

US AIR FORCE HERITAGE OF AMERICA BAND



MISSION

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

LINEAGE

Air Force Band, Barksdale Field, Shreveport, Louisiana constituted and activated, 1 Oct 1941

Redesignated 64 AAF Band, 10 Aug 1942

Redesignated 564 Army Band, 27 Aug 1943

Redesignated 564 AAF Band 26 Feb 1944

Redesignated 564 Air Force Band, 26 Sep 1947

Redesignated 564 Tactical Air Command Band, 15 Dec 1989

Redesignated Tactical Air Command Band, 1 Oct 1991

Redesignated Air Combat Command Heritage of America Band, 1 Jun 1992

Redesignated US Air Force Heritage of America Band, 9 May 1997

STATIONS

Barksdale Field, Louisiana, 1 Oct 1941

Brooks Field, Texas, 12 Jan 1946

Langley Field (later Langley AFB), Virginia, 29 Jun 1946

ASSIGNMENTS

Third Air Force, 1 Oct 1941
III Bomber Command, 1 Oct 1944
Third Air Force, 24 Aug 1945
Tactical Air Command, 21 Mar 1946
Ninth Air Force, 28 Mar 1946
Tactical Air Command, 29 Jun 1946
Ninth Air Force, 17 Feb 1949
Tactical Air Command, 1 Aug 1950
4500 Air Base Wing, 22 Mar 1960
Tactical Air Command, 1 Jul 1970
Air Combat Command, 1 Jun 1992

COMMANDERS

Unknown, 1941-1943
Maj James R. Berry, 1943
Warrant Officer Junior Grade Robert B. Kay, 1943-1945
Chief Warrant Officer Glynn A. Beckham, 1945
Warrant Officer Junior Grade Wilbur H. Leadbetter, 1945-1946
Capt Robert M. Bussel, 1946
1st Lt Gordon W. Johnson, 1946
Capt George B. Schold, Jr., 1946-1947
Chief Warrant Officer Elmer Reade, 1947-1950
Chief Warrant Officer Clyde C. Owens, 1950-1951
1st Lt David H. Peery, 1951-1952
1st Lt Gilbert W. Shrauger, 1952
1st Lt Henry O. Sellers, Jr., 1952
Chief Warrant Officer Adam. B. Schaeffer, Jr., 1952-1954
Maj Walter M. Halsey (Acting), 1954-1955
Maj Robert W. Libell (Acting), 1955-1956
1st Lt Arnold D. Gabriel, 1956-1959
Chief Warrant Officer Eldridge G. Bunton, Jr., 1959-1960
Chief Warrant Officer Eugene A. Dieter, 1960
Capt Carl W. Costebbader, 1960-1964
Chief Warrant Officer Eugene A. Dieter, 1964-1965
Chief Warrant Officer Julius Sanger, 1965-1967
Maj Richard E. Thurston, 1967-1969
Cpt Lewis W. Stone (Acting), 1969
Maj Edward D'Alfonso, 1969-1974
Capt Ron Carl, 1974-1978
Capt David W. Rackley, 1978-1981
Capt Richard A. Shelton, 1981-1984
Capt Lowell E. Graham, 1984-1995
Capt Larry H. Lang, 1995-2004

Lt Col Doug C. Monroe, 2004

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

1 Jul 1969-30 Jun 1971

EMBLEM



MOTTO

OPERATIONS

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

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

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

The U.S. Air Force Heritage of America Band plays approximately 25 concerts a year in venues from Pennsylvania to South Carolina, playing a variety of jazz, classical and patriotic music to an audience of retirees, children and families alike. Their mission is to reach out to communities and tell the Air Force story through the use of wind, brass and percussion instruments. Bridging the gap between the military and the public is a high priority, said the band members and something they try to accomplish with each bang of a drum or toot of the horn. During an eight-concert trip through North Carolina, the band touched crowds from Greensboro to Hickory and several points in between.

"We have such a good time each performance," said Master Sgt. David Dell, an 18-year trumpeter for the Air Force. "We have a lot of folks who are excited to tell us how much they love the show, but also a lot of people tell us their story of when they were in the military." With a large population of military retirees dwelling in the central part of the state, during their performances here the band gave audience members a chance to remember the patriotic feeling of serving their country.

"It fills me with great pride to come out and see members of the Air Force perform like this," said George East, a retired Air Force senior master sergeant from Stoneville, N.C. "This is great for these guys to go out on tour and entertain the public. I come out every year when they're in the area and it gives people a good chance to interact with members of the Air Force." The recent tour continued through Veteran's Day, and added an additional level of pride from military retirees, who stood and sang proudly during the band's rendition of the Armed Forces Medley. "Hearing the Air Force song brought back such great memories and made my spine tingle," East said.

"We take on the persona of the entire military," Bell said when referring to those unfamiliar with the military. "It's important for us to have the best possible product out there. From the moment we step on stage, we conduct ourselves professionally. If we perform with excellence, the audience will tell people, 'if the band can be this great, then the Airmen at others bases must be incredible.'" Whether their audience is a crowd of five or 5,000, the members of the Heritage of America band said they hit every note with a sense of pride and worth knowing the musical message they deliver touches many different people, in many different ways. 2012

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORIES

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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency, U.S. Air Force, Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.

Unit yearbook. *Barksdale Field, LA*. 1945