

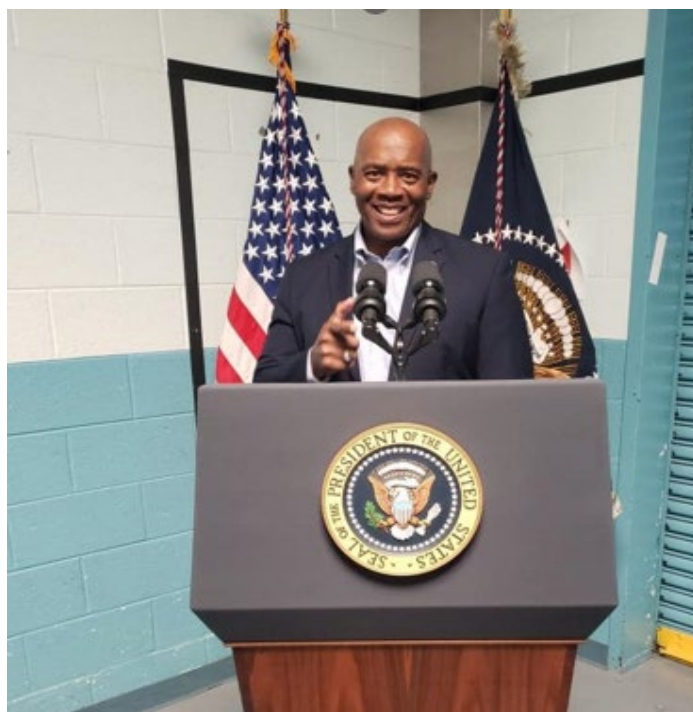


1600 COMMUNICATOR

1600 Communications Association, November 2023

WHO ARE WE

Established in 1968, the 1600 Communications Association is a fraternal and social organization comprised of military and civilian personnel who have served as members of the White House Communications Agency (WHCA) and its predecessor the White House Army Signal Agency.



Former WHCA Commander, Air Force Colonel (Retired) Michael B. Black

WHCA ALUMNI DAY – MAKES HISTORY

On June 22, 2023, the White House Communications Agency hosted the 2023 Alumni Day. It was a big success—boasting the highest alumni event attendance in history. The hugs, handshakes, and fist pumps were preludes to catching up on life, family, and second careers. It was clear, “this was one of the best alumni attended events ever!” [Read more on Page 18.](#)

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Board Members



Greetings Fantastic 1600 Association Team,

As the Vice President, I am humbled and honored to have the opportunity to continue to support our White House Communications Agency (WHCA) warriors, members of the Association, and their families. As a quick background, I was assigned at WHCA from 2006 through my retirement from the U.S. Army in 2012. I served as the Director of Operations and subsequently the Director, Network Systems Division in what was then called the Washington Area Communications Command (WACC). I then had the privilege to be part of a team of true professionals as the Commander, 1st Presidential Communications Command (PCC)—ROAD DAWGS!!! Back then, there were three PCCs. Since retirement, my wife and I have been active with the Association and Agency events over the last (wow) 12 years.

The board would like to congratulate U.S. Army Colonel Brian Jorgenson as he assumed command of the Agency in June 2023 thus becoming the 31st Commander of WHCA. Although, I think that number may need to be adjusted to 32nd Commander as U.S. Air Force Colonel (Retired) Michael Black found a missing piece of the organization's history! We also want to take this time to formally thank and say farewell to U.S. Air Force Colonel Joy Kaczor, and her family. The Kaczor command team accomplished so much for the Agency, its members, and families. The board would also like to recognize and congratulate Colonel Kaczor for being selected for promotion to Brigadier General.

Being part of an incredible organization—"membership does have its privileges." The board and alumni have and continue to sponsor and support multiple events. This year alone the team has supported the Foundation's 2023 Golf Tournament and the WHCA Alumni Day, several reunions across the country, Agency functions, and awarded \$14,000 in scholarships. A special congratulations to our 2023 Scholarship Awardees. If you ever wonder if you are making a difference as part of the association, just take a few minutes to read the Scholarship News section. Your membership dues and golf tournament participation and donations directly support the Agency, alumni, and families through networking activities, organizational events, and the scholarship program. We are looking forward to providing Presidential level support to future events.

The last thing I'd like to do is reiterate the President's message from our last Newsletter. Our desire is to provide a strong bond and connection between WHCA's current members and its alumni. Many of us in the alumni ranks have moved into second careers in the Government/Government Contracting industries. We have among us senior Government officials and leaders in federal contracting companies with senior leadership and/or hiring management roles. Take a moment to reflect on when you were retiring or separating from military service. Did you have anyone mentoring you or coaching you on



how to find a job, or how to “step out of your boots” and begin to function as a civilian? If you did, you know the value. If you did not, imagine how much less anxiety you would have faced as you stepped into the unknown. For these reasons, my goal is to improve access for WHCA’s current members to our alumni network, provide mentoring opportunities, and provide guidance and coaching in the form of events like resume writing workshops, interview tips, and lessons in how to find a great job and be successful on the outside. Again, we will leverage social media to advance this agenda, and hopefully sponsor and support more events and opportunities for people to be engaged.

We want to hear from you! If you have questions, ideas, or want to get more actively involved, please do not hesitate to contact us at president@1600commassoc.org

Also, we encourage you to join us via the 1600 Communications Association Facebook page. This is where you will find the most current information on upcoming events and to stay connected with the team!

**Respectfully,
Mike Millward**



TREASURER'S REPORT – OCTOBER 2023



MEMBERSHIP

Thus far in 2023 the Association has processed 24 membership transactions. This includes seven new members. Two of those new members signed up for Lifetime Membership. The others pay dues annually. Thank you to those who have paid for 2023.

Unfortunately, the new member and annual payment numbers are down from previous years; however, there is optimism that transactions will increase by the end of the year. There are still several members who have not yet paid their dues for 2021 and 2022. Notifications have been sent and these persons have been moved to an inactive status.

This brings the total current **active** membership roster to **687**.

NEW MEMBERS – THIS REPORT

Welcome to the following new members:

- **Erdy Bailey** (2005 to 2008)
- **Ryan J. Huston** (2022 to Present)
- **Kearia Johnson** (2018 to 2023)
- **Kineta Eva Mae Ruffin** (2021 to Present)



LAST WHEELS UP (some are late entries)

- **John B. Cowan** – (WHCA 1984 to 1991) Deceased January 10, 2023
- **Gordon G. Koch** – (WHCA 1981 to 1995) Deceased March 17, 2023
- **Robert J. Ackerman** - Deceased August 3, 2023
- **Frederick W. Swift** – (WHCA 1965 to 1973) Deceased August 10, 2023
- **Lamont Hoyer** – (WHCA 2000 to 2009) Deceased August 24, 2023
- **Ronald E. Hacker** – (WHCA 1977 to 1986) Deceased September 2, 2023



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

To save postage, the Association does not mail a special dues invoice. Instead, members are reminded in the newsletters that the **dues year is January to December**. If you have already sent your 2023 dues, thank you very much.

Please remember the yearly dues are \$30.00 per year and are due in January.

Below is a form to fill out and send with your dues. Also, please notify the Treasurer of any address, email address, or other contact information changes.

1600 Communications Association Membership Renewal

NAME: _____ SPOUSE NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____ CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

HOME PHONE: _____ WORK PHONE: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

WHCA SERVICE DATES: From _____ To _____

Make check payable to 1600 Communications Association. Please allow 4- to 6-weeks for a reply. For a quicker response, mail your payment and form to Glenn Arnett, 128 Atlantis Lane, Lake Frederick, VA 22630-2099.



ASSOCIATION ITEMS FOR SALE

The new website has not been updated yet with the Association items but there are a few in stock for sale. It is our goal to have photos and ordering instructions on the website soon.

WHAT'S AVAILABLE?

PSB Sticker/Decals:

- PSB Stickers/Decals are \$5.00 each if paying with a check (using PayPal - \$6.00 ea)

Small PSB Lapel Pins

- PSB Lapel Pins are \$10.00 each if paying with a check (using PayPal - \$12.00 ea)

1600 Communications Association 50th Anniversary and Generic Challenge Coins

- All Coins are \$25.00 each plus \$5.00 postage if paying with a check (using PayPal - \$35.00 ea)

There are also a few (limited sizes) of the 1600 Communications Association Polo Shirts.

Ask us how to purchase ***A Million Miles of Presidents, McNally Book***.

If you would like to purchase one or more of these items, send your request to treasurer@1600commasoc.org or Glenn Arnett, 128 Atlantis Lane, Lake Frederick, VA 22630-2099. Make checks payable to the 1600 Communications Association.

As a friendly reminder, sticker/decals and Lapel Pins are for use only by authorized recipients of the Presidential Service Badge.



50th Anniversary Coin



PSB Decal



Challenge Coin

SCHOLARSHIP NEWS

\$14,000 AWARDED IN 2023



SCHOLARSHIPS

One of the truly great things that the 1600 Communications Association does every year is to award scholarships to members and dependents through its annual scholarship program. The program dates back to the earliest days of the organization. One of the objectives of the Association's founder, **Colonel George J. McNally**, was to establish a scholarship program to support members and their families in pursuing higher education goals. The program has grown over the years—thanks to the generosity of members donating to the scholarship fund and revenue generated by events, such as the annual golf tournament, awards have increased. The competition has also increased with the quality of applications improving each year. The program is now administered by the Association's nonprofit 501c3 organization, **The 1600 Communications Foundation**.

Again, this year the competition for scholarships was strong. The selection committee had the difficult task of deciding among a number of worthy applicants. The overall quality of applications was excellent. After screening for eligibility, all applications were evaluated in 10 areas—academic achievement, leadership, character and commitment, extracurricular activities, quality of the written essay, quality and completeness of the application, potential for academic success, career potential, evidence of responsible citizenship, and financial planning. After thorough evaluation of all the applications, the Committee selected four of the applicants for awards.

Go to the 1600 Comm Foundation website, <https://1600commfoundation.org/> under the **Scholarship** tab for information on the program.

ATTENTION ASSOCIATION MEMBERS! – Did you know your donations to the scholarship program are tax deductible? Make your donations to the **1600 Communications Foundation** TODAY!

The Association is proud to announce the
2023 Scholarship Recipients:

KATIE SCHMIDT

Vanderbilt University
Total Award \$6,000

Thomsen Memorial Scholarship and General Tuck
Memorial Scholarship Awardee



DOMONIC KACZOR

University of Miami
Total Award \$3,500



HALEIGH DILKS

University of Hawaii, Manoa
Total Award \$2,500



JOSHUA WILLIAMS

University of Maryland Eastern Shore
Total Award \$2,000

SCHOLARSHIP NEWS

HISTORY OF THE PROGRAM



The **Ronald K. Thomsen Award** recognizes Ron Thomsen, a long time Association member who served on the Board for more than 25 years and was a driving force behind making the Scholarship Program what it is today. Ron passed away in December of 2009. The **General John Tuck Memorial Award** recognizes General Tuck who served as WHCA Commander from 1982 to 1984, and this Scholarship was established by the general's wife, Mrs. Eleanor Tuck, after his death in August 2015. Mrs. Tuck has now also passed away. The award reflects both the General and Mrs. Tuck's commitment and dedication to the military, the Association, and education.

The Association offers its congratulations to the 2023 scholarship awardees and wishes all applicants good luck and success in their academic pursuits. The efforts and achievements of all the applicants was extraordinary. With the 2023 awards, **the Association has provided more than \$150,000 in scholarships to Association members and their families over the last 12 years**—we have been able to do so as a result of donations and support of the Golf Tournament.

The Association would like to thank the members of the selection committee, Gordon Aitken, Joseph (Jake) Simmons, George Bafundo, and Glenn Whited. Each year they devote numerous hours to evaluating each applicant and ensuring the selection process is both thorough and fair. Thanks for your hard work and dedication!

The following two pages are letters from recipients of scholarship awards. We always take considerable pleasure in hearing about the great things awardees have accomplished or are pursuing. Other awardees are encouraged to send us updates on their studies and careers.



SCHOLARSHIP NEWS

2023 SCHOLARSHIP WINNER – THANK YOU



Dear 1600 Scholarship Committee,

I would like to thank you for choosing me to receive a scholarship from the 1600 Communications Association. It is nice to know that others are willing to financially help students with their education and dreams.

Your kind gift has allowed me to gain experience that encompasses my concept of leadership and led me to become a University of Maryland Eastern Shore Hawk Ambassador. As a Hawk Ambassador, it's my responsibility to show prospective students and their families around the campus so they can get a sense of the college lifestyle and make an informed decision about their future education experience. As a leader, being an ambassador has furthered the concept of responsibility in the importance of holding yourself accountable for the decisions you make whether it affects you and others..

Another experience that has shaped me, because of your generous donation, is becoming a member of University of Maryland Eastern Shore's Hawk Media. As part of Hawk Media, I run various media events around the campus such as the Maryland Truth and Reconciliation Council and other numerous campus events. Through this organization, I have been recognized by many people on campus who have recruited me to help them with film projects. One notable experience I can share is working on a Senior's film project which she used to get into film school.

The 1600 Communications Association scholarship motivated me to do my best, so that you could see your investment. I have completed my freshman year of college with a 4.0 GPA for both semesters. I put in the work by prioritizing a strong academic start to my four-year educational journey. Additionally, I was honored



at the Honors Convocation with Departmental Distinction for maintaining a GPA of 3.7 or above. Being a member of the Honors Program keeps me on track and pushed me to surpass my freshman year college goal. The Honors Program drove me to a level of higher standards amongst my peers to demonstrate my academic knowledge, develop character building skills, and a deep service to the community around me.

My goal is to keep challenging myself and have an even better sophomore year! I cannot thank you enough for supporting me through the 1600 Communications Association, as I continue my education and achieve my goals.

Sincerely,

Joshua Williams

IB Diploma Program Recipient

Digital Media Studies Major

Richard A. Henson Honors Program Student

UMES Class of 2026



LINDSEY DICKERSON 2017 & 2018 RECIPIENT

I, Lindsey Dickerson, was a recipient of the 1600 Communications Association Ron Thomsen Memorial Scholarship in 2017 and 2018. Every day I am honored to represent a small part of the 1600 Communications Association which my grandfather, George Bafundo, has been a member of since serving in the White House Communications Agency. My grandfather is my hero, and having a portion of his legacy intertwined with my academic and professional future has truly been a privilege.

At the time of my award, I was an undergraduate student at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) studying biopsychology and art history. With the support of the 1600 Communications Association Scholarship, I sought opportunities to fully engage with my education. Aside from being actively involved in my coursework and volunteering, I participated in undergraduate research. I worked alongside two of UCSB's esteemed professors to establish a local elementary education program that bolstered K-5 students' interest in STEM coursework. The ultimate goal of this project was to combat academic and gender disparities by making science accessible and exciting to children. I was honored to be included as an author on this project's research paper, and had the opportunity to present our findings at an undergraduate research conference. My time at UCSB granted me incredible friends, mentors, and memories. I could not be more grateful to have had the 1600 Communications Association's support to attend such an incredible university.

After graduating from UCSB in 2021, I accepted a full-time position as a Medical Assistant in a pediatric orthopedic practice in downtown Santa

Barbara. Working in a surgical practice provided me with insights into the realities of medicine. Each day, I saw upwards of thirty patients whose problems ranged from fractures to chronic congenital conditions. I frequently removed children's casts using what I called a "tickle machine"; quickly learning how to best demonstrate and explain the process so that young patients felt more at ease. Working with and educating patients was especially rewarding, and inspired me to pursue graduate programs to become a Nurse Practitioner.

My passion for medicine and working with children led me to the University of Pennsylvania's Accelerated Bachelor and Master of Science in Nursing program. Penn's program offers a streamlined path to becoming a Nurse Practitioner for students who have a non-nursing bachelor's degree. Beginning in August 2023, I will take courses from interdisciplinary faculty and complete clinical training in Philadelphia's large hospital system to learn how to care for diverse patient populations and cases. After completing the first portion of this program, I will work as a RN before submatriculating into Nurse Practitioner coursework with a Pediatric Acute/Chronic Care Concentration. Upon completion, I will be a licensed Nurse Practitioner specializing in pediatrics.

I am above all honored and extremely excited to embark on my next chapter at Penn. I would not have this opportunity without the support of my family and organizations like the 1600 Communications Association. I am eternally thankful for your assistance and hope to embody the 1600 Communications Association's generosity and community values as I move forward in my professional and personal life.

GOLF TOURNAMENT 2023



Into each golf tournament, a little rain must occasionally fall—but a little rain did not stop the show. In the nearly 30 years that the members of the Association have gathered for our annual tournament, we have been blessed with great weather. This year was the exception. We were greeted with rain and a very soggy golf course. The hardy Association golfers would not be deterred. A record turnout—more than 130 golfers and a dozen volunteers braved the conditions. Fortunately, the really heavy rain held off until the group had gathered in the clubhouse for a fantastic buffet meal and more importantly—fellowship.



GOLF TOURNAMENT 2023 - continued



Enough about the weather. The membership and sponsors really showed up in support of the real purpose of the tournament—the 1600 Communications Foundation scholarship and charitable programs. More than \$11,000 was raised to support these two important programs. A special shout out to the active duty WHCA family, who once again showed up in force this year. Chief of Staff Rich Gonsalves represented the WHCA Command Group and led his foursome.



GOLF TOURNAMENT 2023 - continued



Old Hickory Golf Club was the site of our tournament once again. The course was in amazing shape despite the saturated conditions. The golf course staff were first-class. There were a lot of smashing shots, and at the end of the day, some terrific scores and memorable stories. Prizes were awarded to winning teams in two brackets. Closest to the pin and long drive winners were also recognized. Again, this year, no one won the Hole-in-One prize, but there were several close shots.



GOLF TOURNAMENT 2023 - DONORS



Our thanks to the following corporate and individual donors:

- AT&T Government Solutions
- CopaSAT
- Eric Campbell
- First Command Financial Solutions
- General Dynamics IT
- GuROO LLC
- Hui Huliau
- iDirect Government
- Jacobs Technology
- Kelly and David Williams
(Wine donation for the raffle)
- Lenaj Marketing
- MetroStar Systems
- Mil Corp
- Riverbed Technology
- Seneca Holdings, Inc
- SES Government
- The Jesse Devitte Family
- The Legends
(Gordon Aitken, Steve Young, and Jim Williams)
- TUVLI
- Verium Corporation



We send our thanks to all sponsors, participants, and volunteers—**All Weather Warriors!** This is our major fundraising event for the year, and its success is a tribute to all of you.

We will see you at our tournament next year at Old Hickory on June 21, 2024...

MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW!

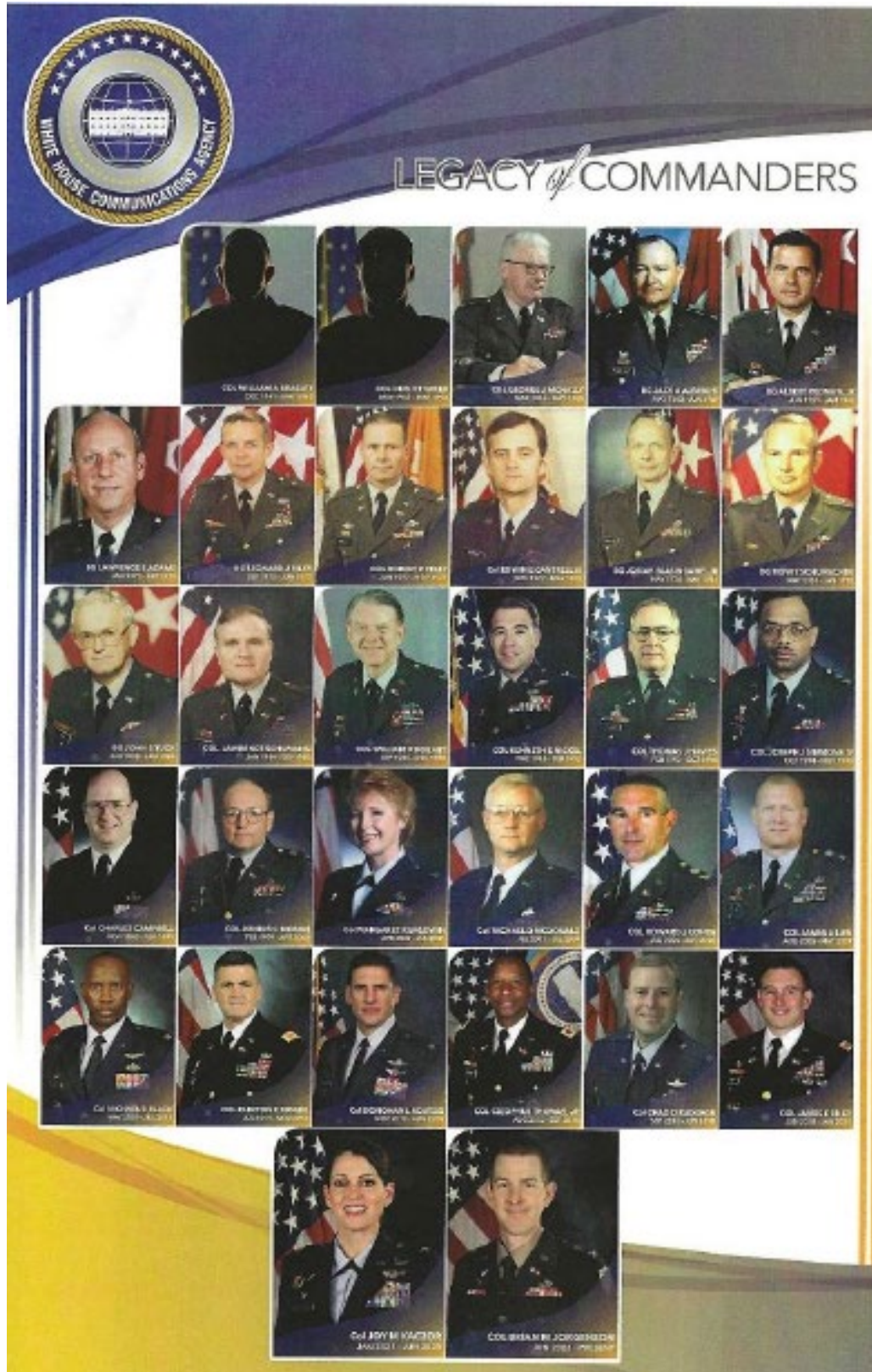


CHANGE OF COMMAND – NEW 31st COMMANDER



On June 8, 2023, U.S. Army Colonel Brian Jorgenson assumed command of the White House Communications Agency (WHCA) taking the reins from U.S. Air Force Colonel Joy Kaczor during a moving Change of Command ceremony at Joint Base Anacostia Bolling (JBAB). COL Jorgenson became the 31st WHCA Commander in its long history. Upon his induction, COL Jorgenson conveyed his enthusiasm to be part of the WHCA and Defense Information System Agency (DISA) team, expressing eagerness to build on earlier accomplishments and navigate the forthcoming challenges and opportunities for the organization. Before this assignment, COL Jorgenson distinguished himself as the Deputy WHCA Commander.

Col Kaczor bid adieu and in her parting words, she extended her heartfelt gratitude towards the personnel of WHCA, the supporting organizations, and teams. Col Kaczor expressed her profound love and appreciation for her husband, their children, and other friends and family. She emphasized the significance of integrity, accountability, and unity in serving the Office of the Presidency. Highlighting key values, Col Kaczor shared the essence of her command philosophy. DISA Director, Air Force Lieutenant General Robert J. Skinner, presided over the ceremony. He commended Col Kaczor's stellar leadership, particularly her ability to steer WHCA with unwavering focus during the pandemic, transforming it into a more robust organization with a rejuvenated sense of purpose.



WHCA CHANGE OF COMMAND – JUNE 8, 2023



2023 WHCA ALUMNI DAY



It has been over four years since WHCA has had a big event like the 2023 Alumni Day to bring together former and current members. The WHCA senior leadership team put forth a lot of thought and effort to showcase how the mission platforms and the building has evolved, in part since the pandemic. In fact, for most it has been decades since they have seen one another and a preview of how WHCA now operates. Needless to say, much has changed; however, the core of the mission is the same.



The excitement started at the gate where visitors checked in and on to the entrance of the WHCA lobby—where attendees waited for the event to officially kick off. Most took advantage of the wait and took pictures behind the Presidential lectern. As individuals arrived, they could not help but recognize former friends and colleagues who they may not have seen for 30 years. Many former WHCA colleagues took photos and exchanged contact information to ensure they could stay connected.



Robert Hendrix and Glenn Arnett

WHCA did a great job executing this event! Kudos to the organizers for keeping the line moving at sign-in and expeditiously placing everyone in cohorts—which they toured with throughout the day.



WHCA ALUMNI DAY - Continued



The new WHCA Commander, Colonel Brian Jorgenson, officially started the day with a welcome, opening remarks, and a run-of-show for the day—which included tours to several briefing stations and concluded with a huge lunch on the loading dock. The tours were a welcomed new addition to previous open house events.

The WHCA Commander noted, “As I spoke with numerous former members, the running theme was clear, this was one of the best alumni attended events ever!” The number of people who attended was phenomenal, especially since most former WHCA members indicated they had not been on the grounds since they separated, changed duty station, or retired. The luncheon was a special time for everyone to sit down, break bread together, and retell stories from trips that they would never forget—nor the people that helped them make WHCA history.



CSM (ret) Gerald Williams, Ms. Barbara Renfroe, Col (ret) Michael Black, Thomas Coles, MSgt (Ret) Kelly Canty, and CSM (ret) Sam Watkins





KU-BAND SATELLITE USE AT WHCA—THE BEGINNING

WHCA personnel have been on the front lines of challenge supporting our President with leading-edge technologies for over 80 years since we were formed as the White House Signal Detachment (WHSD) by the War Department on 25 March 1942. During my tour in the mid-1980's, we were using copper wire, analog unsecured POTS (plain old telephone service), Kleinschmidt teletype writers, unsecured VHF/UHF radio, and bulky STU-1 secure encrypted voice passed through MODEMS over analog circuits at 2,400 - 4,800 BPS. That was state-of-the-art in the 1980's. That all changed when new Reagan era White House staffers brought their personal Radio Shack TRS-80 Model-100 Portable Computers along on trips using them to pass important traffic back home without encryption.

We were at a definite turning point driven by our times. For our Commander, Col Larry Schumann, a new day had dawned. The traffic had to be secured. He commissioned a new start-up company -- GRiD -- to build laptop computers with an amazingly large (in that day) 10 MB hard drive. We commissioned NSA to develop PCM voice coding encryption for secure calls built into a standard desk telephone set. Portable deployable AFSAT and DSCS satellite terminals, Mobile Communications Vehicles called Road Runners, and DES encrypted VHF/UHF hand held radios that had to be re-keyed every day soon followed.

As one of President Reagan's trip officers, my one man team in the Plans Division developed the first Presidential usage of Ku-Band satellite service.

In May 1985 (during a European swing to Germany, France, Spain, and Portugal in commemoration of the 41st Anniversary of the Normandy Invasion), we set up our first international commercial Ku-Band link from Bonn, Germany, to Washington, DC. We did a "down and dirty" deployment going from the drawing board to the field. The entire effort was a joint collaboration between WHCA and COMSAT General. This was one of my projects dependent on commercial assets rather than military assets like my other AFSAT and DSCS projects.

The deployment was not without challenges. This is a picture (**Figure 1**) of us on the roof of our hotel in Bonn, Germany, after we block, and tackle hoisted the dish from the street. I am immediately to the right of the dish with a camera around my neck. Inside the hotel, our terminal equipment (**Figure 2**) provided two encrypted T1 (1.544 Mbps) circuits to the hotel trip site comm center from Washington.

This was not the original dish I traveled over with from Andrews AFB on a C-141. That dish got strapped down on top of a pallet loaded with equipment by an Air Force load master (named Murphy of Murphy's Law fame). It arrived deformed having the shape of the equipment containers under it. Surprise - - that the antenna wouldn't focus!! Only two of these hand crafted dishes existed at the time so we had a backup. We got an emergency delivery of antenna number 2 a couple of days later pictured here.

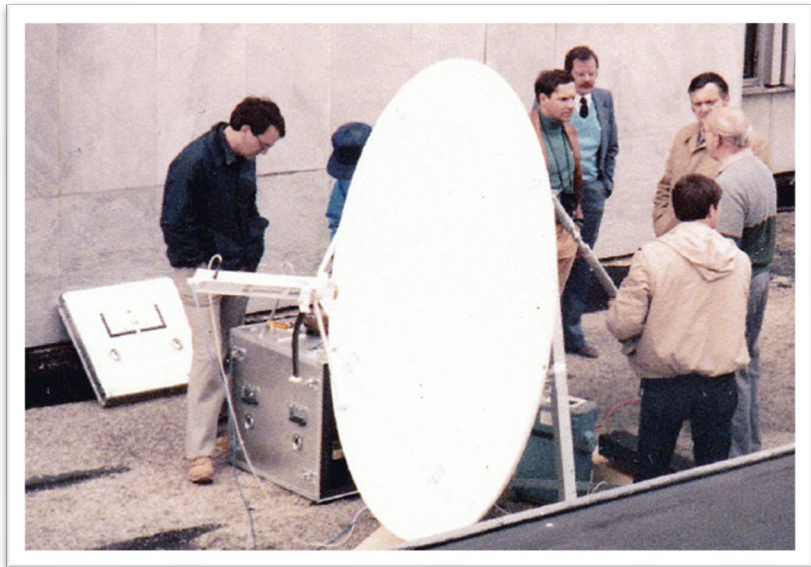


Figure 1: Official 1985 White House Photo
Ku-Band Dish on Bonn Hotel Roof



Figure 2: Official 1985 White House Photo
Ku-Band Terminal Equipment inside Bonn Hotel
Comm Center

It was a memorable trip for me since our aircraft was contacted by CROWN (White House Communications Control) close to arrival by HF radio on the aircraft and was told not to land in Bonn. We had to go somewhere else because anti-US demonstrations were happening there. My pilot and I figured out where to land instead before we ran out of fuel! Ah - - the trials of a WHCA trip officer.

Soon after we came up on the air at a very low look angle to the US, we discovered periodic interference on our frequency. Knowing spread spectrum transmission techniques (which appear like background noise) were used on 1980's commercial satellites, I contacted the National Security Agency (NSA) Watch Officer in the middle of his night shift for help identifying the source. In about an hour, a Deutsche Bundespost monitoring van (like what the FCC uses to track non licensed transmitters in the US) arrived at our hotel with a team of technicians and a senior Bundespost official. Shortly after that, the interference disappeared for the duration of the trip. We had no problems when we moved on to Madrid or Lisbon.

In Lisbon, Portugal, we set up our antenna outside of the Coyote Comm Center Coach seen here in **Figure 3** with the terminal equipment inside the Coyote.

Since 1985 when the President travels away from Washington, DC, Ku-Band has become a WHCA staple, along with military satellite, and commercial leased digital circuits for getting digital signals back to the White House.

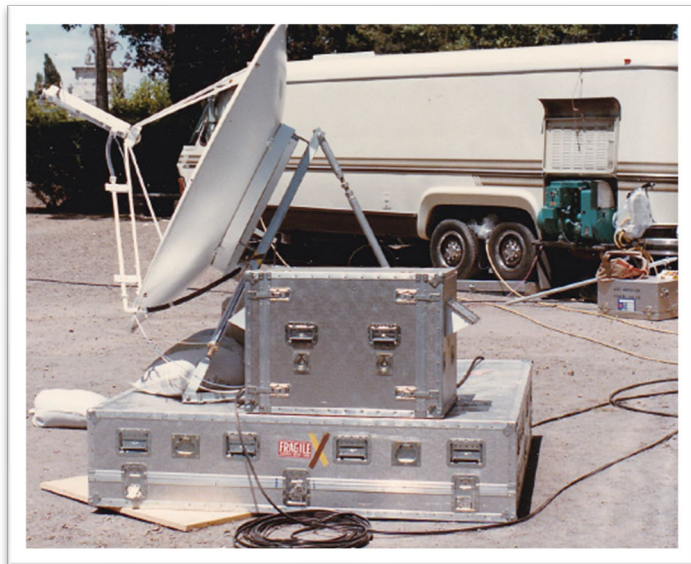


Figure 3: Author's Photo
Ku-Band Terminal outside of Coyote Comm Center
Coach in Lisbon, Portugal

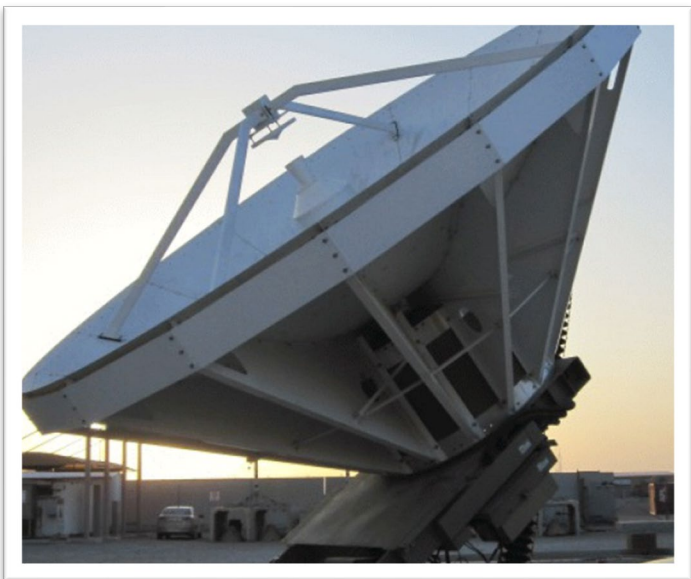


Figure 4: Generic 13 meter Ku-Band Gateway
Antenna



REAGAN and NIXON May 2023



Reagan Ranch Center and
Reagan Ranch

During the first week of May 2023, more than 75 former WHCA alums and family members gathered in California to take part in a reunion remembering the Reagan and Nixon Presidencies. Starting in Santa Barbara many of the group stayed at the Inn at East Beach formerly the Tahitian where many of the WHCA teams stayed during Presidential trips to the Reagan Ranch. Most of the group had not been back to Santa Barbara for many years and were amazed at the development in the area. The reunion was organized primarily by Mike Ebbing with assistance from a number of other folks most notably Gary London who coordinated the trip to the Reagan Ranch.

The first stop was the Reagan Ranch Center in downtown Santa Barbara. This facility was built and is administered by the Young America's Foundation. This organization bought the ranch in 1998 and has worked to preserve it as a living memorial to President Reagan. The ranch itself is not open to the public so the reunion group was privileged to be able to visit it. Gary London was the driving force behind making the visit possible. The staff of the center welcomed the group, and their presentation was followed by a welcome by Mike Ebbing. Col Joy Kaczor, the former WHCA Commander, then presented a briefing on WHCA of today. There were a few minutes after the presentations to explore the Center's Exhibit Galleries which chronicle the history of the ranch and the Reagan Presidency.

Next it was time to board the buses for the trip to Rancho Del Cielo (known to most as the Reagan Ranch). For most of the group it had been 35 or 40 years since we had driven the long, winding road up the mountain. The road hasn't gotten any better in those years, and most of the group cringed at the thought of remembering the trips with cars and trucks full of equipment going to and from the ranch. The "gate of seven locks" was still there and operating. As we got closer to the ranch the rain started which was very different than most remember as it seems like it rarely rained and in fact was so dry that there were normally fire warnings. Once at the ranch, the group was able to visit the stables, barn, tack room, the old secret service command post and of course the house. It brought back a lot of memories for those who supported the many visits of President and Mrs. Reagan from 1981 to 88. As the morning turned to afternoon, the skies began to clear, and the group boarded the buses for the short trip further up the mountain to the site where the WHCA Teams set up our communications facilities as well as the location of the helicopter (HMX-1) landing site and hangar. All that is gone now, but the beautiful views down into the Santa Ynez Valley and the town of Solvang are still there.



Again, looking at this site really opened up the memory banks from 40+ years ago and all the work it took to establish communication for the Commander-in-Chief on this mountain location. Reboarding the buses, it was time for the adventure down the winding, crumbling, narrow road back to sea level. It was everyone's hope that the buses' brakes were in good shape. Back at the Reagan Center in Santa Barbara collectively the group was tired but unanimously agreed it was a great day.

Following the trip to the ranch, many in the group accepted an invitation to a reception hosted by Dinah Griego, a WHCA alum who now lives in Santa Barbara. Dinah opened her beautiful home in the hills overlooking Santa Barbara with wonderful views of the Pacific Coast. The wine and cheese reception was wonderful and afforded the group the opportunity to relax after a busy day and relate "war stories" on Reagan Ranch Trips from many years ago. Our thanks to Dinah for her hospitality. The reception was wonderful with great food, beverages, and fellowship.

Next it was on to the Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, California. The library is about 60 miles south of Santa Barbara and sits on a beautiful hill overlooking the California Pacific Coast. The reunion group got VIP treatment from the library staff and docents. The visit included access to the archives and curatorial departments where staff from the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) briefed on their work. It seemed that these folks had as many questions from the reunion group as we had for them. A large amount of the information they deal with was produced by

WHCA. Video and audio recordings, photographs, etc. were virtually all WHCA produced. Similarly, many of the thousands of gifts managed by the curators had been turned over to WHCA Teams on the road for transport back to Washington. It was truly a once in a lifetime experience to visit the archives as they are not generally open to the public. Next were docent led VIP tours of the library itself including the adjacent building housing AF-1, followed by lunch at the "Ranch House Café", and then free time to spend roaming around the museum and grounds.



Reagan Presidential Library and Museum

ASSOCIATION EVENTS - continued

WHCA REUNIONS – REAGAN AND NIXON



The next day took the reunion group to the Nixon Presidential Library. The Nixon Library is located Yorba Linda, California on property originally owned by the Nixon family. The site includes the actual house where President Nixon was born. Both he and First Lady Patricia Nixon are interred on the property. The reunion group was greeted by Yorba Linda Mayor Pro Tem, Tara Campbell. Mayor Campbell presented the group with an official Proclamation declaring May 4 as "WHCA Day in the City of Yorba Linda." Next were VIP docent led tours of the library including the archival area and the tours of the actual childhood home of President Nixon. Again, the archivists from NARA were very interested in learning all they could from the collective knowledge of our reunion group.



President Richard Nixon Library and Museum

After the day's activities, the group met at the Lone Wolf Brewing Company for the "Wheels Up Party". War stories, fellowship, food and drink closed out an eventful three days. Again, many thanks to Mike Ebbing and Gary London who were the primary planners and coordinators of this highly successful reunion. Their efforts got the reunion group special access to areas that just are not open to the general public.

Following the main reunion activities, a group of half dozen folks and their spouses who had served during the Nixon administration visited La Casa Pacifica (President Nixon's Western White House) in San Clemente. The current owner, Mr. Gavin Herbert, was one of Nixon's closet friends. Mr. Herbert graciously opened the estate to the group.



President Richard Nixon and First Lady Patricia gravesite



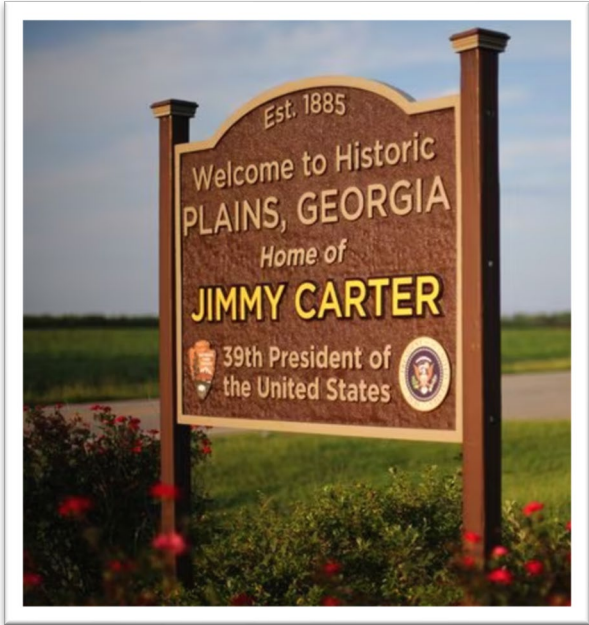
2nd Annual
Reunion
PLAINS,
GA



The 2nd Annual WHCA Reunion was held in Plains, Georgia September 29, 2023 to October 2, 2023. Like the first, it was a huge success with 109 folks in attendance with activities taking place at Plains High School where both President Jimmy Carter, the 39th President of the United States, and First Lady Rosalyn attended. The high school and grounds are now managed by the National Park Service because it is now a museum called the Jimmy Carter National Historical Park. In keeping with traditions, there was a WHCA Office and Keg at the Quality Inn Motel (formerly Best Western) in Americus, Georgia, where the WHCA Team stayed during countless visits with the President to his hometown.

Check out [WHCA Plains Reunion 2023](#) for more photos.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/563339808686401/>



Welcome sign to Plains, Georgia

ASSOCIATION EVENTS - continued

WHCA REUNIONS – UPCOMING 2024

DALLAS, TEXAS

Mark your calendar and make plans now to join the alums **June 6, 2024 to June 9, 2024** at the **George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum**.

The tentative schedule is:

- June 6, 2024 Arrival and check-in at hotel (TBD)
- June 7, 2024 Tour George W. Bush (#43) Presidential Library and Museum and afterwards some open time before dinner
- June 8, 2024 Cookout
- June 9, 2024 Departure

[LEARN MORE](#)

If you are a Facebook user look for the Facebook page [2024 Texas WHCA Reunion](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/805115388009476/>

MONTANA

The 2024 Montana Reunion is planned for **September 6, 2024 to September 9, 2024** at Grassy Mountain Ranch near White Sulfur Springs, Montana.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Facebook information with contacts at [2024 WHCA/PSB Montana Reunion](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/811178750517143/>

Email us at <treasurer@1600commassoc.org> if you are interested and we will put you in contact with the organizers.

THE ASSOCIATION GIVING BACK

QUARTERLY - WHCA NEWCOMERS ORIENTATION



Quarterly, WHCA conducts a Newcomers Orientation, and the 1600 Communications Association is one of the regular guests that is fortunate to provide a Welcome Aboard Brief at the WHCA Training Academy. The event is a weeklong with presentations from various WHCA departments, and community support organizations that members and their families may utilize throughout their WHCA tour.

The 1600 Communications Association has the privilege to share topics that include:

- Association History
- Board Members
- Membership and Dues
- Perks and Networking Advantages
- Annual Scholarship Program
- Transition Coaching Resources
- Upcoming Events.



BOARD MEMBERS



Rob Blake - President

Co-founder and CEO of Verium, LLC. Rob is a 10-year U.S. Air Force veteran who served in WHCA from 1996 to 2001. He provides a wide variety of information technology (IT) services across the national security community.

Glenn Arnett - Treasurer

Senior Master Sergeant, U.S. Air Force Retired. Glenn served in WHCA from 1976 to 1991 in what is now the Visual Information Command; J3, Training Division; and a Vice Presidential Communications Officer (VPCO) supporting multiple administrations.

Danny Young – Member at Large

U.S. Army Retired, Danny has served in WHCA for more than 17 years in the White House Switchboard. He performed duties as the Noncommissioned Officer in Charge of the Carswell Communications Support Team; VPCO; and Vice Presidential Communications Response Officer (VPCRO).

Darrell Williams, MCLC, HOF - Alumni Career Coordinator

U.S. Army Retired. Darrell served in WHCA from 1990 to 1997 and from 1998 to 2005 as an Operations NCO, VPCO, and VPCRO. From 2005 to 2010, he worked at the WHCA Training Academy. Darrell was selected as NCO of the Year on several occasions, a WHCA All-Star, and Agency Senior NCO of the Year. He was inducted into the WHCA Hall of Fame in 2021.

Steve Crowder - Golf Tournament Coordinator

U.S. Air Force Retired. Steve served in WHCA from 1990 to 2001 in the Transmissions Systems Unit as the NCOIC of the SATCOM Shop and the NCOIC of Training. As a fully qualified Wideband Lead he traveled globally supporting Presidents George H. W. Bush, Clinton, and George W. Bush. Steve also served four years in the White House Situation Room.

Dr. Shantrell Nikki Collier, DBA – Director of Communications

Sergeant Major, U.S. Army Retired. Nikki served in WHCA from 2005 to 2012 in various leadership roles including the First Sergeant, 1st Presidential Communications Command, Acting J3 Sergeant Major, First Lady Communications Officer, and fully qualified VPCO. She was inducted into the WHCA Hall of Fame in 2013.

Mike Millward - Vice President

U.S. Army Retired. Mike served in WHCA from 2006 to 2012 as an Operations Officer; Director, Network Systems Division; Commander, 1st Presidential Communications Command; and fully qualified Presidential Communications Officer (PCO) globally supporting Presidents George W. Bush and Obama.

Jeff King, MPS, MBA - Secretary

Co-founder and President of Verium, LLC. Jeff is a 10-year U.S. Navy veteran who served in WHCA from 1993 to 1997 in the Radio Systems Unit (RSU). He is a Lifetime Member and graduate of the Federal Executive Institute and the Metropolitan Police Academy.

Helen Pennington - Member at Large

Warrant Officer, U.S. Army Retired. Helen served in WHCA from 1989 to 1997 as Chief of the Emergency Actions Branch; Commander of the Training Communications Detachment; and PCO. She developed the first foundational travel team training courses for what is now the WHCA Training Academy.

Gordon Aitken - Historian

U.S. Air Force Retired. Gordon served in WHCA from 1977 to 1982 as the Chief of Record Communications, Chief of Voice Communications, and a Presidential Trip Officer. He held several positions on the Association Board since 1995, including President for four years. For the past 15-years, Gordon has chaired the Scholarship Committee.

Lee Hamilton, MBA, MA - Special Projects

U.S. Air Force Retired, Chief of Computer Maintenance. Lee served in WHCA from 2003 to 2004. He retired in California after teaching high school for 10-years and college for 20-years. Lee has a passion for the classroom and continues to serve as a high school substitute teacher for Fairfax County Public Schools in Virginia.



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