Texas ties, he propped it up against a tumbleweed.

Subsequently, a five-minute thunderstorm blew through the area, but he remained completely dry.



"The skies cleared as night fell, revealing more stars than I knew existed — a hauntingly beautiful sight," Thomas wrote.

Thanks to Dodson, 14 Army troopers in two Black Hawk helicopters were on the scene in a little more than two hours.

"Sir," the first responder said. "Sir, are you OK?"

"Yes, I am," Thomas responded. "Let's get the hell out of here."

Running to the Black Hawk, Thomas climbed aboard.

As the chopper pilot sped through the darkness to the south, a missile launch came from the north. Rescuers saw it hit the ground harmlessly, Thomas said in his memoir.

He said in an interview that his college lifestyle helped him withstand the rigors of the day's events.

"With football (at Air Force), you had to learn how to multi-task," Thomas said. "You had to learn time management and asset management. It made you think. 'What's my highest threat the next day? Is it that test? Is it that lab? Anything else?'"

"For me, when I showed up at practice, that was kind of an escape." But nothing like his escape from southern Iraq.

DeBerry said it's important to remember college football players like Thomas, who could have played in the NFL.

"I'm sure he would have liked to and could have (played pro ball), with his determination and talent, yes," DeBerry said. "But he had his (military) commitment."

The coach referenced a night in Connecticut following Thomas' 1985 regular season. At the time, DeBerry was being honored as Coach of the Year, Thomas as an All-American by the Walter Camp Foundation.

Many of the players, upon introduction at the dinner, talked about their dream of playing in the NFL.

DeBerry quoted Thomas as saying, "I'm not going to play in the NFL. But I am going to fly an F-16 for the U.S. Air Force."

As it turned out, his dream came true.

"Scott isn't just a football hero," DeBerry said. "He's an American hero."

### **1986 Air Force Falcons Coach Fisher DeBerry**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1986 college football season playing as a Division I-A WAC. It was their thirty-second season of intercollegiate football. They were led by coach Fisher DeBerry in his third year at Air Force. DeBerry was on a roll.

Air Force finished the season with a 6–5 record overall and a 5–2 record in Western Athletic Conference games.

## **Great Air Force Players 1986 Tom Rotello**



Cornerback Tom Rotello gained his Football Letters over four years in 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986. He is well known for picking off more passes (17) than any player in Air Force history.

Rotello was named a second-team All-American by Football News in 1986 when he made 91 tackles that year. He was also a two-time first-team all-Western Athletic Conference selection (1985 and 1986).

Tom Rotello recorded a program-record eight interceptions in 1985. This was part of a season-record of 28 passes picked off by the Falcons squad.

## Great Air Force Players 1986 Mark Simon

During his playing days, he was known as the punter. He earned his letters in 1984, 1985, and 1986 . He was the winner of the Scripps-Howard All-America honors in 1985 after leading all Division I punters with a 47.3-yard punting average — the best single-season mark in Air Force Academy history.



Simon holds the Air Force record for career punting average (44.4 yards per punt) For his accomplishments on the field, he earned second-team all-Western Athletic Conference honors in 1984 and first-team honors in 1985 and 1986.

### 1987 Air Force Falcons Coach Fisher DeBerry

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1987 college football season playing as a Division I-A WAC. It was their thirty-third season of intercollegiate football. They were led by coach Fisher DeBerry in his fourth year at Air Force.

Air Force finished the season with a 9-4 record overall and a 6-2 record in Western Athletic Conference games. The Falcons offense scored 405 points while the defense allowed 269 points.

At season's end, the Falcons appeared in the 1987 Freedom Bowl. In the Ram-Falcon Trophy match, the Falcons beat the Colorado State Rams to win the trophy. Air Force also won the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy, emblematic of beating both Army and Navy.

After having won four straight bowl games, the Air Force lost on December 30, 1987 to Arizona State in Anaheim Stadium, Anaheim, California in the Freedom Bowl L (28-33) before 33,261.

## Freedom Bowl Highlights

Air Force played tough, but it was not enough as Daniel Ford, Arizona State's junior quarterback, threw for 272 yards, including a 61-yard touchdown to Aaron Cox that capped a 24-point second quarter, enabling the Sun Devils to beat Air Force, 33-28, in the Freedom Bowl.

Coach John Cooper's Sun Devils finished 7-4-1. Cooper will be coaching at Ohio State next season. Air Force finished at 9-4. Ford completed 16 of 30 attempts in amassing the most passing yardage in his college career. Channing Williams and Darryl Harris scored on 2-yard runs for Arizona State in the second quarter, and Kirk Wendorf scored on a 20-yard run in the fourth quarter.

Arizona State converted two turnovers by Steve Letnich, the Air Force quarterback, into 10 points in the second quarter on the way to their 24-14 halftime lead.

The Sun Devils bumped up the lead to 33-14 in the second half despite having two scores called back because of penalties. Arizona State, which turned the ball over three times in the third quarter, got out of the period with a 20-yard field goal by Alan Zendejas.

Zendejas also missed two kicks and connected from 36 yards in the second quarter. The Falcons played without the services of their top quarterback, Dee Dowis, who broke his hand in the regular-season finale against Hawaii. Dowis had established a National Collegiate Athletic Association rushing record for quarterbacks by gaining 1,315 yards.

The Arizona State defense was led by Shawn Patterson, a tackle. They held the Air Force's wishbone offense to 276 yards. Letnich, who replaced Dowis as the starter, gained 90 yards in 16 carries.

The Falcons' Steven Senn caught scoring passes of 10 and 18 yards from a reserve quarterback, Lance McDowell, in the last three minutes as Air Force reduced the margin but could not squeeze out a victory.

## Great Air Force Players 1987 Chad Hennings

Whenever anybody mentions great AFA football players, Defensive Tackle Chad Hennings is always on the list. No offensive player in his time with Air Force was pleased when they found out they had to line up against Chad Henning. He was drafted to the Dallas Cowboys and played a lot of great pro football after being an AF pilot for four years. His pro period with the Cowboys was from 1992 to 2000.



Chad Hennings—Always Ready!

What's the scoop on Henny? Chad Hennings won the Outland Trophy (top interior lineman) at Air Force in 1987 and was an 11th-round pick of the Dallas Cowboys -- his draft stock reportedly slipped due to his pending military service. He served his country for four years as an Air Force pilot, and had four more years waived, which allowed him to embark upon a pro football career. He was already 27 when he began playing for the Cowboys, but he managed to win three Super Bowls and notched 27.5 sacks before retiring after the 2000 season. In his post-NFL life, Hennings became a Christian motivational speaker.

### **1988 Air Force Falcons Coach Fisher DeBerry**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1988 college football season playing as a Division I-A WAC. It was their thirty-fourth season of inter-collegiate football. They were led by coach Fisher DeBerry in his fifth year at Air Force.

Air Force finished the season with a 5-7 record overall and a 3-5 record in Western Athletic Conference games. This was Fisher DeBerry's first losing season with the Falcons

### **1989 Air Force Falcons Coach Fisher DeBerry**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1989 college football season playing as a Division I-A WAC. It was their thirty-fifth season of inter-collegiate football. They were led by coach Fisher DeBerry in his sixth season with Air Force.

Air Force finished the season with an 8-4-1 record overall and a 5-1-1 record in Western Athletic Conference games. In the Ram-Falcon Trophy match, the Falcons beat the Colorado State Rams to win the trophy.

The Liberty Bowl committee invited Air Force to play Mississippi on December 28, 1989 in Liberty Bowl Memorial Stadium Memphis, Tennessee. The Rebels defeated the Falcons L 29-42 before 60,128.

### **Liberty Bowl Highlights Dec 28, 1989**

Air Force had a string broken in the prior year's bowl game and they lost again this time in 1989 in the Liberty Bowl, This game was played between the Ole Miss Rebels (42) and the Air Force Falcons (29).

The Rebels had a great year, finishing tied for 4th in the Southeastern Conference while the Falcons finished 2nd in the Western Athletic Conference. This was the first year in which the winner of the Commander in Chief's Trophy (Air Force) received an automatic bid to the Liberty Bowl. Air Force was pleased to accept.

The two teams had played before in 1983. Chucky Mullins, an Ole Miss favorite, who had been paralyzed in a game just two months prior, visited the Ole Miss locker room prior to the game in his first visit outside the hospital since before his injury.

It was a well-played game with the first quarter bringing Ole Miss a score with Hines' 32 pass from Darnell. Hogue got the PAT with 3:53 remaining. Then Air Force got a Wood 37 FG with 11:16 remaining. Ole Miss's Baldwin scored on a 23 run with a Hogue PAT, and there was 9:18 remaining. Air Force then had a Dowis 2 yd run; but a pass failed with 3:19 remaining

Despite all the hard work, the Falcons lost the game L (29-42)

## **Great Air Force Player 1989 Dee Dowis**

Quarterback Dee Dowis was another great AFA QB . He preceded the greatest, Shaun Carney by about ten years and though he played four years, he did not play as much.

He got his letters in 1986, 1987, 1988, and 1989 in the Forrest DeBerry years. Dowis is most famous finishing well (sixth) in voting for the 1989 Heisman Trophy and he is credited with one of the most remarkable single-game performances in academy history. You'll want to know about this.



<< Dee Dowis

It was described as an eye-popping 249 rushing yards and six touchdowns on just 13 carries in just one game. It was the 1989 victory over San Diego State.

Most men playing in the service academies at all positions are on the average smaller than the averages sized players in NCAA Division. They are all mighty-mights. And,

so Dowis had been termed a diminutive signal-caller.

Nonetheless, he was the Western Athletic Conference's Offensive Player of the Year and he received an honorable mention Associated Press All-America selection in 1989. He still ranks as the academy's career rushing leader with 3,612 yards.

#### **1990 Air Force Falcons Coach Fisher DeBerry**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1990 college football season playing as a Division I-A WAC. It was their thirty-sixth season of inter-collegiate football. They were led by coach Fisher DeBerry in his seventh season with Air Force.

Air Force finished the season with a 7–5 record overall (6-5 in the regular season) and a 3–4 record in Western Athletic Conference games. The team was selected to play in the Liberty Bowl, in which it defeated Ohio State.]

As the winner of the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy, Air Force was invited again to the Liberty Bowl. On December 27, 1990 v Ohio



State. The game was played in Liberty Bowl Memorial Stadium in Memphis, TN. The Air Force prevailed W (23–11).

### **Highlights of the 1990 Liberty Bowl**

Fisher DeBerry's 1990 Falcons triumphed over "THE" Ohio State in the 1990 Liberty Bowl. It was great for the Falcons, but the loss was especially hurtful to Ohio State as it came on the heels of Coach John Cooper's third straight loss to Michigan as Ohio State's head coach. It changed their season. If Ohio State had won that game, Ohio State would have gone to the Rose Bowl. Instead, Ohio State was sent to Memphis to play against an Air Force team that barely qualified for bowl eligibility. In retrospect, I would think the Buckeyes wished they had spent a bit more time thinking about the game rather than their "humiliation."

Despite outsizing and outweighing the Air Force Defense, the Buckeyes simply could not get the run going. Their famed back Robert Smith, for example, was held to just 62 rushing yards and one touchdown. OSU QB Greg Frey was terrible, throwing for just 10 of 27 for 110 yards. He also threw an interception before being taken out and replaced by Kent Graham late in the game.

OSU had a 5-0 lead in the first due to recovering a muffed punt in the end zone for a safety and later gaining a field goal. But Perez gave the Air Force the lead with 3:42 in the half on a touchdown sneak, entering halftime with a 6-5 lead. He added another touchdown run to make it 13-5 in the third quarter.

Ohio State narrowed the Falcon lead to 13-11 and so they went for two to tie. But Graham's pass was too high thus keeping the difference at 2. The Falcons kept at it by adding a field goal after a bad punt, making it 16-11. While driving to try to take the lead, Air Force intercepted Frey's and Carlton McDonald returned it 40 yards. This was McDonald's second of the day).

This assured the win for Air Force. Rob Perez only threw 1 for 3 passes (a Liberty Bowl record for least amount of pass completions) for 11 yards and an interception. He also rushed for 93 yards and 2 touchdowns for Fisher DeBerry's well-oiled Air Force squad.

## Great Air Force Player 2000 Steve Russ

Steve Russ was born September 16, 1972. He was an All-conference Line Backer for the Air Force Falcons. After two years of military duty, he played four years with the Denver Broncos. He came back to Air Force and is responsible for turning around their Defense.

As noted, he played American football in the National Football League for the Denver Broncos in 1997, 1999, and 2000 as a linebacker. He is now the linebackers coach for the Carolina Panthers.

He also played for the Los Angeles Xtreme in the short-lived XFL. He played at the collegiate level at the United States Air Force Academy.

Russ was a coach at United States Air Force Academy. He spent six seasons (2012-17) at Air Force as the assistant head coach, including four (2014-17) as the defensive coordinator and defensive backfield coach. Russ served as co-defensive coordinator from 2012-13 with responsibilities coaching the inside linebackers (2013) and secondary (2012). He is currently the Linebacker's coach for the Panthers.



He joined the Carolina Panthers to coach linebackers, replacing Al Holcomb, who had become the Arizona Cardinals' defensive coordinator. The Carolina Panthers dipped into the college ranks to

find their linebackers coach. Russ took over one of the Panthers' deepest position groups, after six seasons at his alma mater. He began his full-time coaching career in 2001 at Ohio University, where he worked with Panthers defensive coordinator Eric Washington.

Russ was Air Force's defensive coordinator the past four years and oversaw a big improvement during his first season in 2014 when the Falcons allowed nearly 16 points and 100 rushing yards fewer than they did in 2013.

Air Force was 66th among 129 FBS school last season in total defense but ranked 10th against the pass (171.1 yards allowed per game). Russ also has had stops at Syracuse and Wake Forest, where he worked under Jim Grobe.

He was an all-conference linebacker at Air Force, was a seventh-round draft pick of the Denver Broncos in 1995. He was part of the Broncos 1997 and '98 Super Bowl-winning teams. After hiring former Seattle Seahawks assistant special teams coach Heath Farwell in the same role. In pro football, noting is ever set in stone.

### **1991 Air Force Falcons Coach Fisher DeBerry**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1991 college football season playing as a Division I-A WAC. It was their thirty-seventh season of inter-collegiate football. They were led by coach Fisher DeBerry in his eighth season with Air Force.

Air Force finished the season with a 10-3 record overall (9-3) in the regular season) and a 6-2 record in Western Athletic Conference games. The team was selected to play in the Liberty Bowl, in which it defeated Tennessee. The Falcons had a great year and came very close to playing for the national championship.

Having won the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy, the Falcons were invited to the Liberty Bowl on December 29 vs. Mississippi State. The game was played in Liberty Bowl Stadium, Memphis, Tennessee where the Falcons defeated the Volunteers W 38-15 before 61,497

## 1991 Liberty Bowl Highlights

Fullback Jason Jones and Rob Perez each with one-yard scoring runs gave the Falcons a 14-0 first quarter lead. Perez's TD came just six plays after the kickoff returner fumbled the ball back to the Falcons.

The score shot up to 21-0 when Shannon Yates recovered a fumble and ran 35 yards for a touchdown. Sleepy Robinson threw a touchdown pass to Trenell Edwards to culminate a 76-yard drive with thirty-five seconds left in the half.

The Falcons hit a lull and scored only three points in the third quarter, though they had possession of the ball for 13:12. Scott Hufford scored on a 31-yard touchdown run on the 2nd play of the fourth quarter. Michael Davis then ran for a touchdown to make it 31-15 with 7:23 remaining, but the Falcons would not be beaten, Rob Perez ran for a whopping 318 yards while only attempting two passes in the entire game. Air Force outgained the Bulldogs in time of possession by 37:34 to 22:26.

## Great Players in Air Force Football 1991 Joe Wood

Joe, “The Toe” Wood never got that nickname (The Toe) because Lou “The Toe” Groza had it many years before in the pros.



FYI, Groza was professional football's career kicking and points leader when he retired after the 1967 season. He played in 21 seasons for the Browns, helping the team to win eight league championships in that span.

Wood got his Letters for AFA football in 1989, 1990, and 1991. He was best known for his bombing kickoffs; and hitting field goals consistently.

Many remember his famous do-over at Notre Dame in 1991. Wood hit a field goal from 52 yards just before the end of the first half that was nullified by a false start. After the penalty, he attempted another, which after the penalty officially was a 58-yarder, and he nailed it. Joe

Wood was a great player and was nominated first-team all-Western Athletic Conference selection in 1990 and a second-team choice in 1991.

In his career, he made 39 of his 49 field goal attempts. That's 79.6 percent—second-best in academy history for those kickers with a minimum of 10 attempts. He also slammed through 104-of-108 extra points. He ranks sixth all-time at the academy with 221 points. He was so good that he was selected by Houston in the 1992 draft where he played one year.

### **1992 Air Force Falcons Coach Fisher DeBerry**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1992 college football season playing as a Division I-A WAC. It was their thirty-eighth season of inter-collegiate football. They were led by coach Fisher DeBerry in his ninth season with Air Force.

Air Force finished the season with a 7-5 record and a 4-4 record in Western Athletic Conference games. The team was selected to play in the Liberty Bowl, in which they were defeated by Old Miss.

On Dec 31, Air Force was shut out by Ole Miss in the Liberty Bowl, played in Liberty Bowl Memorial Stadium Memphis, TN L (0-13)

### **Liberty Bowl Game Highlights**

Ole Miss's Dou Innocent started things off with a TD to give the Rebels a 7-0 lead over Air Force's Falcons with 2:42 left in the first quarter. He completed his day with 65 yards on 17 carries. Brian Lee kicked two field goals from 24 and 29 yards making the final game score 13-0 as Air Force was held to a minimal offensive production (185 yards of total offense). Russ Shows completed 9-of-19 for 163 yards. Cassius Ware had 10 tackles and 2 sacks, in a game MVP effort.

## Great Air Force Player 1992 Vergil Simpson



Outstanding Linebacker Vergil Simpson picked up his AFA Varsity Letters in 1989, 1990, 1991, and 1992. He was not the most well liked on the AFA D by opposing players. He made his living by harassing opposing quarterbacks. He played overflowing with emotion, making big plays from his outside linebacker spot.

He ranks second behind Chad Hennings at the Academy in career quarterback sacks with 23 and third all-time in tackles for losses (46). He received many honors such as first-team all-Western Athletic Conference honors in 1991 and 1992. His braggable claim to fame is his recovery of a fumble in end zone for touchdown in the 1991 Liberty Bowl victory over Mississippi State.

## Great Air Force Player 1992 Carlton McDonald

Carlton R. McDonald is one of Air Force's best players – in the top five. He was born February 20, 1971 and played during the late 1980's and early 1990's. He was a consensus All-American defensive back while playing for the Air Force Falcons football squad in 1992.

Like all of the players in Air Force Football, he attended the United States Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs, Colorado. While at



the Academy, he played at the traditional cornerback position for the Air Force Falcons football team from 1989 to 1992. The great Fisher DeBerry was his head coach.



As a highlight in his career, Air Force aficionados recall that under head coach Fisher DeBerry, in the 1990 Liberty Bowl, McDonald had one heck of a game. He intercepted two passes, including one late in the game that he was able to return 40 yards for a touchdown. This TD clinched the Falcons' 23-11 victory over an always tough Ohio State Team

After playing as a senior, McDonald was selected as a consensus defensive back on the 1992 College Football All-America Team. He had other honors including being selected as the Western Athletic Conference defensive player of the year in both 1991 and 1992. He was second in the voting for the 1992 Thorpe Award. This prestigious award named after football great Jim Thorpe is presented to the top defensive back in college football since 1986. During his playing career, he measured six feet tall and weighed 195 pounds. He was a powerhouse player for sure and used every ounce of his frame for the benefit of Air Force football.

Like most Air Force graduates, he had a fine career after graduation. When he graduated from the Air Force Academy in 1993, he immediately began to serve a five-year stint in the Air Force as a finance officer. He subsequently became employed by Winn-Dixie company at its headquarters in Jacksonville, Florida. He also became a pilot for the Florida Air National Guard. As one of the best on Air Force history, Carlton R. McDonald was inducted into the Air Force Academy's Sports Hall of Fame in 2013.

### **1993 Air Force Falcons Coach Fisher DeBerry**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1993 college football season playing as a Division I-A WAC. It was their thirty-ninth season of inter-collegiate football. They were led by coach Fisher DeBerry in his tenth season with Air Force.

Air Force finished the season with a losing season record of 4-8 and a 1-7 record in Western Athletic Conference games. It was one of Fisher DeBerry's worst seasons.

### **1994 Air Force Falcons Coach Fisher DeBerry**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1994 college football season playing as a Division I-A WAC. It was their fortieth season of inter-collegiate football. They were led by coach Fisher DeBerry in his eleventh season with Air Force.

Air Force finished the season with a losing season record of 8-4 and a 5-3 record in Western Athletic Conference games.

### **1995 Air Force Falcons Coach Fisher DeBerry**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1995 college football season playing as a Division I-A WAC. It was their forty-first season of inter-collegiate football. They were led by coach Fisher DeBerry in his twelfth season with Air Force.

Air Force finished the season with a losing season record of 8-5 and a 6-2 record in Western Athletic Conference games. The team was



selected to play in the Copper Bowl, which it lost 41–55 to Texas Tech.

The 1995 season and home opener was played on September 2, 1995 against BYU in Falcon Stadium • Colorado Springs, CO. The Falcons beat the Cougars after twelve years of losses W (38-12). It took Fisher DeBerry twelve years to beat BYU. From this point on there would be a mix of wins and losses for BYU and the Falcons. The long win drought with Brigham Young University for the Air Force, was finally over. They were still a nemesis, but their probability of winning had been decreased substantially.

After such a great regular season, Air Force played in the Copper Bowl on December 27 vs. Texas Tech in Arizona Stadium Tucson, AZ. The Copper Bowl was a shootout so both the offensive and defensive squads in this match felt OK but only Texas Tech actually felt good as they won the game L 41–55)

### **Copper Bowl Highlights**

The Air Force was invited to the 1995 Copper Bowl played on December 27, 1995, at Arizona Stadium in Tucson, Arizona. Most Americans have never heard of the Copper Bowl; but it takes a while. It turns out that it was just the seventh edition of the annual Copper Bowl—now known by fans as the Cactus Bowl. This game featured the Texas Tech Red Raiders, and the Air Force Falcons.

Both teams were ready to take away the bowl trophy. This year, the Red Raiders were 1-2 against ranked opponents, having lost to #4 Penn State and #13 Texas but they did beat #8 Texas A&M.

The Red Raiders finished tied for 2nd in the Southwest Conference with Texas A&M and Baylor. It was their third bowl game in two seasons. Air Force, which had gotten over its phobia about beating BYU, finished as co-champion of the Western Athletic Conference in a rare four-way tie, with Colorado State, BYU, and Utah.

Air Force had beaten BYU to begin the season, but they lost to Colorado State and Utah. However, Fisher DeBerry's Falcons were the only one of the four to be invited to a bowl game, their 7th in 10 seasons.

Air Force held their ground for the most part in the game but gave up just enough to lose the shootout contest L (41-55).

## Chapter 10 Coach Fisher DeBerry 1996-2006

DeBerry Coach # 6



Year	Coach	Record	Conf	Record
1996	Fisher DeBerry	6-5	WAC	5-3
1997	Fisher DeBerry	10-3	WAC	6-2
1998	Fisher DeBerry	12-1	WAC	7-1
1999	Fisher DeBerry	6-5	MWC	2-5
2000	Fisher DeBerry	9-3	MWC	5-2
2001	Fisher DeBerry	6-6	MWC	3-4
2002	Fisher DeBerry	8-5	MWC	4-3
2003	Fisher DeBerry	7-5	MWC	3-4
2004	Fisher DeBerry	5-6	MWC	3-4
2005	Fisher DeBerry	4-7	MWC	3-5
2006	Fisher DeBerry	4-8	MWC	3-4

As you have surely deduced by now, coaches Ben Martin and Fisher DeBerry put in twenty-+ years at the helm for Air Force. And so, my knowing that readers of great books such as this, Ahem, are known to not want to read forever and ever to get finished one single chapter so they can get on to the next. So for these legendary coaches, I chose to split the chapters about down the middle and give the reader a nice break in-between.

The good news for all readers is that we still have eleven more Fisher DeBerry chapters. I suspect that you like reading about this phenomenal coach as I like writing about him. He makes me wish I was one of the chosen to be on his college football squad while his squads were all trying to become Air Force Pilots.

It is no secret for anybody that Fisher DeBerry retired in December 2006 after his last season. He is the best AFA coach of all time.

### **Retirement STATEMENT FROM Fisher DeBerry**

There comes a time in every man's life when you have to look at the big picture and decide what's the best thing for your family. After 27 exciting and wonderful years here at the Academy and a total of 44 years of coaching, I am announcing my retirement from active coaching.

Coaching is the best job a guy could have, but it is a very demanding and time-consuming job. My kids and grandkids have moved to Oklahoma. It is time for Lu Ann and me to spend some quality time together and be with them. We passionately love the Academy and consider it an honor and a privilege to have had the opportunity to serve here and carry the title "Coach."

We respect the military so much and the mission of the Academy and I have felt football is one of the most important leadership training opportunities here. We have been blessed and privileged to have had the opportunity to coach the finest young people in America and work daily with the best coaches in NCAA football. Nobody in life does anything by themselves [The only thing you can do alone in life—is fail]. and any success we have enjoyed is the direct result of a tremendous commitment on the part of so many; the players, coaches, secretary, support staff and administration.

Therefore, this is the hardest decision I have ever made in my life. I love my players and my coaches. I will always be grateful to former Superintendent Gen. Skip Scott and former Athletic Director John Clune for their confidence and the opportunity they gave me 23 years ago to live my dream.

It's been a good ride and I thank from the bottom of my heart all my players and my fellow coaches over my tenure for their commitment to excellence and high expectations. I especially want to thank the best secretary in NCAA football for 25 years of loyal and faithful service to the football program.

In conclusion, I want to thank my loving wife of 41 years, Lu Ann, for her understanding loving support and commitment and for putting up with late suppers. Thank you, Baby, for your love and support. Also, I thank my two children, Joe and Michelle, for their support during this ride. Without their love, I wouldn't be standing here today. No question, Lu Ann has been the Head Coach and we have been a good team.

Finally, I want to thank my Master Coach for leading us to Colorado 26 years ago. I pray we have made a difference in the lives of the ones who have been entrusted to us and I hope we have honored Him in all we have tried to do. We love Colorado and especially Colorado Springs and the wonderful friends we have made. I hope Lu Ann and I can continue to be of service to others in this community.

As I have always said to others departing the program, 'Once a Falcon, Always a Falcon.' My heart and prayers will always be with the Fighting Falcons. Thanks to all for the privilege and opportunity to have been able to serve the finest educational institution in the country and the finest kids in the world. Thanks to this community and Denver, some of the greatest football fans in the nation, for your support over the years. When I came to the Academy, a good crowd was between 15,000 and 18,000. Today we have averaged well over 40,000 during my career here.

To you, the press, I have enjoyed working with you and proud to call you friends. Thanks for the positive things you write about our athletes and the total athletic program here at the Academy.

Lu Ann and I are so humbled, honored and thankful for the opportunity and are excited now to see what God's plan is for our future. Thank you and have a great day.

## **RE: Fisher DeBerry AIR FORCE PLAYER QUOTES**

*Shaun Carney, Quarterback (Senior in 2007)* The meeting with coach was pretty emotional this morning. He really poured his heart out to us. We really weren't surprised, but we really didn't expect it either.

I would like to see the qualities in our new that Coach DeBerry had. When it comes to how much we learned from him as people off the field. He always taught us to be a great father and great husband and a man of great character. Those are qualities that we take from him. We would always like to see a coach that brings some intensity to the table and Coach De Berry always did that. I would like to see our new coach emulate Coach DeBerry in a lot of ways.

I think he was ready to retire. He talked about how his family played an integral part of his decision and how he wanted to spend more time with his grandchildren. I really think that his decision was more about his family than about him.

Any losing season leaves a sour taste in our mouths. My class hasn't had a winning season yet and that never happened under Coach DeBerry. We want to get the new coach off to a great start.

You can't point fingers at the coaches or at the players. As players we have to work harder and get better and grow as players and as people and get ready for next season.

I think we have some great athletes on the offensive side of the ball and have a lot of experience. I think we can adapt to any new coach or new system. As a quarterback, I love to throw the ball, but more importantly I like to win football games and it isn't something that I've done here. In my last season, I'd like to be remembered as someone that won games and went to a bowl game.

*Drew Fowler, Linebacker (Senior in 2007)* It was pretty shocking. I didn't ever think that while I was here (coach DeBerry would retire). It's just one of those things.

Whoever comes in, I hope they understand the kind of people we have here and the kind of program we run here. We need to keep going from where Coach DeBerry has started us. He's obviously had great intentions for us, and we need to build on that

I hope we don't look at next year as a rebuilding year. I really don't want my senior year to be thought of that way. I think we have enough tools on this team to be competitive just like we are every year. We just need to figure out a way to win close games, that's what it boils down to.

I'll miss Coach DeBerry's little comments on everyday life things. There is probably no one in this world that cares more about us than Coach DeBerry. That is something hard to find now days. Everyone is so caught up in winning that sometimes they forget about their players. With Coach, it was always the team before anything.

He is a great role model. Words can't explain what it means to the players when a head football coach shows emotion like today. Coach DeBerry and Coach (Richard) Bell are the people that brought me here and gave me a chance to play when no one else thought I could do it at the D-I level. I give them thanks for that. They opened doors for me that I could have never opened myself.

***Bobby Giannini, Safety (Senior in 2007)*** When he announced that he was retiring, I think we all had that vibe. But we support him in whatever he does--if he would have stayed or that he has retired. I don't think it was a surprise. We can always say that we played for a Hall of Fame class coach. His message was a very somber one this morning. He just looked sad.

It's not going to be a rebuilding year because we have so many seniors coming back. I'm not worried about that.

Having a new coach can be good or can be bad, but we'll just see how it goes. We were certainly sad to see Coach DeBerry go, but we are excited to get things going for next year.

Dr. Mueh, our AD, told us that he promised the basketball team that after their coach left that he would bring in a coach that would bring them more success than we have had before, and he promised us the same thing.

***Ryan Williams, Fullback (Senior in 2007)*** My initial reaction was that a decision he had to make. He had to think about what was best for his family and I stand by that. You can't argue with that.

It is sad to see him go. He recruited me with Coach Petersen. It will be a little different to have a different coach. I think it would be nice for our new coach to have a lot of energy and pick us up.

On a potential new offense: It's our job to play and not coach so whatever the new coach throws out there for us, we have to do. This decision is not going to change anything the way I work in the off-season. We'll just go out and get ready to play in August.

## Fisher DeBerry Seasons from 1996 through 2006

### 1996 Air Force Falcons Coach Fisher DeBerry

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1996 college football season playing as a Division I-A WAC. It was their forty-second season of inter-collegiate football. They were led by coach Fisher DeBerry in his thirteenth season with Air Force.

Air Force finished the season with a season record of 6-5 and a 5-3 record in Western Athletic Conference games. The team was not selected for a bowl game in 1996.

On Oct 19 at Notre Dame in Notre Dame Stadium Notre Dame, IN, the Falcons defeated the Fighting Irish in a hard-fought overtime battle W (20–17) in OT. The highlights of this great win follow:

**Oct 20, 1996**

**AIR FORCE 20, NOTRE DAME 17**

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/sports/1996/10/20/air-force-20-notre-dame-17/3f5079cf-0645-46f8-b55c-49216cd9012e/?utm\\_term=.8d9c481fa496](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/sports/1996/10/20/air-force-20-notre-dame-17/3f5079cf-0645-46f8-b55c-49216cd9012e/?utm_term=.8d9c481fa496)

**Thank you to the Washington Post**

Alex Pupich recovered Ron Powlus's fumble in overtime and Dallas Thompson kicked a 27-yard field goal as Air Force upset No. 8 Notre Dame, 20-17, today.

Thompson knelt to the ground as his kick sailed through the uprights, and his teammates surrounded him to celebrate. Several piled on him



as the rest of the team traded hugs and high-fives. Notre Dame players, meanwhile, walked off the field with heads bowed after losing to the Falcons for the first time since 1985.

"We need to handle this with class," Notre Dame Coach Lou Holtz said. "Is it easy to take? No. We have no excuses."

Although it was Thompson's overtime field goal that won the game, it was Beau Morgan who engineered the victory. The senior quarterback rushed for a season-high 183 yards and a touchdown and completed 5 of 11 passes for 51 yards.

The Irish, meanwhile, couldn't get anything going. They were limited to 67 yards rushing.

Notre Dame got the ball first in overtime, but Powlus, back to throw, was hit by Joe Suhajda and had the ball stripped away. Pupich recovered at the Irish 25.

Notre Dame was called for a face-mask penalty, moving the Falcons to the Irish 10. After Todd Eilers rushed for two yards, Thompson came in for what would have been a 22-yard field goal attempt. As the kick sailed through the uprights, officials waved it off and penalized Air Force for delay of game. The five-yard penalty didn't matter as Thompson's second kick also was perfect.

The Falcons forced overtime when Morgan handed off to Tobin Ruff, who scampered 26 yards to tie the game at 17 with 7:15 left in regulation time. The score came five minutes after Marc Edwards had rushed a yard to break a 10-10 tie that had stood since halftime.

"Notre Dame made some big third-down plays, but in the fourth quarter, it was our team that made the plays," said Air Force Coach Fisher DeBerry. "I think that was the difference in the game."

Notre Dame looked as if it would come right back, as Robert Farmer returned the kickoff 24 yards to his 38. Powlus connected with Cikai Champion on a 29-yard pass, and Autry Denson ran for three yards to bring the Irish to the Falcons 30. But as Powlus went back to throw on second and seven, Pupich hit him and the ball tumbled out of his hand. Lee Guthrie recovered with six minutes left. Air Force got the

ball twice more and Notre Dame once, but neither team could make anything happen before time ran out.

With the rushing game shut down, the Irish turned to the air. Powlus was 16 of 24 for 268 yards, but he either fumbled or was sacked when the Irish got close to the goal line.

Notre Dame's defense wasn't much help, either. With Morgan running the wishbone offense, the Falcons ran right through the Irish front seven, which entered the game 10th in the nation in total defense. Air Force finished with 304 yards rushing.

The lone bright spot for Notre Dame came when Allen Rossum returned Mel Whatley's punt 57 yards to put the Irish ahead 7-0 early in the first quarter. It was only the second punt return of Rossum's career, and the first came a few minutes earlier.

Rossum has now returned a punt, a kickoff and an interception for touchdowns.

Things went downhill for the Irish quickly after that. The Falcons responded with Thompson's 21-yard field goal, and Notre Dame was forced to punt on its next possession. Morgan rushed for 59 yards in the next series, including a five-yard scramble into the end zone to put the Falcons ahead 10-7 with 8:23 left in the half.



**1997 Air Force Falcons Coach Fisher DeBerry**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1997 college football season playing as a Division I-A WAC. It was their forty-third season of inter-collegiate

football. They were led by coach Fisher DeBerry in his fourteenth season with Air Force.

Air Force finished the season with a regular season record of 10-2, overall, 10-3, and a 5-2 record in Western Athletic Conference games. The team was defeated by Oregon in the post-season Las Vegas Bowl.

In the post-season on December 20, 1997, Air Force lost to Oregon in the Las Vegas Bowl at Sam Boyd Stadium Las Vegas, NV L((13-41)

Air Force was stung right in the beginning of the Las Vegas Bowl. Pat Johnson and Saladin McCullough literally stunned #23 Air Force by scoring on Oregon's first two plays from scrimmage. This was just the beginning as it kicked off a string of big plays leading the Ducks to a 41-13 victory in the Las Vegas Bowl.

Johnson, who was the 1995 Pac-10 400-meter champion, scored on passes of 69 and 78 yards and Tony Hartley caught two other RD passes for the Ducks, which dominated the first major bowl game of the season from the opening kickoff.

The game was just 18 seconds old when Johnson streaked down the left sideline to catch a pass in midstride from Akili Smith. He took it the full 69 yards from that point for a touchdown.

Right after Air Force was forced to punt, adding insult to injury, McCullough got the handoff up the middle on Oregon's next play from scrimmage and he took it 76 yards for another score to put the Ducks up 13-0 with only 2 minutes 6 seconds off the game clock.

Oregon led 26-0 at halftime, crushing Air Force's option offense and not allowing the Falcons to complete a pass until midway through the second quarter. Eventually the Falcons got over the sting, but the game had gotten by them by then.

It was the first win in the last five bowl games for the Ducks, who hadn't won a bowl game since beating Tulsa in the 1989 Independence Bowl.

Oregon took all of 69 seconds for its three offensive scores in the first half, the last coming on a five-play, 71-yard drive that put the Ducks

up 26-0 on a 7-yard pass to Hartley in the end zone with 28 seconds left in the half.

The second half wasn't much different, with Oregon needing only 37 seconds for its first score and 42 seconds for another.

This game was billed as Oregon's potent offense against Air Force's stingy defense. But it became a lopsided encounter that forced Air Force (10-3) out of running its option offense in a futile effort to get anything going in the game. It was unusual for the Falcons for sure.

## Great Air Force Players 1997 Chris Gizzi

Linebacker Chris Gizzi was so good he could have played at Linebacker U. He earned his AFA Sports Letters in football in 1994, 1996, and 1997.



There were few as intense as Chris Gizzi. He is best known in fact, for his intense, blood-dripping-down-his-nose style while leading the Green Bay Packers out of the tunnel at Lambeau Field before a "Monday Night Football" game. He would be carrying an American flag just 13 days after the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

In 1997, he picked up second-team All-America honors from the Football Writers and third-team honors from the Associated Press. He was the Western Athletic Conference Defensive Player of the Year in 1996 and 1997. In 1997, he came through with 179 tackles, which was the third-most in a season in Air Force history.

### **1998 Air Force Falcons Coach Fisher DeBerry**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1998 college football season playing as a Division I-A WAC. It was their forty-fourth season of inter-collegiate football. They were led by coach Fisher DeBerry in his fifteenth season with Air Force.

Air Force finished the season with a season record of 12-1, and a 7-1 record in Western Athletic Conference games. The team defeated Washington in the post-season Oahu Bowl.

On Dec 5 in the WAC Championship v BYU in Sam Boyd Stadium Whitney, Nevada, the #17 Falcons won the Championship W (20-13)

On Christmas day, Dec 25 v Washington on the Oahu Bowl # 16 Air Force defeated the Huskies in Aloha Stadium Honolulu, HI W (43-25)

### **Highlights of the Oahu Bowl**

A lot of pundits see the major snub Air Force got from the Bowl Championship Committee by not being considered. In the Oahu Bowl, Air Force had something to prove to the Bowl Championship Series committee.

Having been snubbed in the national championship selection process despite an 11-1 record, the #16 ranked Falcons showed just how real they were by pounding the Washington Huskies 45-25 in the Oahu Bowl on Christmas Day.

Our sincere thank you to CBS News for this report on the game:  
<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/air-force-flies-to-oahu-bowl-win/>  
The game, the back end of the first postseason bowl doubleheader -- Colorado upset No. 21 Oregon 51-43 in the Aloha Bowl -- was a rout in the second half.

Air Force coach Fisher DeBerry wants the BCS folks to know the Falcons are a Top 10 team.

"I'm at a loss for words right now," DeBerry said. "This is a team that people didn't think a whole lot of. People picked us to finish in the middle of our conference. The team got better and better. We lost a total of one game by one point."

**"If this is not a Top 10 team, then I don't know what is."**

With Blane Morgan deftly guiding the complex triple-option offense, the Falcons completed the day a little under their regular-season average on the ground with 232 yards and added another 267 passing.

"Our quarterback kept them off-balance all game long," DeBerry said of Morgan's play. "Our offensive line did great, too."

The Falcons scored three of the first four times they had the ball to take a 22-13 lead at the half and got 16 unanswered points in the third quarter.

Morgan, not known as a prolific passer, even outplayed heralded Brock Huard, who plans to skip his final season to enter the NFL draft. The Air Force quarterback matched Huard's passing yardage but did so on 11 fewer completions to go with a pair of touchdowns. Morgan also had 50 yards rushing.

"I feel disappointed," Huard said. "This is not the way I wanted to go out."

"Their success, their whole game was pressure. They moved their linemen all around. We couldn't pick them up really well. They executed, we didn't."

Huard's totals included no TDs and three interceptions.

"We made plays on offense, but couldn't catch up with them," Washington coach Jim Lambright said. "Our scout team we worked against didn't give us a picture the Air Force gave us on game day."

"You can't credit their quarterbacking and play-calling enough."

Said Morgan: "In practice, we had been throwing the ball as well as we had all year long. They (Washington) run a lot of guys up to the line to try to stop the run."

"It's a tremendous feeling. It's been a long road, a long four years.

Winning 12 games is a tremendous feeling."

Exactly a year ago, it was Lambright singing the praises of the Huskies, who demolished Michigan State 51-23 in the Aloha Bowl.

Air Force, which won its final nine games after a one-point loss to Texas Christian, used its quickness to bury the Huskies.

On its first three scores, Morgan guided Air Force on long drives -- 73, 83 and 74 yards -- with Jemal Singleton scoring twice, on runs of 12 and 2 yards, and Scott McKay getting the third on a 15-yard run.

The Falcons resorted to trickery on the third score, using a fake punt on fourth-and-8 -- a 10-yard run by Jason Sanderson -- to keep the ball moving.

Braxton Cleman scored on runs of 3 and 1 yards for Washington to make it 22-13 at the half, but the Falcons' big third quarter ended the Huskies' hopes.

The scores came on a 42-yard field goal by Jackson Whiting, a 4-yard run by Spanky Gilliam and Morgan's 79-yard pass to Matt Farmer.

Morgan closed out the Air Force scoring by teaming with McKay on a 30-yard pass in the fourth quarter. With the game out of hand, Washington's Marques Tuiasosopo scampered 7 yards for one TD and then passed 11 yards to Mikjo Austin with four seconds left.

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CBS Sportsline



## Great Air Force 1998 Player Bryce Fisher

Bryce Alexander Fisher was born on May 12, 1977) . He played Defensive Tackle for Air Force and was drafted by the Buffalo Bills in the 7th round of the 1999 NFL Draft. He was a standout college football player at Air Force.



Before Air Force, Fisher attended the Seattle Preparatory School where he was a three-year letterman in football. At Prep he played for head coach Rollie Robbins and defensive coordinator Mitch Robbins. As a senior, he was an All-League selection and was named the League's Lineman of the Year. He had no problem getting into the Air Force Academy.

And, so he played college football for the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs where he was a two-year starter on the

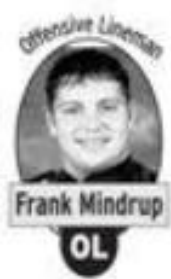
defensive line at the Air Force Academy. He was Selected as WAC Defensive Player of the Year in Mountain Division as senior. He was well known wherever he played on the D-line.

In his senior year, he started 12 games and recorded career-high 70 tackles, six sacks, and one fumble recovery. As a junior he began his starts streak at 12, where he garnered 63 tackles, 1.5 sacks, one forced fumble, and one fumble recovery. He even played in seven games as backup defensive lineman in his sophomore season.

He was drafted by the Buffalo Bills in the 1999 NFL Draft, he would join the team as a defensive end in 2001 after fulfilling a two-year commitment to the Air Force. He went on to play for the St. Louis Rams (2002 – 2004) before signing with the Seahawks in 2005. That year he recorded a career-high 9 sacks. He would play in Seattle through the first game of the 2007 season before being traded to the Tennessee Titans, where he played through the 2008 season and then he retired from football.

## Great Air Force Player 1998 Frank Mindrup

Offensive Lineman Frank Mindrup earned his letters in 1996, 1997, and 1998. Mindrup was known for his aggressive style and big frame that allowed him to record 642 career knockdown blocks, including 302 in 1997.



Both of these are records at the academy.

He was also selected for the third team of the American Football Foundation All-American squad in 1998, a first-team all-Western Athletic Conference selection in 1997. He made the second-team all-WAC selection in 1998.

Frank Mindrup helped guide the 1997 AFA team to a phenomenal 10-3 record and he led the 1998 team to a 12-1 mark giving the Academy its first outright league title.

### **1999 Air Force Falcons Coach Fisher DeBerry**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 1999 college football season playing as a Division I-A MWC. It was their forty-fifth season of inter-collegiate football. They were led by coach Fisher DeBerry in his sixteenth season with Air Force.

Air Force finished the season with a season record of 6-5, and a 2-5 record in Mountain West Conference games. The team was not invited to a bowl game this season.

### **2000 Air Force Falcons Coach Fisher DeBerry**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 2000 college football season playing as a Division I-A MWC. It was their forty-sixth season of inter-collegiate football. They were led by coach Fisher DeBerry in his seventeenth season with Air Force.

Air Force rebounded from its 6-5 play from 1999 and finished the season well at 9-3, 5-2 in Mountain West play to finish in second place. They were invited to the Silicon Valley Football Classic where they defeated Fresno State.

In the Silicon Valley Football Classic on December 31, 2000 vs. Fresno State in Spartan Stadium San Jose, CA, the Falcons edged out the Spartans W (37-34) before 26,542.

## **Highlights Silicon Valley Football Classic**

Dean Martin once said that everybody loves somebody sometime. Well, let me say that everybody knows something sometime. For this game, the pundits believe that the Fresno State Bulldogs knew the Air Force Academy gets its kicks from blocking field goals, so they cooked up a plan just two weeks before game time to combat that potential opportunity for AFA.

When the time came to unveil the strategy, the Bulldogs were totally prepared, had everything lined up, and diagnosed the situation perfectly -- only their execution was more than a little nipper off.

The game had already brought back memories of those wild, high-scoring games of the WAC, but in this contest in a different conference, Air Force barely hung on for their 37-34 win over Fresno State in the inaugural Silicon Valley Football Classic at Spartan Stadium. AFA had it tough as almost all the fans were pro-Bulldogs out of a crowd of 26,542.

Their workaround was a fake FG that would not get blocked. Holder Jason Simpson, not a QB by trade could not hit an open Gianchino Chiamonte in the end zone on the fake field goal try while tight end Donnell Burch was also open in back of the end zone.

At the time, there were just nine seconds left, robbing the Bulldogs of a chance to snatch a victory in what has to be one of the wildest contests of the bowl season. Fresno State had trailed by 27 at the half and it looked like the grim reaper had already cursed their efforts.

"That's the decision I made, and I have no second thoughts about it," said Fresno State coach Pat Hill. "We were going for the win. If anything, we just ran out of time. Most everybody thought it was going to overtime. Air Force is good at blocking kicks. We knew we were going to use it.



Air Force's Mike Thiessen (#3), prepares to throw a pass in Q2

"We just came up short. It was a well-conceived play. We believed it would work." Actually, the play was fairly simple. If the Falcons showed two "jumpers" -- players in the middle of the line whose role is to leap and try to bat the ball down -- holder Simpson would grab the ball away from kicker Ashen Asparuhov, drop back and pass to tight end Alec Greco, who'd be running across the middle. One jumper would mean a straight field-goal try.

When Air Force linebackers Corey Nelson and Kevin Runyon appeared to both be in jumper mode as the Bulldogs lined up for the 33-yard field goal, the chicanery was on. But Greco collided with Air Force's Paul Mayo at the line of scrimmage, was knocked down and never made it downfield. Simpson's second option (Chiaromonte) and third option (Burch) were also free, Simpson just couldn't hit his man, throwing the ball in between Chiaromonte and Burch. Chiaromonte was covered by Jeff Overstreet and had him beat.

Another tight end, Jeremy Johnson, was the ideal guy the Bulldogs wanted to use in that situation, but he suffered a stinger in the first quarter out was out of the contest. Otherwise, he would have been on the field instead of Greco.

"They're trying to make an old man out of me," said Air Force coach Fisher DeBerry. "I thought they'd try to kick the field goal. We had all 11 guys in position to field-goal block. That's why the guy was so wide-open. That's why the guy didn't complete the pass, he was shocked to see the guy wide-open."

Said Nelson: "The holder just takes off with the ball and I'm like, 'Oh, come on . . . At the time, I was pretty much helpless because I'm up in the air . . . so I'm not going to be able to get over there and help. Thank God for that guy not seeing the open receiver in back of the end zone."

The Falcons benefited from an apparent gaffe by Fresno State quarterback David Carr. On third down from the Falcons' 16-yard line with 14 seconds left, Carr spiked the ball. And it wasn't a matter of brain-lock or forgetting what down it was, Carr knew exactly what he was doing. After a timeout, Fresno State went for the victory.

"I knew the (play) clock was ticking down, and I couldn't get the play (from the sideline) they wanted to run," said Carr, who threw for 391

yards and five touchdowns. "I didn't just want to throw it up. I knew we were in four-down territory, anyway. Everybody was jumping up and down, trying to be head coach. It was hard to see coach Hill for the play."

"I knew we had at least one more play. I knew it was either second or third down. All the guys were caught up in the moment of the game."

This contest was two games in one. Air Force rolled to a 34-7 lead in the first half, slicing, dicing and shredding the Bulldogs defense for 319 total yards. Quarterback Mike Thiessen ran for two touchdowns and passed for two more, both going to Bellarmine High of San Jose graduate Scotty McKay, and Dave Adams added a pair of field goals. All the Bulldogs could manage was a 73- yard touchdown pass from Carr to Paris Gaines.

"We were a little dinged," Hill said. "Air Force really put it to us in all phases of the game. We were like a fighter (who got caught) with a good right hand. We were reeling. We took a standing eight count and came back in the second half.

Air Force 37; Fresno State 34. Now, that's a fine game. That's a great game to win for sure.

### **2001 Air Force Falcons Coach Fisher DeBerry**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 2001 college football season playing as a Division I-A MWC. It was their forty-seventh season of inter-collegiate football. They were led by coach Fisher DeBerry in his eighteenth season with Air Force.

Air Force could not match its 9-3 play from 2000 and finished the 2001 season at 500 with a 6-6, 3-4 in Mountain West play to finish in a tie for fifth place. There would be no bowl game this year for the Falcons, though as usual they again played as hard as any team in the NCAA.

## **2002 Air Force Falcons Coach Fisher DeBerry**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 2002 college football season playing as a Division I-A MWC. It was their forty-eighth season of inter-collegiate football. They were led by coach Fisher DeBerry in his nineteenth season with Air Force.

Air Force finished the 2002 season with an 8-5 record, 4-3 in Mountain West play. They lost to #19 Virginia Tech in the San Francisco Bowl.

On December 31, 2002, at 8:30 p.m., #19 Virginia Tech edged out Air Force at Pacific Bell Park San Francisco, CA in the San Francisco Bowl L (13–20) before 25,966

### **San Francisco Bowl Highlights**

(Provided by the Hokies)

SAN FRANCISCO - The Virginia Tech Hokies rallied from a 10-point deficit to take the lead in the second half and Ronyell Whitaker made two huge defensive plays in the waning seconds as the Hokies rang in the New Year with a 20-13 win over Air Force in the inaugural Diamond Walnut San Francisco Bowl in front of more than 25,000 fans at Pac Bell Park.

With the win, Tech finished the season 10-4, notching the sixth 10-win season in the program's history. As a program, the Hokies improved to 6-10 in bowl games, including a 5-5 mark in head coach Frank Beamer's tenure.

But perhaps more importantly, Tech's seniors notched their 40th win, making them the winningest class in school history.

"For these seniors, to go out as the all-time winningest class is pretty significant," Beamer said. "And now we're going to be second behind Michigan as far as being ranked in consecutive weeks in the top 25. We won 10 games. There were some great things that came out of this win over a really good Air Force team."

Tech trailed 10-0 in the first quarter but rallied and took a 17-10 lead on a Lee Suggs' 1-yard touchdown run with 4:55 left in the first quarter. The two teams then traded field goals as the Hokies led 20-13 going into the game's final possession.

Air Force (8-5) took over at its own 18 with 4:11 left in the game and managed to drive deep into Tech territory. On first-and-20 from the Tech 39, Air Force quarterback Chance Harridge tried to hit a wide-open Anthony Park, but Whitaker, Tech's senior cornerback, knocked the ball away at the last second to save a touchdown.

Three plays later, Air Force managed to convert a fourth-and-11 - the Falcons converted 4-of-5 fourth-down conversions in the game - when Harridge hit J.P. Waller for a 20-yard gain to the Tech 10. Two Harridge incompletions left the Falcons with seven seconds on the clock and basically time for one last play.

On the game's final play, Harridge dropped back to pass, but finding no one open, he tried to scramble for the end zone. Whitaker hit Harridge at the Tech 4, and Harridge, in desperate straits, heaved the ball toward offensive lineman Brett Huyser. Jason Murphy and Lamar Cobb buried Huyser to end the game, setting off a wild celebration on the Tech sideline.

"I was hoping that I wouldn't let a quarterback embarrass me," Whitaker said, laughing. "Nah, he's a great player and he was playing with an injury. He's a tough kid. I take nothing away from him.

"I had to make a play. If not, Coach Foster would have been on me, the fans would have been on me ... it would have been deja vous. I couldn't have picked a better way to end my career."

Tech's defense got off to a shaky start as Air Force jumped out to a 10-0 lead less than eight minutes into the game. On the Falcons' first possession, they went 80 yards in three minutes, thanks largely to a 47-yard pass play from Harridge to Park that got the Falcons to the Tech 27. Air Force scored on the drive when Matt Ward took the pitch on a reverse and went 15 yards for a score.

The Falcons then took advantage of a questionable Suggs' fumble - Suggs appeared to have hit the ground first and the ground cannot



cause a fumble. Taking over at the Tech 35, Air Force ended up settling for a season-long 45-yard field goal by Joey Ashcroft.

But the Hokies settled down after that, allowing just three points the rest of the game. Air Force, which came into the nation ranked No. 1 in rushing offense (314.5 ypg), amassed just 227 yards on the ground. And Harridge completed just 4-of-19 for 91 yards, with two interceptions.

Offensively, quarterback Bryan Randall, the game's offensive most valuable player, led the Hokies. Randall completed 18-of-23 for 177 yards, while Suggs led the Hokies rushing attack with 70 yards on 19 carries and two touchdowns. As a team, Tech finished with just 278 yards of total offense.

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### **2003 Air Force Falcons Coach Fisher DeBerry**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 2003 college football season playing as a Division I-A MWC. It was their forty-ninth season of inter-collegiate football. They were led by coach Fisher DeBerry in his twentieth season with Air Force.

Air Force finished the 2003 season with a 7-5 record, 3-4 in Mountain West play. They finished in a three-way tie for fourth place. The Falcons were not invited to a bowl game this year. This would be the last winning season for Fisher DeBerry at Air Force as his next three years before retirement would be below 500.

### **2004 Air Force Falcons Coach Fisher DeBerry**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 2004 college football season playing as a Division I-A MWC. It was their fiftieth season of inter-collegiate football. They were led by coach Fisher DeBerry in his twenty-first season with Air Force.

Air Force finished the 2004 season with a 5-6 record, 3-4 in Mountain West play. They finished in a three-way tie for fourth place. The Falcons were not invited to a bowl game this year.

### **2005 Air Force Falcons Coach Fisher DeBerry**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 2005 college football season playing as a Division I-A MWC. It was their fifty-first season of inter-collegiate football. They were led by coach Fisher DeBerry in his twenty-second season with Air Force.

Air Force finished the 2005 season with a 4-7, 3-5 in Mountain West play. They finished in seventh place. This was one of Fisher DeBerry's poorest records. The Falcons were not invited to a bowl game this year.

### **2006 Air Force Falcons Coach Fisher DeBerry**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 2006 college football season playing as a Division I-A MWC. They played their home games in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, CO. It was their fifty-second season of inter-collegiate football. They were led by coach Fisher DeBerry in his twenty-third and final season with Air Force.

DeBerry announced his retirement following the conclusion of the season. They were a member of the Mountain West Conference. They finished the season 4-8, 3-5 in Mountain West play to finish in a tie for sixth place.

## **Fisher DeBerry—an Epilogue**

I admit though I never met Fisher DeBerry personally that I am a little choked up about not being able to write about his great exploits as a coach on the football field . DeBerry is alive and in great health as I write this epilogue as the second-last section of this book about Air Force. Not only is he alive, he is doing well, and as one author Bill Wagner recently noted DeBerry is leading a charmed life.

Right after we finish excerpts of this fine article about DeBerry, for which we thank Mr. Wagner, we'll then pick up with Troy Calhoun's thirteen years of exploits as the Air Force mentor. Enjoy.

## Legendary Air Force head coach Fisher DeBerry leading charmed life

Fisher DeBerry was once the undisputed champion of service academy football, leading Air Force to 17 winning seasons and 12 bowl berths while serving as head coach from 1984 through 2006. We also included images by Brian Bahr / Getty Images as they were presented in the article.



Here is a picture of Mr. Wagner.

Bill Wagner

Contact Reporterbwagner@capgaznews.com

Fisher DeBerry readily admits he leads a charmed life these days.

DeBerry and his wife, LuAnn, spend six months in Grove, Oklahoma – nearby to their two children and eight grandchildren. They spend the other half of the year in Isle of Palms, South Carolina, at the retirement home they built that overlooks the Atlantic Ocean.

Together, the couple devotes considerable time and effort to the Fisher DeBerry Foundation, which is dedicated to the support and education of single mothers and their children. That is a cause that is very personal to DeBerry, who grew up without a father in the country town of Cheraw, S.C.

“I was a single-parent kid and I don’t know what I would have done without my coaches,” said DeBerry, who was honored to give the eulogy at the funerals of the three men who served as important mentors. That would be the Cheraw High football and baseball coach along with Wofford football coach Jim Brakefield.

DeBerry travels around the country speaking at fundraising events for the foundation, which annually sends 500 to 600 youngsters to summer camps. He relies on connections developed during a 44-year college football coaching career to get notable names from his lifelong profession to work those camps.

“We believe if we can get these kids to a camp so they be around the right kind of people and learn a little about leadership, character and integrity it can make a difference in their lives,” DeBerry said.

DeBerry was once the undisputed champion of service academy football, leading Air Force to 17 winning seasons and 12 bowl berths while serving as head coach from 1984 through 2006. The Falcons captured the coveted Commander-in-Chief’s Trophy 14 times during the 21-year tenure of DeBerry, who was a combined 34-8 against Army and Navy.

Now DeBerry is a fan of all the service academy programs, rooting almost as hard for Army and Navy as he does for Air Force. He was absolutely thrilled when the Black Knights, Falcons and Midshipmen all posted winning records and earned bowl berths in 2016.

# Chapter 11 Coach Troy Calhoun 2007-2016

Calhoun Coach # 7



Year	Coach	Record	Conference	Record
2007	Troy Calhoun	9-4	MWC	6-2
2008	Troy Calhoun	8-5	MWC	5-3
2009	Troy Calhoun	8-5	MWC	5-3
2010	Troy Calhoun	9-4	MWC	5-3
2011	Troy Calhoun	7-6	MWC	3-4
2012	Troy Calhoun	6-7	MWC	5-3
2013	Troy Calhoun	2-10	MWC	0-8
2014	Troy Calhoun	10-3	MWC	5-3
2015	Troy Calhoun	8-6	MWC	6-2
2016	Troy Calhoun	10-3	MWC	5-3

## Calhoun to replace DeBerry at Air Force

*Dec 22, 2006*

*Associated Press -- Our thanks to the AP for this piece*

**AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo.** -- Former Air Force starting quarterback Troy Calhoun will replace Fisher DeBerry as head coach of the Falcons.

[It is always a better deal for a new coach or a new manager of a corporate office to know that the person they were replacing was not well liked and they would not have to be concerned about the comments post facto about their abilities compared to the former beloved mentor.

Think of Knute Rockne and how nobody else could replace him until somebody did. The same problem came with Troy Calhoun in his difficult role of replacing the still legendary Fisher DeBerry as the head coach of Air Force Football.

The best thing DeBerry did for the future of the program post-DeBerry is to somehow have a tough couple seasons—much unlike his 23 others near the end of his career. Would DeBerry have gotten 9 wins out of his Juniors from 2006? Who knows? Actually nobody cares. Calhoun was a literal phenomenon and his finest credential was he was one of DeBerry's boys.]

Calhoun, who started for DeBerry in 1986, had been an assistant coach with the Denver Broncos before joining Gary Kubiak as offensive coordinator of the Houston Texans this season. Calhoun is a 1989 Air Force graduate -- the first former Air Force player to coach the Falcons.

"Our thought going into this was Fisher DeBerry had been here for 27 years, head coach for 23. And during that time he has inspired, trained, taught, motivated, produced not just leaders for the Air Force but leaders for the NCAA athletic community," Air Force athletic director Hans Mueh said during a news conference.

"Troy Calhoun I believe is at the pinnacle of that group of folks Fisher DeBerry produced and so we are proud that he would accept this offer from us to be our next head coach," he said.

Calhoun replaces DeBerry, who retired Dec. 15. Calhoun is only the seventh head coach for Air Force, joining a list that includes Bill Parcells and Ken Hatfield.

## **2007 Air Force Falcons Coach Troy Calhoun**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 2007 college football season playing as a Division I-A MWC. They played their home games in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, CO. It was their fifty-third season of inter-collegiate football. They were led by coach Troy Calhoun in his first season with Air Force.

Troy Calhoun was announced as the new AFA coach shortly after Coach DeBerry offered his retirement following the conclusion of the 2006 season. The Falcons were a member of the Mountain West Conference. They finished the season 9-4, 6-2 in Mountain West play to finish in second place. Troy Calhoun coached the Falcons to their first winning season since 2003. They were invited to the Armed Forces Bowl where they lost to California.

In the post-season, on December 31, 2007 at 10:30 a.m. v California in Amon G. Carter Stadium Fort Worth, TX for the Armed Forces Bowl, the Falcons looked in good form but lost the game on a one-TD difference L 36–42 before 40,905

### **Highlights of the Armed Services Bowl.**

The Air Force had gone into a slump on bowl games in the last four years of Fisher DeBerry's time and few thought a new coach would produce such a resurrection at Air Force. But, Troy Calhoun pulled off what would have been considered impossible.

And, so, the impossible became the improbable and then it became a fait accompli as Air Force fooled everybody and like Mark Twain, they proved that the rumors of their death had been greatly exaggerated—and then some.

Getting a bowl day bid would have been impossible with a bad record but the new Air Force Coach was like a new Fisher DeBerry who would never say no. He not only made the pundits question their punditry in 2007, he produced a great Air Force Squad that made it because of great play to the Armed Services Bowl. They were ready though they faced a determined and competent opponent.

The opponent was the Golden Bears of California. They came out for the game without last names on the backs of their uniforms. This was change from their look throughout the season. Prior to the game, Golden Bears players kick returner DeSean Jackson, wide receiver Robert Jordan, and free safety Thomas DeCoud had been suspended for the first quarter of the game for violating team rules. A few wild and crazy players had violated the rules but would be back in before half-time.

The Falcons started tough. The Golden Bears struggled early against AFA. Like most squads, The Bears had trouble in the early going of the game adjusting to the Falcons triple option offense and unpredictable line formations.

Golden Bears quarterback Nate Longshore started in the first quarter, but was hampered by the absence of DeSean Jackson and Robert Jordan. Longshore completed 5 of 8 passes for 36 yards in the first quarter.

As Cal coach Jeff Tedford had planned, backup quarterback Kevin Riley took over for Longshore in the second quarter. Riley completed two touchdown passes to DeSean Jackson and Lavelle Hawkins to make it 21–14 Falcons at the half. The game was not decided yet.

Falcons Carney suffered a gruesome lower body injury in the third quarter on a running play and did not return. Backup Shea Smith, who had not played all year, replaced Carney. The Falcons were then limited to a pair of field goals, while Robert Jordan caught a pass for a touchdown and Justin Forsett ran in for one.

In the fourth quarter, things did not improve much for Air Force. Forsett rushed for another score in the fourth quarter, as did Riley. Air Force was limited to field goals until they capitalized on a botched kickoff return to score a touchdown with just over two minutes left, but as most teams in futility, they failed to recover an onside kick.

During the game, Carney finished with one touchdown pass and 108 yards rushing. Alongside Carney, Falcons running back Jim Ollis also eclipsed the 100-yard rushing mark with 101, while Forsett had 140. Riley completed 269 passing yards and was the game MVP. But, the



bottom line is that AFA could not get it all together and lost the Armed Services Bowl by --- just six points.

## Great Air Force Players 2007 Chad Hall

In the modern era, slot back Chad Hall like many before him earned his letters at Air Force. His came in 2005, 2006, and 2007. Hall is best known for his standout senior year. In 2007, he rushed for 1,478 yards (second-most in a season in academy history); he caught a team-high 50 passes; he scored 16 touchdowns; and he compiled an academy record 2,683 all-purpose yards.



He topped this off by being named the Mountain West Conference Offensive Player of the Year. In his AFA career, as part of his achievements, he earned third-team All-American from Rivals.com and he got honorable mention All-America honors from SI.com.

Hall holds the Air Force record for career all-purpose yards (4,098) and he owns academy's two best single-game rushing performances (275 against Army, and 256 against Colorado State in 2007). This is on top of the best single-game all-purpose yards performance (333 against Army in 2007).

## Great Air Force Player Shaun Carney 2007



Shaun Carney was a top ranked quarterback for the Air Force football team from his freshman year 2004 until his senior year. In his four years at the QB helm, he passed for 5391 passing yards and 39 touchdowns. . He is the top passer in Air Force football history. Shaun got it done passing for sure and of course he anchored the AFA attack with a combined passing and funning in his four years for another Air Force first place statistic at 7952.

**Freshman 2004:** Shaun not only won the starting QB job at Air Force in his freshman year. He was the first freshman in Air Force history to start the opening game of the season and first rookie to start any game at quarterback since Dee Dowis in 1986 vs. BYU. Shaun came out of the AFA football gate wired for greatness. He was already operating at a blistering speed when He played in the first of his 10 games, and with no college experience in his past, he would start and succeed in nine of them. His first career start came in 2004 against 4th-ranked California. Carney led the team on a 17-play, 77-yard scoring drive on the first drive of his career. He capped the drive with a 10-yard touchdown pass on third down. His nine starts are a record-- the

most in AFA history for a freshman, breaking the record of seven set in 1976 by Dave Ziebart.

Shaun also set a then-single-season Academy record for completion percentage with a 61.1 mark. It seems like it could never be; but Shaun Carney made it happen.

His completion percentage ranked second in the conference and it broke the school record of 58.5 set in 1964 by Tim Murphy. In this inaugural year, he completed 91 of 149 passes for 1,315 yards with 11 touchdowns and six interceptions.

His QB efficiency rating of 151.52 would have ranked second in the conference, but he lacked enough pass attempts to qualify for the conference and national statistic How about that. After piling up records as a freshman that would typically be earned only by a Senior, the most unusual aspect of Carney's 2004 year was that he would be back the next year, and the next and the next



**Sophomore 2005:** As you are reading this, I bet some are thinking that you will learn that Shaun Carney had a letdown in his Sophomore Year, but this will not be in your lesson plan. Carney played more in 2005 as a sophomore, and he played even better. On the field in 11 games, the star QB for AFA started 10 of them. He did not start vs. Army.

In this one-of-a-kind season, which was Carney's second, like this, he also led the team in rushing with 710 yards on 170 carries, averaging 4.2

yards per carry and 64.5 yards per game. He rushed for a team-best 11 touchdowns. He completed 95 of his 148 passes for 1,393 yards. He fired seven touchdowns and had a matching seven interceptions. Carney averaged 126.6 yards per game and had a quarterback efficiency rating of 149.40. His completion percentage of 64.2 set a new single-season record at the Academy, breaking his own mark. To top off a great year, he ranked second in the conference in passing efficiency.

### **Junior 2006:**

Carney had already had the kind of year that come typically only to Juniors and Senior players. By the time he began his Junior Year in 2006. So, what else could there be? Lots! His first honor was being selected as team captain and he started all games this year—and there were twelve of them – his most so far

As the QB, Carney was not supposed to be the best rusher on the field though he had been. This year, he was happy to be the #2 rusher with 618 yards on 188 carries. He averaged 3.3 yards per carry, and he scored a team-best eight rushing touchdowns. As the team's #1 passer, he did well on the ground finishing eighth in the conference in rushing with a per-game average of 51.5 yards . he nailed 82 of 137 passes for 1,192 yards with just three interceptions, two of which were deflected . Carney threw for 12 touchdowns and had a quarterback efficiency rating of 157.47.

Signal caller, Carney created a streak of 94 consecutive passes without an interception during the season. This helped him make the prestigious O'Brien List. He was one of 33 quarterbacks selected for the Davey O'Brien National Quarterback Award 'Watch List.'

This agile and accurate QB bulled his way for 67 yards on 20 carries vs. Notre Dame while hitting 14 of 17 passes for 205 yards and two scores. He also hit 16 of 22 passes for a season-best 218 yards vs. Utah. Coming in to the season, he needed just 890 passing yards to become the all-time leader in Air Force history. On his way, he ranked second in school history in career touchdown passes with 30, trailing the all-time leader Rich Haynie (34, 1971-73) by just four. He still had his senior year left.





## Senior 2007.

After three phenomenal years. You won't believe it. Shaun Carney had an even better year in 2007 as a senior. His games started moved up one to 13 as he passed for 637 yards and he got his best average in all four years of 4.7 yds per completion. Along the way, he also got six passing TDs.

His running average was also its best at 4.7 yards per carry. Additionally, this was Troy Calhoun's first year as coach and Shaun Carney helped him kick off his tenure with a fine 9-4 season. Calhoun made use of Carney's talents 100%.

Additionally, in what matters about as much as anything besides

Army and Navy wins in a season, the Air Force Academy's pulled a 41-24 rout of the Notre Dame Fighting Irish on Nov. 10, 2007 at Notre Dame Stadium in Notre Dame, Indiana. In one of his best games in a stellar career, Shaun Carney threw for two touchdowns and ran for a third, assuring ND had no hope for a comeback.

The victory upped Air Force's first winning record since 2003 to 8-3, doubling its win total from a year ago, and gave the Falcons a bright outlook to go to a post-season bowl game for the first time since the 2002 San Francisco Bowl.

-- End of info on Shaun Carney, great player ---

### 2008 Air Force Falcons Coach Troy Calhoun

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 2008 college football season playing as a Division I-A MWC. They played their home games in Falcon Stadium

in Colorado Springs, CO. It was their fifty-fourth season of inter-collegiate football. They were led by coach Troy Calhoun in his second season with Air Force.

Troy Calhoun was announced as the new AFA coach shortly after Coach DeBerry offered his retirement following the conclusion of the 2006 season. His first year was his best year so far but his subsequent years such as this year were also good. The Falcons were a member of the Mountain West Conference. They finished the season 8-5, 5-3 in Mountain West play to finish in fourth place. Troy Calhoun coached the Falcons to their second consecutive winning season. They finish in fourth place in the MWC. They were invited to the Armed Forces Bowl where they lost to Texas.

On December 31, 2008. At 10:00 a.m., Houston beat Air Force in Amon G. Carter Stadium Fort Worth, TX in the Armed Forces Bowl L (28–34) before 41,127

## Dec 31 Armed Services Bowl Highlights

### **Armed Forces Bowl puts military might on display**

*By Marine Lance Cpl. Bryan G. Carfrey January 2, 2009*

**FORT WORTH, Texas** -- The sixth annual Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl football game featured the Houston Cougars (7-5) taking on the U.S. Air Force Academy Falcons (8-4) on Dec. 31 at the Amon G. Carter Stadium here.

Kickoff for the Armed Forces Bowl was noon Eastern, but the event started more than 24-hours prior to the kickoff when both teams were welcomed to Fort Worth with a luncheon at the Fort Worth Convention Center on Dec. 30.

Retired Army Lt. Col. Greg Gadson, who survived severe injuries following a road-side bomb attack while deployed to Iraq, was the keynote speaker. Colonel Gadson was credited by the New York Giants football team for giving them the inspiration to turn their 0-2 season start into a Superbowl-winning season.

Outside the stadium, home of Texas Christian University's Horned Frogs, there was an "Adventure Zone" set up featuring almost 60 displays of military might from all the armed services.

"My son loves all the guns and tanks and we've had a really good time; it is wonderful here," said Ali Rattan, one of the spectators of the Adventure Zone on Dec. 30.

"A lot of people are coming out to see what the different services have to offer, and we get to put on display some of the equipment they have never seen before," said Marine Cpl. John Luis, an artillery cannoneer.

"They get to ask a lot of questions and we get to interact with them, it's really an awesome event."

The day's events was closed out by a pep rally for both teams culminating in a 10-minute fireworks display.

Prior to the game start on Dec. 31, pre-game festivities included a skydiving demonstration by a combined team of different types of Army paratroopers, and an Air Force flyover that included two F-16 Fighting Falcons and a B-52 Stratofortress. Army Gen. David Petraeus, U.S. Central Command commander, flanked by all of the senior service representatives, performed the coin toss.

"It just makes me absolutely proud to be here, it's a phenomenal event," said Army Maj. Gen. Peter M. Vangjel, commanding general of the United States Fires Center and Fort Sill, Okla., who was the senior Army official at the game. "It's nice to stop and think about all the folks in the armed forces, the impact we have on the nation, and to celebrate together with all the other services."

More than 40,000 tickets sold for the bowl game.

"It's a terrific opportunity, and not just for the Air Force, said Air Force Chief of Staff, Gen. Norton Schwartz. "We are representing the entire joint team -- Army, Navy, certainly the Air Force, and the Marines."

The halftime ceremonies included General Petraeus receiving the Great American Patriot of the Year Award from Tom Dials, chief

executive officer of Armed Forces Insurance, and an oath of enlistment ceremony officiated by General Petraeus for more than 100 future servicemembers from all branches of service. The Air Force Academy's Wings of Blue parachute team ended the ceremony with their aerial demonstration.

During each quarter of the game, Armed Forces Bowl officials also spotlighted a different branch of service by running public service announcements on the "Jumbotron."

For the bowl game itself, Air Force lost to Houston, 34-28.

### **2009 Air Force Falcons Coach Troy Calhoun**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 2009 college football season playing as a Division I-A MWC. They played their home games in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, CO. It was their fifty-fifth season of inter-collegiate football. They were led by coach Troy Calhoun in his third season with Air Force.

This was the second straight 8-5; 5-3 season for the Falcons of coach Troy Calhoun. The Falcons were a member of the Mountain West Conference. They finished the season 8-5, 5-3 in Mountain West play to finish in fourth place. Troy Calhoun coached the Falcons to their third consecutive winning season. They finish in fourth place in the MWC. They were invited to the Armed Forces Bowl where they defeated Houston.

On December 31, 2009, at 10:00 a.m. v # 25 Houston in Amon G. Carter Stadium Fort Worth, TX the Falcons pounded the Cougars in the Armed Forces Bowl W (47-20) before 41,414.

## **2009 Armed Services Bowl Highlights**

<https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/sdut-air-force-picks-off-bowl-victory-over-houston-2009dec31-story.html>

An appreciative Thank You to the San Diego Union-Tribune



## Air Force picks off bowl victory over Houston

**STEPHEN HAWKINS, AP Sports Writer**



Air Force running back Jared Tew (42) carries the ball into the end zone to score as Houston cornerback Carson Blackmon (23), linebacker C.J. Cavness (40), and safety Nick Saenz (41) defend during the first half of the Armed Forces Bowl NCAA college football game on Thursday, Dec. 31, 2009, in Fort Worth, Texas. (AP Photo/Tom Pennington) (/ AP)

With Asher Clark and Jared Tew grinding out yards and Air Force controlling the ball for more than 41 minutes, there were few chances for Case Keenum and Houston's potent offense.

Then when Keenum got on the field in the Armed Forces Bowl, he was often under pressure or getting picked off - or both.

Air Force's top-ranked pass defense had six interceptions and Clark and Tew each ran for more than 100 yards and two touchdowns to lead the Falcons to a 47-20 victory on Thursday.

"The front three kind of got in his head, kind of got into him," said safety Chris Thomas, who had two interceptions along with his 12 tackles. "When he was on the run like that, we feel like we had the advantage."



Houston quarterback Case Keenum (7) looks for an open receiver against Air Force during the first half of Armed Forces Bowl NCAA college football game, Thursday, Dec. 31, 2009, in Fort Worth, Texas. (AP Photo/Tom Pennington) (/ AP)

After the Falcons (8-5) went ahead on Clark's 36-yard TD to cap the opening drive of the game, Keenum's first pass attempt deflected off his falling receiver and was grabbed by Anthony Wright, who had three interceptions. That set up Tew's 6-yard TD run for a 14-0 lead.

When it was over, Keenum had thrown a career-high six picks and was 24 of 41 for a season-low 222 yards for the Cougars (10-4). Before throwing three interceptions with five TDs and a school-record 56 completions in a loss to East Carolina in the Conference USA championship game last month, Keenum had only six picks the first 12 games this season.

"Give Air Force all the credit and I'll take all the blame," Keenum said, opening a 78-second postgame statement before walking off without taking questions. "I'm going to learn from this. You know, I'm a winner and I'm a competitor. ... We're going to take this into the offseason and we're going to use it as motivation. Look for the Cougars to do something special next year because there's a lot of guys in this locker room who have got a lot of determination. "

The junior quarterback who played his 40th career game had previously said he plans to be back next season, when the Cougars return nine offensive starters, including three 1,000-yard receivers.

Keenum finished this season with a nation-leading 5,671 yards with 44 touchdowns and 15 interceptions.

"I'm not going to make any kind of generalization based on the overall numbers in the past two games for him," coach Kevin Sumlin said. "He's a damn good player. Has been and will continue to be. ... He wasn't sharp today. We weren't sharp today at all."

Air Force ran for 402 yards and Tim Jefferson was effective through the air, hitting 10 of 14 passes for 161 yards.

"We felt that if we just kept doing what we do and the plays were called right, they couldn't stop us," said Tew, who finished with 26 carries for 173 yards. He had a 71-yard TD run with 3:32 left in the game after Keenum's fifth interception.

Clark ran 17 times for 129 yards for the Falcons, who had lost in the Armed Forces Bowl the past two seasons, including 34-28 to Houston a year ago. Air Force had lost three straight postseason games.

Houston's bowl win last year capped Sumlin's debut season and snapped an eight-game postseason losing streak that had spanned 28 years. This time, the Cougars missed out on their first 11-win season since 1979.

After Houston was held without a touchdown before halftime, Tyron Carrier returned the opening kickoff of the second half 79 yards for his fourth TD this season. He took the ball near the left sideline, then ran to the middle of the field before shooting through a gap and running untouched to get the Cougars within 24-13.

Air Force immediately responded with its first kickoff return for a touchdown since 1985. Jonathan Warzeka fielded the ball and stepped back into the end zone before running 100 yards. Five Houston players got their hands on him but couldn't get him down.

According to STATS, it was only the sixth major college game since 1996 with kickoff return touchdowns on consecutive plays. None of them had been in a bowl game.

After the kickoff returns, Keenum threw a 10-yard TD to Patrick Edwards to make it 31-20. That gave Keenum a TD pass in 30 consecutive games, but this was the first time in that streak that he had more picks than scores.

Houston managed only 331 total yards after coming in with a nation-best 581 yards per game and averaging 44 points.

When Jefferson slipped down trying to run on third-and-goal from the 2 with 17 seconds and no timeouts left just before halftime, he quickly got the offense off the field and the kicking team got out in time for Erik Soderberg's 27-yard field goal.

"Just overall, we played terrific football today. If you want to break it down into the three phases, one by one, we really were outstanding," coach Troy Calhoun said. "Yet even above that, just the unity, the kind of team chemistry, the spirit that's part of these guys."

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Football

### **2010 Air Force Falcons Coach Troy Calhoun**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 2010 college football season playing as a Division I-A MWC. They played their home games in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, CO. It was their fifty-sixth season of inter-collegiate football. They were led by coach Troy Calhoun in his fourth season with Air Force.

This was the second 9-win season in Coach Calhoun's first four years. Air Force clocked in with a 9-4; 5-3 MW. The Falcons were a member of the Mountain West Conference. They were invited to the Independence Bowl, where they defeated Georgia Tech, 14-7.

During their games against Navy and Army, the Falcons wore a special uniform design modeled after the flying suits and helmets worn by the United States Air Force Thunderbirds, with each player's nameplate featuring either the word "SERVICE" or "FREEDOM". Air Force defeated both Navy and Army, winning them the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy for the first time since 2002.

With eight regular season wins, the Falcons qualified for the Independence Bowl and played Georgia Tech on December 27, 2010 at 3:00 p.m. in Independence Stadium • Shreveport, LA. Air Force won in a low scoring match W (14–7) before 39,362.

## 2010 Independence Bowl Highlights

### Falcons Are Independence Bowl Champions

[https://goairforcefalcons.com/news/2010/12/27/Falcons\\_Are\\_Independence\\_Bowl\\_Champions.aspx](https://goairforcefalcons.com/news/2010/12/27/Falcons_Are_Independence_Bowl_Champions.aspx)

**Dec. 27, 2010**

**SHREVEPORT, La. (AP)** - The Independence Bowl featured the two best running teams in the nation, and special teams proved to be the unlikely difference.

Air Force cashed in when Georgia Tech muffed a punt in the second half, getting a go-ahead touchdown run from Jared Tew in a 14-7 victory Monday.

Backup kicker Zack Bell converted the first two field-goal attempts of his career before Tew's 3-yard run gave the Falcons (9-4) the lead for good. Air Force's only touchdown came four plays after Daniel McKayhan's second muffed punt of the game.

Georgia Tech's 327 yards rushing per game this season edged Air Force's 317.9 average for the nation's top spot. Both teams use a heavy dose of option, which often catches opponents off guard because it's a relatively rare offense.

But with each defense familiar with the scheme, there were no surprises, and both teams were held under their season rushing average - Georgia Tech with 279 and Air Force with 170.

Air Force's Tim Jefferson completed 11 of 23 passes for 117 yards. Bell's field goals came from 41 and 42 yards.

Georgia Tech's Tevin Washington rushed for 131 yards and Anthony Allen added 91 as Georgia Tech outgained Air Force 320-287. But the Yellow Jackets committed four turnovers - including three fumbles.

Georgia Tech (6-7) came into the game hobbled by injuries, academic casualties and misbehavior.

Joshua Nesbitt, the ACC's career leading rusher for a quarterback, missed the game because of a broken right arm. Top receiver Stephen Hill and starting safety Mario Edwards were among four players declared ineligible because of various academic issues

On Sunday, the Yellow Jackets announced that three players - including defensive end Anthony Egbuniwe and defensive backs Michael Peterson and Louis Young - would miss the first half because of a curfew violation.

Even with all those issues, Georgia Tech probably would have won if not for the turnovers. Instead, the Yellow Jackets dropped their sixth consecutive bowl and posted their first losing season in 14 years.

Bell's 42-yard field goal gave Air Force the lead in the first quarter, but Georgia Tech responded with a 12-play, 69-yard drive capped by Anthony Allen's 5-yard touchdown run. The clock-chewing possession was all running plays stayed as the Yellow Jackets ran over and around the Falcons' defense.

Air Force was much more willing to take shots through the air, throwing 17 passes in the first half, but couldn't take advantage of its opportunities. Jonathan Warzeka dropped what looked to be a sure touchdown pass in the second quarter, and the Falcons couldn't convert on three fourth-down opportunities in the first half - including one that was well within field-goal range had they elected to kick. Bell's 41-yard kick as time expired in the second quarter cut Georgia Tech's lead to 7-6 at halftime.

The Yellow Jackets appeared to take control of the game in the second half, but a handful of crucial mistakes proved to be too much for them to overcome.

A nearly nine-minute drive opening the third ended when Washington fumbled on the Air Force 5. Then McKayhan's muffed punts - including the one at the Georgia Tech 14 that led to Air Force's winning touchdown - gave the Falcons terrific field position.

After Tew's scoring run, the Falcons converted the 2-point conversion on a Warzeka run.

Georgia Tech had one last chance to tie it, but a last-gasp pass toward the end zone was intercepted by Jon Davis.

### **2011 Air Force Falcons Coach Troy Calhoun**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 2011 college football season playing as a Division I-A MWC. They played their home games in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, CO. It was their fifty-seventh season of inter-collegiate football. They were led by coach Troy Calhoun in his fifth season with Air Force.

This was the first season with less than eight wins for the Troy Calhoun Falcons. The Air Force record was 7-6; 3-4 in the Mountain West Conference. They finished in fifth place in the MWC. They were invited to the Military Bowl, where they were defeated by one point (L (41-42) by Toledo. With wins over Army and Navy, Air Force won the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy for the second consecutive year.

In the Military Bowl on December 28, 2011, at 2:30 p.m., Toledo beat the Air Force in RFK Stadium Washington, D.C. L (41-42) before 25,042.

## **2011 Military Bowl Highlights**

This 2011 Military Bowl Recap is presented by the game sponsor, Northrop Grumman

<http://www.northropgrumman.com/MediaResources/MediaKits/MilitaryBowl/Pages/2011.aspx>





Dec. 28, 2011 — In one of the most exciting college football bowl games in recent memory, the University of Toledo Rockets held off the Air Force Academy Falcons, 42-41, in the 2011 Military Bowl.

The game was presented by Northrop Grumman at historic Robert F. Kennedy (RFK) Stadium in Washington, D.C. in front of 25,042 fans.

The game, which benefitted the USO, was televised live nationally on ESPN for the fourth straight year. Toledo's Bernard Reedy, who scored three touchdowns, was named the game's Most Valuable Player (MVP).



Northrop Grumman's Chairman, Chief Executive Officer and President Wes Bush (left), along with Vice President for Strategic Communications, Randy Belote (center), and Corporate Vice President of Communications, Darryl Fraser (right), scan the skies for the Northrop Grumman-built B-2 Spirit stealth bomber as it flies over RFK Stadium just before kickoff.





Volunteers roll out a giant American flag across the field in preparation of the 2011 Military Bowl.



The Northrop Grumman-built B-2 Spirit stealth bomber flies over RFK Stadium just before kickoff.

## **About the Sponsorship**

The sponsorship of the game has been a very special and unique opportunity for Northrop Grumman to support the work of the USO. For decades, this organization has been there to boost the morale of our servicemen and women, at home and abroad. From entertaining the troops overseas, to establishing welcome centers across the country, to reaching out to the families of service members, the USO has long demonstrated the enduring American tradition of respect and support for our armed forces.

At Northrop Grumman, we share this tradition, working positively and creatively with the USO over many years for the benefit of service members. For example, Northrop Grumman was the first supporter of the Operation USO Care Package program, and has contributed money, resources and time to the care package program and to USO centers around the world.

Through this sponsorship of the Military Bowl, Northrop Grumman has been able to expand this relationship, delivering all net proceeds from the game to the USO. Additional information about the game can be found on the bowl's website, [www.militarybowl.com](http://www.militarybowl.com).

### **Toledo takes Military Bowl thanks to Air Force's botched 2-point conversion**

**Dec 28, 2011**

**Associated Press**

**WASHINGTON** -- Even the youngest head coach in the country knows not to expect the conventional from Air Force. After all, the Falcons had already scored three fourth-down touchdowns, including the one that had just tied the Military Bowl with 52 seconds to play.

So 32-year-old Matt Campbell, leading Toledo for the first time, wasn't surprised when Air Force lined up to kick the extra point and then ran a fake, going for two to win the game instead of sending it to overtime.

## **The Rockets were ready.**

Holder David Baska got bottled up trying to run the option. The ball squirted toward kicker Parker Herrington, who chased it until it went out of bounds in the end zone, and Toledo started celebrating its 42-41 victory Wednesday night at RFK Stadium.

"We talked about it, first and foremost, because they fake some extra points and fake some field goals," said Campbell, the Toledo offensive coordinator who was promoted this month to the head job after Tim Beckman left for Illinois. "Ironically, we were in the same situation last year in our bowl game. I give credit to our staff. We got ourselves into a defensive call. We were not in a 'block' look."

Toledo succeeded in taking a one-point lead with a 2-point conversion near the end of last year's Little Caesars Pizza Bowl, but the Rockets lost the game to Florida International on a field goal on the game's final play.

This time, the wild ending to a wild game went their way in the school's first bowl win since 2005.

The game matched two of the top 25 scoring teams in the country, and they wasted little time living up to their reputations. It was Mid-American Conference member Toledo's spread offense against Mountain West Air Force's triple option, and the idea of a huddle seemed a quaint, antiquated concept.

Back and forth they went. A kickoff return for 87 yards. A pitch around the left end for 60. Touchdown passes for 49 and 37 yards. A pair of botched onside kicks.

And that was just the first half.

Tim Jefferson, the first quarterback in service academy history to lead his team to four consecutive bowl games, completed 13 of 22 passes for 159 yards with two touchdowns and one interception for Air Force (7-6). Jonathan Warzeka had a career-best 60-yard run to set up one touchdown, and his 37-yard reception on fourth-and-3 tied the game 28-all heading into halftime.

There was even room for a defensive score: Toledo safety Jermaine Robinson's 37-yard interception runback after he corralled a tipped pass deep in the secondary.

It all came down to a gutsy decision on a 2-point conversion. It appeared that Baska tried to pitch the ball to Herrington, but Air Force coach Troy Calhoun said the ball just popped out. Either way, the coach wasn't about to second-guess himself.

"I thought we had an excellent chance to seal and win the game right there. It didn't work out," Calhoun said. "We didn't convert it, so you better be able to live with it. We're a group that over the last six years, we're going to go for it on fourth down if we think there are chances we can take. When we have a pretty darn good opportunity to convert one, we're going to do it. That's the way we're going to play."

### **2012 Air Force Falcons Coach Troy Calhoun**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 2012 college football season playing as a Division I-A MWC. They played their home games in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, CO. It was their fifty-eighth season of inter-collegiate football. They were led by coach Troy Calhoun in his sixth season with Air Force.

This was the first season less than 500 for the Troy Calhoun Falcons. The Air Force record was 6-7; 5-3 in the Mountain West Conference. They finished in fourth place in the MWC. They were invited to the Military Bowl, where they were defeated by Rice.

On December 29, 2012, at 9:45 a.m., Rice beat Airforce L (14-33) in Amon G. Carter Stadium Fort Worth, TX in the Armed Forces Bowl before 40,754.

## **Highlights of the Armed Services Bowl 2012**

### **Academy falls to Rice in Armed Forces Bowl**

*By John Van Winkle, Air Force Academy Public Affairs /*

*Published December 30, 2012*



Rice running back Charles Ross is dragged down during the 2012 Armed Forces Bowl by a host of falcon defenders, including defensive backs Brian Lindsay, bottom, and Chris Miller, right. The bowl game was held December 28 in Ft. Worth, Texas. (U.S. Air Force photo/Sarah Chambers)







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## **Academy falls to Rice in Armed Forces Bowl**

**By John Van Winkle, Air Force Academy Public Affairs /  
Published December 30, 2012**

Above pic shows Rice running back Charles Ross being dragged down during the 2012 Armed Forces Bowl by a host of falcon defenders, including defensive backs Brian Lindsay, bottom, and Chris Miller, right.

The bowl game was held December 28 in Ft. Worth, Texas. (U.S. Air Force photo/Sarah Chambers)

**FORT WORTH, Texas (AFNS)** -- The Air Force Academy fell 14-33 to Rice University in the 2012 Armed Forces Bowl today.

Rice University used a combination of size, speed and better execution to dominate the second half and end the Falcons season with a loss.

After a few initial three-and-outs, Rice mounted its first sustained drive to score when quarterback Taylor McHargue connected with receiver Jordan Taylor from 16-yards out in the corner of the end zone to go up 7-0.

McHargue would later go with a concussion and not return. Air Force also switched out under center, pulling senior quarterback Connor Dietz in the second quarter in favor of sophomore Kale Pearson, hoping to spark an offense that can stay on the field for more than three consecutive plays.

"We came into the game expecting both guys to play for us at quarterback," said Falcons head coach Troy Calhoun. "Kale played well for us in the second quarter."

Pearson commanded the Falcons' first sustained drive of the game and ended the series with a 9-yard run around the right to tie the game at 7-all. The Falcons took the lead a few series later when senior running back Wes Cobb dove in from a yard out for the Falcons' second touchdown.

Kicker Parker Herrington added the extra point, giving the Falcons a 14-7 lead. The Owls evened the score before the half and took control of the game from that point on, keeping the Falcons out of the end zone and on their heels for the remainder of the game. Rice would score four times in the second half to mount and sustain a 33-14 lead until time ran out.

"At every single spot, we didn't play well enough in the second half to win a game," said Calhoun.

On offense, the Falcons would end the day converting only four of 14 third downs, and one of two on fourth down. Two critical turnovers in the fourth quarter also killed any chance the Falcons had of mounting a comeback.

"We put an awful lot of strain on our defense," said Calhoun. "Sometimes it was in field position, and sometimes it wasn't getting enough first downs. Sometimes it was in third downs for the other team. When your opponent has 20 third downs, you aren't stopping them enough to give your offense a shot."

Defensively, the Falcons allowed 503 yards of offense to sustain several long drives and win time of possession battle by over 15 minutes.



"It just came down to execution," said senior linebacker Austin Niklas, Air Force's move valuable player for the game.

Size was also an advantage that Rice monopolized. It is an advantage that most opponents have over service academy football teams. Service academy teams compensate for this up front with their triple-option offenses, and utilize technique, strength and mobility to overcome the opponents' mass advantage.

But against Rice's offense and their three wide-receiver set, the Falcons smaller secondary spent the game in their opponent's shadows. Between Rice's two quarterbacks, the Falcons gave up 295 yards in passing offense and had zero interceptions.

"It was a combo of our secondary, our defensive backs, getting beat up, and our pass rush. Rice has a lot better size on the ends and our pass rush just didn't bring it home," said senior linebacker Alex Means.

Rice receiver Jordan Taylor used his 6'5" frame to tower over Falcon defenders and score all three of Rice's touchdowns.

"I wish we had won," said Niklas. "We fought hard the whole game. Rice has a good football team, and we were unable to stop them consistently in the second half. The Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl people were great, and we appreciated our time here."

For the Falcons, this concludes their 2012 college football season. After a few more days of holiday leave, next up for the players will be off-season workouts in the weight room in January for the underclassmen. For most of the 22 seniors, it' was the last game of their collegiate careers, so they just had one more semester and graduation awaiting them. For the coaches, recruiting trips and recruiting visits will take the forefront of the days to come, as well as preparations for spring football in early 2013.

### **2013 Air Force Falcons Coach Troy Calhoun**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 2013 college football season playing as a Division I-A MWC. They played their home games in Falcon Stadium

in Colorado Springs, CO. It was their fifty-ninth season of inter-collegiate football. They were led by coach Troy Calhoun in his seventh season with Air Force.

This was the first really poor season for the Troy Calhoun Falcons. The Air Force record was 2-10; 0-8 in the Mountain West Conference. They finished in last place in the MWC.

They won no games in the Conference this year. It was as if a big spray came over the AFA football this year and it brought the Can't Play disease. It was the worst AFA results since Santa Claus first appeared before the world was born. It was not a happy year.

The good news for the Falcons and the good news for the readers is that the three years after this were what I would call great. The two after that were twice as good if not better than this year. Every team falls in the mud every now and then. This year, the Falcons got stuck in the mud and could not get out until the year changed from 2013 to 2014.

#### **2014 Air Force Falcons Coach Troy Calhoun**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 2014 college football season playing as a Division I-A MWC. They played their home games in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, CO. It was their sixtieth season of inter-collegiate football. They were led by coach Troy Calhoun in his eighth season with Air Force.

This was a great rebound season after the last. I am trying to find out the reason for the poor 2013 showing and when I do, I will correct the online version of this book to include the "wha happa!" I may even include the paperback in the republished changes.

For this book, I am pleased to report that no season, even the last two (2017 & 2018), which are so close to current that they have their own chapter, compares in bad play like 2013. Can it be the "13" part of the date. I don't think so. You don't think that "13" is an unlucky number just because it was for the AFA in 2013...do you?

The Air Force record this year was very good. It was 10-3; 5-3 in the Mountain West Conference. They finished in fourth place in the MWC. They were invited to the Famous Idaho Potato Bowl where they defeated Western Michigan. How's that for a recovery?

In the famous Idaho Potato Bowl, on Dec 20 vs. Western Michigan in Albertsons Stadium Boise, ID , the Air Force prevailed W (38–24) before 18,223

## **Bowl Bits: Air Force 38, Western Michigan 24 (Idaho Potato Bowl)**

<https://www.cbssports.com/college-football/news/bowl-bits-air-force-38-western-michigan-24-idaho-potato-bowl/>

Thanks you to cbssports.com

Air Force won 10 games for the first time under Troy Calhoun after beating Western Michigan in the Famous Idaho Potato Bowl.

**by Chip Patterson @Chip\_Patterson**

**Dec 20, 2014**



Shayne Davern ran for 101 yards and two touchdowns against Western Michigan. (USATSI)

Air Force and Western Michigan were two of the best turnaround stories in 2014, but it was the Falcons that were able to finish the year with a victory after a 38-24 win against Western Michigan in the Idaho Potato Bowl. The bowl victory, Air Force's first since 2010, wraps the program's first 10-win season under Troy Calhoun and gives the MW's Mountain Division three 10-win teams (Boise State and Colorado State, and both teams lost to the Falcons).

Story of the game: Jarvion Franklin made history as the first player in MAC history to be named Freshman of the Year and Offensive Player of the Year in the same season. But he was tough to find on Saturday thanks to a noted effort by Air Force to shut down the Western Michigan running attack. With eight, even nine players crowded near the line of scrimmage, the Falcons forced quarterback Zach Terrell to try and beat them through the air in cold and rainy Boise conditions. WMU wide receiver Corey Davis was the benefactor of this game plan, pulling in 8 catches for 176 yards and three touchdowns.

Meanwhile, Air Force's offense was right at home in Boise State's stadium, holding the ball for long drives thanks to a fierce commitment to the ground game. At was a slow and steady approach, but the 284-79 advantage in team rushing yards stands out more than any stat from the game.

Player of the game: Air Force linebacker Weston Steelhammer led the Falcons defense with 10 solo tackles. Some of Steelhammer's finest work this season has been done in the open field, and while the entire defense deserves this award there is only one Steelhammer.

### **2015 Air Force Falcons Coach Troy Calhoun**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 2015 college football season playing as a Division I-A MWC. They played their home games in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, CO. It was their sixty-first season of inter-collegiate football. They were led by coach Troy Calhoun in his ninth season with Air Force. This was an OK season after winning ten the last year (2014)

The Falcons finished the season 8-6, 6-2 in Mountain West play to win the Mountain Division championship. They represented the

Mountain Division in the Mountain West Championship Game where they lost to West Division champion San Diego State. They were invited to the Armed Forces Bowl where they lost to California.

On December 29 at 12:00 p.m. California beat Air Force at Amon G. Carter Stadium Fort Worth, TX in the shootout at the Armed Forces Bowl L (36–55) before 38,915

## Highlights 2015 Armed Services Bowl

by Charles Rahrig V 3 years ago Follow @c\_rahrig

Comment: The California Golden Bears and quarterback Jared Goff rolled to a win over the Air Force Falcons.



**California Golden Bears 55**



**Air Force Falcons 36**

The Armed Forces Bowl might have been a blowout, but both the California Golden Bears and Air Force Falcons put on a show. Both teams put up a lot of points on the board and it was a day where defenses were non-existent.

For California quarterback Jared Goff, it was the final game of his collegiate career. Goff headed off to the NFL Draft, where he was one of the top quarterbacks taken in the draft, if not the top quarterback off the board. Goff got the Rams to the NFC Championship and then he played a tough game against the Patriots in the Super Bowl.

He put on an impressive showing all day for the Golden Bears in the Armed Services Bowl. Goff put the ball in the right spot and consistently set up his wide receivers to score touchdowns.

Air Force got the scoring fest started on the day, when Jacobi Owens ran in from a yard out to put Air Force on top. California would answer right back with a rushing touchdown of their own, as Vic Enwere also ran in from a yard out.

From there, both teams would match each other with passing touchdowns, to make it a 14-14 game. California would then begin to gain separation from Air Force.

The Golden Bears would score on three straight possessions, all of which were beautiful touchdown passes from Jared Goff. Air Force would get a score of their own in, but by then Goff and the Golden Bears had a commanding 35-21 lead at the half.

California would continue to extend their lead right out of the half, as Goff found Darius Powe for 12 yards and a touchdown. Air Force would then have a big fumble, which set up a California field goal. The game was suddenly 45-21 in favor of California and looking like a blowout.

Air Force would try to climb back in it, as Karson Roberts and Timothy McVey connected on a 57-yard score. California would respond to Air Force's touchdown to keep their big lead, when Goff continued to roll with his pass to Kenny Lawler, who made a beautiful sprint to the end zone, which gave Goff six touchdowns on the day.

The Golden Bears held a 52-29 lead and the game was all but over, save for Air Force scoring on another touchdown pass from Roberts. With time running down and a 52-36 lead, California just worked on the clock and making Air Force burn their timeouts.

California capped off their day with a field goal, to make it 55-36. With the win, California became the 2015 Armed Forces Bowl winners.

### **2016 Air Force Falcons Coach Troy Calhoun**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 2016 college football season playing as a Division I-A MWC. They played their home games in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, CO. It was their sixty-second season of inter-

collegiate football. They were led by coach Troy Calhoun in his tenth season with Air Force. This was another fine for Troy Calhoun's Air Force Squad.

The Falcons finished the season 10-3, 5-3 in Mountain West play for a tie for fourth place in the Mountain Division. They were invited to the Arizona Bowl where they defeated South Alabama.

In the Arizona Bowl, on December 30, 2016, at 3:30 p.m., Air Force defeated South Alabama in Arizona Stadium Tucson, AZ W (45-21) before 33,868

## 2016 Arizona Bowl Highlights

by **Connor Muldowney** 2 years ago Follow [@connormuldowney](#)  
Thank you Connor.

**COMMENT:** Take a look at the highlights, final score and more from Friday evening's Arizona Bowl between South Alabama and Air Force.



**SOUTH ALABAMA JAGUARS 21**



**AIR FORCE FALCONS 45**

South Alabama opened the 2016 season with one of the best upsets of the year, beating Mississippi State on the road. The Jaguars weren't quite the same after that, as the expectations from that point on were a little unrealistic and they finished eighth in the Sun Belt with a 6-6 overall record.

Facing the potent rushing attack of Air Force on Friday evening, the Jaguars looked to make a name for themselves. However, the Falcons posed a serious problem for the 98th-ranked rushing defense. They have averaged over 300 yards per game on the season.

The Jaguars got off to a quick start, scoring two touchdowns in the first quarter and taking a 14-3 lead. It was looking like it'd be all South Alabama through the first 20 minutes as the Jaguars added another touchdown on a Dallas Davis run and the sophomore was having a big game.

Air Force stormed back, scoring 42 straight points and just wearing down the Jaguars' defense. The Falcons' rushing attack was doing damage and the second half was all theirs. Air Force was owning the trenches and it was clear who the stronger team was.

All the Falcons had to do in the fourth was run out the clock, winning big.



# Chapter 12 Coach Troy Calhoun 2017-2018

Calhoun Coach # 7



Year	Coach	Record	Conference	Record
2017	Troy Calhoun	5-7	MWC	4-4
2018	Troy Calhoun	5-7	MWC	3-5

## 2017 Air Force Falcons Coach Troy Calhoun

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 2017 college football season playing as a Division I-A MWC. They played their home games in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, CO. It was their sixty-third season of inter-collegiate football. They were led by coach Troy Calhoun in his eleventh season with Air Force.

The Falcons finished the season 5-7, 4-4 in Mountain West play to finish in a tie for fourth place in the Mountain Division.

## **2018 Air Force Falcons Coach Troy Calhoun**

The Air Force Falcons football team represented the United States Air Force Academy in the 2017 college football season playing as a Division I-A MWC. They played their home games in Falcon Stadium in Colorado Springs, CO. It was their sixty-fourth season of inter-collegiate football. They were led by coach Troy Calhoun in his twelfth season with Air Force. This was another not so fine year for Troy Calhoun's Air Force Squad. But, there is always tomorrow.

The Falcons finished the season 5-7; 3-5 in Mountain West play for a tie for fourth place in the Mountain Division. They were not invited to a bowl game this season.

During the Mountain West media days held July 24–25 at the Cosmopolitan on the Las Vegas Strip, the Falcons were predicted to finish in fifth place in the Mountain Division. The prognosticators were right. Air Force did not have any players selected to the preseason all-Mountain West team. Expectations were quite low for the season.

**Thank you all for reading this book. I hope you enjoyed it.**

And, for now, until we get some more great players to write about, that's all she wrote. Hope you enjoyed reading about great AFA players.

## Other Books by Brian Kelly: (amazon.com, and Kindle)

[Great Moments in Air Force Football](#) Read about the great players from 1955 to 2019  
[The Ghost of Wilkes-Barre Future](#) A prescription for making the city a success.  
[Great Coaches in Navy Football: From Coach 1 to Coach #39 Ken Niumatalolo](#)  
[Great Moments in Navy Football: From the beginning of football to the 2018 Season!](#)  
[Great Players in Navy Football: From the first player to the Current Seasons](#)  
[No Tree! No Toys! No Toot Toot!](#) Heartwarming story. Christmas disappeared while 19 month old was napping  
[How to End DACA, Sanctuary Cities, & Resident Illegal Aliens](#) . best solution to wipe shadows in America.  
[Government Must Stop Ripping Off Seniors' Social Security!](#): Hey buddy, seniors can no longer spare a dime?  
[Special Report: Solving America's Student Debt Crisis!:](#) The only real solution to the \$1.52 Trillion debt  
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[The Winning Political Platform for America](#) Unique winning approach to solve the big problems in America.  
[Lou Barletta v Bob Casey for US Senate](#) Barletta's unique approach to solving the big problems in America.  
[John Chrin v Matt Cartwright for Congress](#) Chrin has a unique approach to solving big problems in America.  
[The Cure for Hate !!!](#) Can the cure be any worse than this disease that is crippling America?  
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[White People Are Bad! Bad! Bad!](#) Whoever thought a popular slogan in 2018 would be *It's OK to be White!*  
[The Fake News Media Is Also Corrupt !!!:](#) Fake press / media today is not worthy to be 4<sup>th</sup> Estate.  
[God Gave US Donald Trump?](#) Trump was sent from God as the people's answer  
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[Great Coaches in Clemson Football](#) The best Clemson Coaches right to Dabo Swinney  
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[Winning Back America.](#) America's been stolen and can be won back completely  
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[The Bike by Jack Lammers...](#) Great heartwarming Story by Jack  
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[Top Ten Political Books for 2018...](#) Cliffnotes Version of 10 Political Books  
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