

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE COLD WAR MUSEUM®

THE COLD WAR TIMES

REFLECTIONS BY A DESERT
DRAGON COMMANDER

FALL/WINTER 2026



COLDWAR.ORG

ABOUT THE COLD WAR MUSEUM®



THE COLD WAR MUSEUM was founded in 1996 by Francis Gary Powers Jr., son of the famed U-2 Pilot, and John Welch to honor Cold War veterans, preserve Cold War history, and educate future generations about the Cold War and its legacy.

Since 2011, the Museum has been located at Vint Hill, Virginia, on the grounds of the former Vint Hill Farms Station, also known as Monitoring Station No. 1, which was a Top Secret Army signals intelligence base during WWII and the Cold War. The Museum shares a campus with Old Bust Head Brewery, Covert Cafe, and Vint Hill Craft Winery and other businesses.

The museum has a Midwest Chapter near Milwaukee, WI and Francis Gary Powers Jr.'s traveling exhibit on the U-2 Incident of 1960 helps promote the museum internationally. Artifacts from The Cold War Museum are on display in institutions such as the International Spy Museum in Washington D.C., the Strategic Air Command and Aerospace Museum near Omaha, NE, the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) Museum on Bolling AFB, and the Atom Muzeum in the Czech Republic.

Our collections are particularly strong in signals intelligence (SIGINT), image intelligence (IMINT), the history of Vint Hill during both WWII and the Cold

War, Cold War Berlin, Civil Defense, atomic weapons, the U-2, USS Liberty and USS Pueblo Incidents, Cold War cultural and Olympic competitions, Strategic Air Command, submarine detection (SOSUS), the Cuban Missile Crisis, the STASI (East German secret police), and Soviet and East German disinformation campaigns. Many of our artifacts are rare one-of-a-kind items while some of our exhibits were created and donated by those who did the work. The Cold War Museum is an all-volunteer organization, drawing upon our staff's extensive Cold War experience as professionals in the military and intelligence communities. *We are the Real People Explaining the Real Things.*

HOURS

11-4 PM Saturdays

1-4 PM Sundays

Other Hours by Appointment

PHYSICAL ADDRESS

7172 Lineweaver Rd
Vint Hill, VA 20187

MAILING ADDRESS

P.O. Box 861526
Vint Hill, VA 20187

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- ♦ Priority access to the Interim Chairman

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The Cold War Museum® is an all-volunteer operation. 100 percent of your contributions are applied to fulfilling the Museum's mission. Contributions to the Museum above and beyond membership are also fully deductible in accordance with IRS guidelines for contributions to 501(c)(3) organizations.

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COLD WAR TIMES



OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE COLD WAR MUSEUM®

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*Founder and Interim Chairman
Publisher, Cold War Times*

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Chris Sturdevant
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Front cover photo courtesy of Colonel Charles P. Wilson

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Cold War Museum® is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization dedicated to education, preservation, and research on the global, ideological, and political confrontations between East and West from the end of World War II to the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Dear Friends of The Cold War Museum,

Much of what we know about the Cold War comes from people who took the time to tell their stories, preserve a document, or explain the significance of an object. Those contributions make our work possible. As we approach the end of 2026, I want to thank the veterans, historians, volunteers, board members, and supporters who help the Museum bring that history to new audiences.



This fall, we have several opportunities to hear those stories firsthand. On October 25, our online Presentation Series welcomes Loreen Gibbons, author of *All Eternity Lies Before Me*. Her account of the 1978 ditching of Navy Alfa Foxtrot 586 explores the crew's survival and rescue by Soviet fishermen, alongside her experience as a Navy pilot's wife waiting for news of her husband. On November 15, David Tuch will discuss *The Wireless Operator*, tracing Harold Derber's extraordinary life through the intersecting worlds of Cold War espionage, organized crime, and revolution. Both programs begin at 7 p.m. Eastern via Zoom.

I also hope you will join us for our inaugural Annual Gathering on Thursday, November 12, from 6 to 9 p.m. at Old Bust Head Brewery in Vint Hill. We will honor Chris Pocock, the distinguished aviation writer and U-2 historian whose work has helped preserve the history of one of the Cold War's most consequential aircraft. The evening will bring together friends of the Museum to celebrate this history and the people dedicated to preserving it.

Tickets are \$80 and include dinner from Mission BBQ. Sponsorship opportunities are also available. Please see the gathering flyer in this issue for details, and consider inviting a friend or colleague to join you.

Elsewhere in this issue, you will find an update on our board members' recent activities and accomplishments. Their contributions extend well beyond board meetings, from representing the Museum at conferences to sharing their expertise with wider audiences.

Thank you for being part of this work. Whether you attend a presentation, visit the Museum, volunteer, or support us financially, you help ensure that these experiences remain available to future generations. I look forward to seeing many of you in November.

Warm regards,

Arman Amini
Executive Director
The Cold War Museum

MUSEUM CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



Hello Cold War Museum® Members, Supporters, and Friends:

I am pleased to announce that my newest book, *Cold War California* with co-authors Chris Sturdevant and Franky Ortega, won First Place Overall in the 2026 San Francisco Book Festival and First Place in the Nonfiction Category in the 2026 Los Angeles Book Festival. The book gives a great overview of California Cold War defense sites, military bases, think tanks, and Californians such as Ronald Reagan, Richard Nixon, and Francis Gary Powers, who were instrumental in protecting the United States during the Cold War. There are chapters on Howard Hughes' Glomar Explorer, Northrup Grumman, SAIC, Lockheed Skunkworks Plant 42, and Nike Missile sites including SF-88 in San Francisco. One of the chapters deals with STARGATE and the Remote Viewing that the CIA and KGB did with documented success during the Cold War. For more information on Remote Viewing visit www.IRVA.com. Copies of the book can be purchased through Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and similar retailers. For autographed copies signed by me, please visit <https://squareup.com/store/garypowers>.

In regards to The Cold War Museum, I am pleased to provide this update for the Fall/Winter 2026 issue of *The Cold War Times*. The last few months have been busy as we continue to advance the mission of The Cold War Museum to honor Cold War veterans, preserve Cold War history, and educate future generations about this time period. In September we attended and staffed a museum booth at the Air Force Association Air, Space, and Cyber Conference at the Gaylord Hotel near Washington, DC. During the past few months, museum docents and board members did over 20 presentations and book signings at various schools, retirement communities, and civic organizations around the commonwealth and nationally including the BA- 79 Nike Missile Base in Woodstock, MD, the Vienna, VA Wireless Society amateur radio club, the Four Seasons at Historic Virginia retirement community in Dumfries, Virginia, the International Society of the 3rd Infantry Division, the Dunbarton retirement community in Bristow, VA, the Los Alamos History Museum and the National Museum of Nuclear Science and History in Albuquerque, NM. Our retired SR-71 pilot board member, Buz Carpenter was a consultant on the new movie *May Day* and "taught" Ryan

Reynolds how to "fly" the SR-71. Our docents hosted over 10 private museum tours including groups from the DIA, Marine IO School, Scout Troop 360, and friends and family groups. If you would like to book a private group tour, please let me know.



Inaugural Annual Gathering: I would like to extend an invitation for you to join us at The Cold War Museum's® Inaugural Annual Gathering on Thursday, November 12, from 6 to 9 p.m. at Old Bust Head Brewery located across the parking lot from The Cold War Museum at 7134 Farm Station Rd, Vint Hill, VA 20187 (www.OldBustHead.com). This will be an evening celebrating the history of the Cold War and the people who helped preserve it. Tickets are \$80 per person and include dinner from Mission BBQ. **You can reserve a ticket [HERE](#).**

We will honor author and Cold War historian, **Chris Pocock**, the renowned British aviation writer and foremost authority on the U-2 program for his dedication to preserving Cold War history. He will be our keynote speaker during the event. This is the author of three definitive histories of the U-2 aircraft, and the only foreign civilian ever to fly in the U-2. He has done more than anyone to preserve the story and legacy of the U-2 program, its pilots, and its missions. Additional honorees will be announced at the event. Seating is limited. For more info call 540-341-2008 or email gpowersjr@coldwar.org.

COME AS YOU ARE, BUSINESS CASUAL!

The following Sponsorship Opportunities are available:

TABLE SPONSOR \$750

(Includes table of 10, table signage, and recognition at event)

EVENT SPONSOR \$2,500

(Includes table of 10, event signage, and recognition at event)

DINNER SPONSOR \$2,000

(Includes table of 10, event signage, and recognition at event)

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BEVERAGE SPONSOR \$1,500

(SOLD)

AWARDS SPONSOR \$1,000

(SOLD)

Giving Tuesday December 1, 2026: In order to fulfill our mission, we need your continued support. I hope that you will join me on Tuesday December 1 and make a year-end tax-deductible donation to The Cold War Museum as part of Giving Tuesday 2026. Giving Tuesday is one of our annual fundraisers that allows us to pay our bills throughout the year and is a global generosity movement unleashing the power of radical generosity. GivingTuesday has grown into a global movement that inspires hundreds of millions of people to give, collaborate, and celebrate generosity. Help us to honor Cold War veterans, preserve our collection, and educate future generations about this time period. I hope you will join me, as many supporters and veterans of the Cold War will, in supporting The Cold War Museum and our efforts to preserve and care for our collection. Giving Tuesday donations can be made online at [GivingTuesday](#) starting on November 17 with early giving but we do hope you can wait until Tues December 1, when your donation will have the most impact. Stay tuned for more info on Giving Tuesday during the month of November.

In addition, there are several other ways to donate:

- ⇒ Credit Card donations can be made through our online portal. Click Here to Donate (www.Zeffy.com).
- ⇒ Checks can be mailed, payable to The Cold War Museum, to PO Box 861526, Vint Hill, VA 20187.
- ⇒ If you are a retiree 70 ½ or older and are required to make a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from your 401K retirement account up to \$100,000 can be transferred to The Cold War Museum® tax-free each year. These transfers, known as qualified charitable distributions or QCDs, offer eligible experienced Americans a great way to easily give to charity before the end of the year. And, for those who are at least 73 years old, QCDs count toward the IRA owner's required minimum distribution (RMD) for the year. Visit qualified charitable distributions for more information https://www.irs.gov/publications/p590b#en_US_2025_publink100090626).

Docent Recruitment: The Cold War Museum is open from 11-4 on Saturdays, 1-4 on Sundays and midweek by appointment for school groups and private tours. The

museum is staffed by a small dedicated docent team. We are looking to recruit additional volunteer docents to help with staffing the museum during these hours. If you have an interest in becoming a docent for the museum, please let us know. You can send your cover letter and resume to me at gpowersjr@coldwar.org.

Cold War Conversation Presentation Series: Our next program will take place on Sunday October 25 (7 pm EST ZOOM Only) Loreen Gibbons interweaves a dual narrative account about her memories as a Navy pilot's wife with a tale of what happened to her husband's crew after the ditching of the crippled plane in the frigid, stormy North Pacific waters off the coast of the Soviet Union in 1978. For a complete listing of our upcoming Cold War Conversation Lectures, visit [The Cold War Conversation Lecture Series](#).

There is a lot to do to make sure that The Cold War Museum can continue to grow and fulfill its mission to honor Cold War veterans, preserve Cold War history, and educate future generations about this time period. The museum board, staff and docents cannot do it alone and we need your financial donations to help with our efforts and to fulfill our mission. Please consider making a year-end tax-deductible donation to the museum on December 1 as part of Giving Tuesday to show your support for our efforts.

The war in Ukraine, the war in Gaza, and the many lesser-known conflicts around the world can be traced back to the Cold War, collapse of the Soviet Union, and the geopolitical divides that resulted. Now more than ever we need to educate students on the history for the Cold War so that they understand the significance of the world today and how it relates to the Cold War time period. If you have any questions, suggestions, or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Donations can be made online at this link [Click Here](#) or as outlined above. Thank you for your continued support.

Very truly yours,

Francis Gary Powers, Jr., MPA, MA US History



GARYPOWERS.COM

Author | Historian | Speaker

Founder and Interim Chairman - The Cold War Museum
Honorary Board - The International Spy Museum
Past Board Member - The SAC and Aerospace Museum

FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



The Cold War Museum® Board of Directors is the governing body of our nonprofit organization. This governance is high level: strategy, oversight, and accountability of the overall activities of the museum. Our Board is made up of eight seasoned senior executives of varying professional backgrounds (USAF, CIA, Chamber of Commerce, Real Estate, Nonprofits, Accounting) who work pro bono for the benefit of the museum.

The Cold War Museum's board members have been busy sharing their expertise, representing the Museum, and earning recognition for their work.

We are pleased to welcome **Fred Carr** to the Board of Directors. Fred also joined **Chuck Wilson** and **Buz Carpenter** in staffing the Museum's booth at the AFA Air, Space, and Cyber Conference. Thank you to all three for helping introduce conference attendees to the Museum and its mission.

Pauline Thompson was honored on October 14 at *A Night to Celebrate*, hosted by Silke Endress International. The event recognized 25 extraordinary women for their leadership, accomplishments, influence, and dedication.

Buz Carpenter brought his aviation experience to the film *May Day*, teaching actor Ryan Reynolds how to "fly" the SR-71. We also congratulate **Chuck Wilson** on his appointment to the VAHF.

Museum founder **Francis Gary Powers Jr.** received two first-place awards for his book, *Cold War California*: first place overall at the San Francisco Book Festival and first place in nonfiction at the Los Angeles Book Festival.

Chuck Wilson and **Fred Carr**, and staff **Bryan** and **Karen Zwanzig** greeted visitors at the Fairfax City Fall Festival.

Congratulations to our board members, and thank you for the time, knowledge, and energy you contribute to The Cold War Museum.

GOVERNING BOARD

OFFICERS

Francis Gary Powers Jr., (MPA, MA US History)

Interim Chairman

Biography: <https://garypowers.com>

John Welch (MPA)

Vice Chairman

Biography: www.linkedin.com/in/johncwelch1

Francis Gary Powers Jr., (MPA, MA US History)

Acting Secretary

Biography: <https://garypowers.com>

Adelbert "Buz" Carpenter (Col. USAF Ret.)

2019 Virginia Aviation Hall of Fame Inductee

Treasurer

Biography: <http://airandspace.si.edu/support/wall-of-honor/col-adelbert-buz-carpenter>

DIRECTORS

Frederick E. Carr (USAF, Ret.)

FREDRICK E. CARR > Air Force > Biography Display

Chad Manske (Brig Gen USAF Ret.)

Biography: BRIGADIER GENERAL CHAD T. MANSKE > Air Force > Biography Display

Ambassador Charles Ray

Past Chairman (2021-2022)

Biography: [Charles A. Ray - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_A._Ray)

Ms. Pauline Thompson

Founder, President, CEO, Tysons Realty, Inc.

Biography: <https://tysonsrealtyinc.com/about-us/>

Charles P. "Chuck" Wilson (Col. USAF, Ret.)

Past Chairman (2019-2023)

Biography: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chuck_Wilson_\(pilot\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chuck_Wilson_(pilot))

Maureen V. Wingfield (Senior Intelligence Service CIA, Ret.)



MEET OUR BOARD: CWM_BOARD

MEET OUR NEW BOARD MEMBER



Mr. Fredrick E. Carr, formerly a member of the Senior Executive Service, is the former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Financial Operations, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Financial Management and Comptroller, Arlington, Virginia. Mr. Carr is the principal adviser to the Assistant Secretary and the Air Force senior staff on all issues involving the amended Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990 and related financial management reforms. He is responsible at the executive level for ensuring the Air Force complies with legislative and executive financial management mandates leading to the effective and efficient use of the Air Force resources. Additionally, he is responsible for management of human resources and technology solutions for Air Force financial management.

Mr. Carr began his military career in 1981, serving two years in the Air National Guard, and four years in the active Air Force. He transitioned into the civilian federal workforce via the Air Force Palace Acquire program in 1990. Prior to assuming his current position, Mr. Carr was the Director of Financial Reporting and Compliance where his responsibilities included Air Force financial statements, accounting policy and standards, compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements and principle support to the improvement of financial information for audit readiness.

EDUCATION

1991 – Bachelor of Science, Accounting and Finance, Wright State University, Dayton, OH

2000 – Army Comptrollership Program, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY

2000 – Master of Business Administration, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY

2015 – Air War College, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, by correspondence

CAREER CHRONOLOGY

1981–1983 – Air National Guard, Financial Management, March Air Reserve Base, CA

1983–1989 – Active Duty Air Force, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, OH

1990–1993 – Palace Acquire Intern, Air Force Material Command, Wright-Patterson AFB, OH

1993–1995 – Staff Accountant, Defense Finance and Accounting Service, Dayton, OH

1995–1997 – Functional Manager, Air Force Material Command, Wright-Patterson AFB, OH

1997–1999 – Lead Cost Accountant, Wright-Patterson AFB, OH

1999–2000 – Student, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY

2000–2002 – Systems Accountant, Air Force Material Command, Wright-Patterson AFB, OH

2002–2004 – Program Manager, Air Force Wide Business Systems, Dayton, OH

2004–2006 – Functional Program Manager, Defense Enterprise Accounting and Management Systems, Special Projects U.S. Transportation Command, Scott AFB, IL

2006–2012 – Chief, Accounting Policy and Special Projects, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, the Pentagon, Arlington, VA

2012–2016 – Director, Financial Reporting and Compliance, Joint Base Andrews, MD

2016–2020 – Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for Financial Operations, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Financial Management and Comptroller, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, the Pentagon, Arlington, VA

2020–2026 – Deputy Assistant Secretary for Financial Operations, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Financial Management and Comptroller, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, the Pentagon, Arlington, VA

AWARDS AND HONORS

Keenan Award for Distinguished Federal Service awarded by Syracuse University

DoD (Comptroller) Award for Innovative Technology in Financial Management

Air Force Civilian Sustained Superior Performance Award

Air Force Major Command Award for Technical Excellence

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATIONS

Certified Public Accountant

Certified Defense Financial Manager (Acquisition)

Defense Financial Management Certification, Level III



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REFLECTIONS BY A DESERT DRAGON COMMANDER



By Colonel Charles P. "Chuck" Wilson, USAF Ret., Past Chairman of the Board – Cold War Museum®; Cold War U-2 Pilot, AF Commander multiple levels including being a two-time U-2 Squadron Commander in both Saudi Arabia and South Korea, 40+ year Daedalian, NASM Docent. Photos courtesy of the author.

King Fahd Air Base, Taif, Saudi Arabia 1993 and 1994

On August 2, 1990, Saddam Hussein's Iraqi army invaded Kuwait. The Kuwaiti forces were vastly outnumbered, caught by surprise, and offered little resistance. On that first day, Kuwait City was captured, driving the Kuwaiti Emir and government into exile. Iraq then occupied the entire country and amassed 100,000 troops along the Kuwaiti-Saudi border, posing a threat to the poorly defended oil fields. Within several days, Iraq had mobilized 200,000 men in Kuwait. The world was in shock. (Cross, 1996)

The invasion of Kuwait was met with immediate international condemnation. A coalition of forty-two nations formed in response and began the largest military buildup since World War II. Iraq had invaded Kuwait, and the world was watching as the clock was ticking.

On August 6, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia requested that the United States send forces to help defend his nation against a possible attack. Intelligence gathering for this massive operation was crucial. A key asset was the U-2/TR-1 aircraft.¹ In August 7, the 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing was tasked with deploying two U-2s as soon as possible (Pocock, 2005). TR-1s from the 17th Reconnaissance Wing at RAF Alconbury would soon follow. This unit would become the 1704 Reconnaissance Squadron (1704RS), which ultimately included six U-2s, six TR-1s, and 253 personnel, including 30 pilots, making Operation Desert Storm the largest U-2 operation in history. The buildup also encompassed the Mobile Intelligence Processing Element (MIPE)² and additional reconnaissance staff that were deployed to CENTCOM in Riyadh, and another SENIOR BLADE van³ with a U-2 pilot assigned to monitor missions (Cross, 1996).

After intense and unsuccessful negotiations with Iraq, the Desert Storm air offensive commenced on January 16, characterized by a high operational tempo. A significant coalition ground offensive was launched on February 24, quickly overwhelming Iraq's outdated and poorly equipped military. Within fewer than four days, Kuwait was liberated, with most of Iraq's armed forces either destroyed, surrendered, or fleeing back to Iraq. By February 28, 1991, U.S. President George Bush announced a cease-fire and the end of the Gulf War. With that, the 1704 Reconnaissance

Squadron (RS) was renumbered to the 4402 Reconnaissance Squadron (Provisional). Four U-2 Aircraft remained. (Pocock, 2005) Iraq did commit to adhering to future coalition and U.N. peace agreements. *Or so we thought.*

Even though Saddam retreated to Baghdad, he continued his saber-rattling. Firey rhetoric continued to be broadcast from Baghdad. Air operations continued to survey Iraq. Since Saddam and his forces previously demonstrated their use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in using chemical weapons against the Kurds, there were grave concerns that Saddam will develop and use WMD again. The United Nations Special Commission on the Disarmament of Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction (UNSCOM) was formed. UNSCOM was set up to find Iraqi WMD. (Pocock, 2005)

Meanwhile, in the early 1990s, Somalia was in the middle of a civil war. Intense political instability, along with a humanitarian disaster, ensued. The United Nations (UN) intervened with Operation Restore Hope. As the situation worsened, President George W. Bush ordered U.S. troops to participate in Operation Restore Hope, which was an UN-backed mission aimed at assisting in the delivery of food, providing security for aid convoys, and restoring order in the nation. The conflict was destabilizing the region. (Haulman, 2015) (Brown, 1994)

The civil war led to the fragmentation of power among various armed factions, most notably the Somali National Alliance (SNA) led by General Mohamed Farah Aidid. The U.S. aimed to neutralize powerful warlords who were obstructing humanitarian efforts and to create a more conducive environment for peace and reconstruction.

There was international concern over human rights abuse and the loss of life due to the conflict and famine, which contributed to the desire for intervention. The U.S. framed its involvement as a necessary step to prevent further human suffering.

U.S. involvement escalated from humanitarian aid to combat operations, particularly following the deaths of American servicemen in the Battle of Mogadishu on October 3-4, 1993.

The U-2 Dragon Lady would continue to be needed to provide Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance operations throughout the region. The 4402 Reconnaissance Squadron (P) would be engaged extensively, collecting vital airborne ISR of Iraq and Somalia.

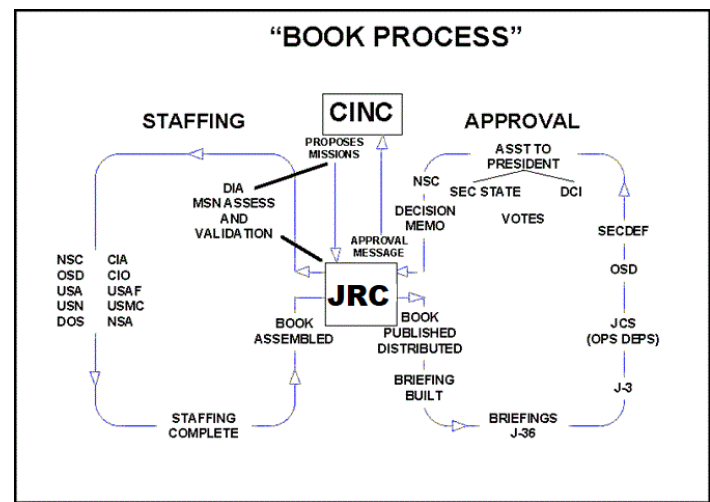
THE PENTAGON

In 1990, I was selected by the Air Force for an assignment to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Reconnaissance Center (JRC). The JRC was a 28-person team that operated around the clock,

monitoring reconnaissance missions worldwide. It included officers representing each military service and reconnaissance discipline, along with representatives from the Department of State, the National Security Agency, and the CIA.

The JRC was established after the shootdown of the U-2 piloted by Francis Gary Powers on May 1, 1960. Before this event, President Eisenhower personally approved each U-2 mission. However, there was no coordination of military reconnaissance activities across the different military services. Coordination among agencies such as the CIA, NSA, DIA, and DOD (now known as the DoD) was suboptimal. Consequently, Eisenhower directed the establishment of a central point of coordination to obtain approval from the National Command Authority for reconnaissance missions. This focal point became the Joint Reconnaissance Center (JRC).

I began my tenure as a JRC watch officer, monitoring worldwide reconnaissance missions. I then progressed to being the Chief of Reconnaissance Plans and Programs, which involved staffing and briefing the *proposed by the combatant commands* for their sensitive reconnaissance missions, from the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) (My briefings to the JCS in the "Tank" were always full of questions and kept me on my toes), to the Secretary of Defense (War) and then to the National Security Council at the Old Executive Office Building next to the White House. This role earned the nickname "The Book Officer" due to the three-inch-thick volume of the Peacetime Aerial Reconnaissance program (PARPRO) that detailed sensitive reconnaissance operations (SRO). The JRC served as a clearinghouse for requests from Combatant Commands or executive departments (interagency) to conduct reconnaissance missions worldwide. These requests were thoroughly staffed among the services, executive departments, and intelligence agencies before being briefed by the "Book Officer" to the highest levels of government. The outcome was a National Security Council (NSC) memorandum to the JCS/JRC from the president, either approving, disapproving, or tailoring these sensitive missions. The JCS/JRC would then send the mission execute message to the Combatant Commands, with a copy sent to the respective services.



The U-2 missions flown by the 4402 Reconnaissance Squadron (P) out of Taif, Saudi Arabia, were some of these sensitive reconnaissance operations. Among them were the *Irish Spear* mission over Somalia and the *Olive Branch* mission over Iraq.

For several years, Somalia experienced civil war and a humanitarian disaster, prompting the United Nations to launch Operation Restore Hope to deliver aid and restore order. As the situation deteriorated, President George W. Bush dispatched U.S. troops to support this UN-backed mission, aiming to counter the influence of armed factions, particularly the Somali National Alliance led by General Mohamed Farah Aidid, and to ensure safe distribution of humanitarian assistance amidst rising international concerns about human rights abuses and loss of life. However, the U.S. mission escalated from humanitarian efforts to combat operations. (Brown, 1994) U-2 missions flown by the 4402 RS (P) out of Taif undertook lengthy, demanding 12-hour missions over Somalia known as Irish Spear.

Meanwhile, following the ground campaign of Desert Storm, air operations continued over Iraq for an extended period. The National Command Authorities (the President and Secretary of Defense) sought intelligence on Iraq's suspected weapons of mass destruction. In response, the United Nations established the Special Commission (UNSCOM) and requested support from the U-2 program for a mission designated "Olive Branch." These missions were also flown out of Taif, Saudi Arabia. Due to concerns about sparking "the next war," each of these missions were personally authorized, and executed, by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell.

The Olive Branch missions, which involved eight-hour U-2 reconnaissance flights over Iraq, were highly politically sensitive and controversial. As the only U-2 pilot on General Colin Powell's staff, I was sent to New York to meet with UNSCOM representatives at the United Nations, including Chairman Rolf Ekeus. The UN initially requested that an inspector fly onboard and that the U-2 be painted white. I diplomatically explained that neither request was feasible. Instead, we agreed to apply chalk-painted UN markings to the tail of the aircraft for each Olive Branch mission.

The mission's sensitivity was such that only General Colin Powell, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had the authority to approve execution. Each mission required a formal "execute" order from him. The National Command Authorities feared that even a single U-2 flight could provoke Iraq into starting another war.

Under operational protocol, Iraq was only notified that a U-2 mission would occur within a specific time window, without knowing the ingress or egress routes. General Powell had three options: to launch the mission, to launch it with a SEAD (Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses) package, or not to launch it at all. Reports soon surfaced that Saddam Hussein was enraged, frequently issuing threats and making aggressive gestures.

In January 1993, one Olive Branch mission experienced what we referred to as a "reaction," a euphemism for being directly

threatened or attacked. Although the U-2 returned safely, the incident raised alarm at the Pentagon.

Since I was then serving as the Joint Staff Reconnaissance “Book Officer” and was the sole U-2 pilot on that staff, I received direction that day to meet with JCS Chairman, General Powell, at 5:00 PM. He wanted me to brief him on the mission and the U-2’s defensive capabilities. In the Chairman’s office were General Powell, Lt. Gen. Marty Brandtner (J-3), RADM Mike Cramer (J-2), and me. Drawing from the day’s mission report, the SAC manual on U-2 defensive systems, and my own experience, I provided a 30-minute brief to this distinguished group. General Powell then asked, “How do you rate the U-2’s defensive capability?”

Referring to the old Strategic Air Command manual—since the newly formed Air Combat Command had yet to release one—I responded, “Fair.”

“Well, son,” he continued, “how would you feel about flying this mission?”

I replied, “Knowing the thorough process you follow to approve each mission, I would surely do it.”

He pressed further: “Chuck, if the system is only rated ‘fair,’ then it is not as good as the F-15’s, right?”

“No, Sir,” I replied.

“Why?” he asked.

I explained that while upgrades to the defensive systems had been planned, the Joint Staff understood that the Air Force had reallocated the funding to higher-priority tactical systems.

General Powell exclaimed, “Is that right?! I am calling Tony McPeak tonight!” (General McPeak was the Chief of Staff of the Air Force at that time.)

As we left the Chairman’s office, Lt. Gen. Brandtner turned to me and said, “Chuck, I know you will eventually go back to the Air Force, and considering the consequences of this briefing, I spoke with the Chairman. He said he would ‘cover you like a blanket.’”

The following morning at 5:30 AM, as I approached the slug line to the Pentagon, I recognized a few Air Staff officers in the still dark area. One of them, Lt. Col. Ed Walby, called out, “Chuck, what in the hell did you do?!”

“I told the truth,” I replied.

The Air Force proposed a solution for the U-2’s defensive system, but as often happens, months went by without action. Meanwhile, an urgent need emerged for a screened and qualified U-2 commander from USCENTCOM. I did not realize it at the time, but I was on a fast track back to the cockpit. I was approved by the USAF return-to-fly board (only 15% of staff pilots were eligible under CSAF McPeak’s policy), met the Air Force command screening board, selected for squadron command, and sent to Beale AFB for requalification.

BACK TO THE COCKPIT

Typically, a U-2 requalification involves a structured training course that includes in-depth academics on both the U-2 and the T-38 Talon companion trainer. This training typically consists of requalifying in the T-38 for airmanship and instrument training, comprehensive U-2 academics during flight training, multiple dual flights with an instructor, and approximately 10 mission qualification flights. However, my requalification process was anything but normal; it was quite abbreviated.

Colonel Larry Tieman, the Commander of the 9th Reconnaissance Wing, required me to take command at Taif as soon as possible, which led to the cancellation of my T-38 flights. Instead, I had two dual flights in the U-2 that combined instrument training and contact procedures, culminating in “contact” check ride. Two solo missions followed this check ride. The wing commander directed me to complete my ops mission training in the desert with Major Don Pickinpaugh, the 4402 Director of Operations and Stan/Eval Pilot, who would oversee my final U-2 mission requalification training. It is obvious that this requalification was highly irregular.



Wilson in the 1034 Pressure Suit

While I was there, I continued to perform the Operational Test and Evaluation of a new David Clark 1034 pressure suit—a striking blue design, complete with matching blue long underwear. The altitude chamber tests went well, and I completed several flights with the suit during my requalification. Shortly thereafter, I deployed to Saudi Arabia to take command of the 4402nd Reconnaissance Squadron at Taif AB, where I continued evaluating the prototype suit in operational conditions.

DEPLOYMENT TO SAUDI ARABIA

The 4402nd Reconnaissance Squadron known as The Desert Dragons, was located at King Fahd Air Base in Taif, Saudi Arabia, was a distinctive unit that transitioned from the 4402 Reconnaissance Group to a Squadron, functioning much like a mini-Air Force wing. This unique organization was responsible for high-altitude reconnaissance across Southwest Asia,

conducting demanding missions that sometimes lasted over 12 hours over regions like Somalia and Iraq. It encompassed U-2 flight operations, mission planning, aircraft maintenance, intelligence, security police, civil engineering, communications, contracting, accounting and finance, as well as comprehensive morale, welfare, and recreation support. This support included facilities such as a gym, billeting office, recreation center, swimming pool, satellite TV, and a well-equipped medical clinic. The 4402nd was structured this way because it was the only American organization in the Taif province, with its parent unit, the 4404 Composite Wing, located across 600 miles of desert away in Dhahran.

As Commander of the 4402d Reconnaissance Squadron, I was fortunate to serve with an exceptional leadership team. Key members included Major Don Pickenpaugh, followed by Major Craig Roebuck, as Directors of Operations; Major (later Lieutenant Colonel) Tony Stone as Director of Planning; Captain Aras Suzedelis Chief of Intelligence; First Lieutenant Henson Chief of Weather; SMSgt Isley as First Sergeant and Senior Enlisted Advisor; and Sergeant Curtis Willey as Personnel Support for Contingency Operations (PERSCO) representative and squadron administrator. Our leadership team was further strengthened by a succession of outstanding Chiefs of Maintenance and Maintenance Superintendents; the Chief of the Medical Clinic and our Flight Surgeons; the Chiefs of Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR); the Chiefs of Finance and Contracting; the teams from the Physiological Support Division; and many other dedicated officers, noncommissioned officers, enlisted personnel, and civilians whose professionalism, expertise, and commitment were essential to the squadron's mission and success.

In 1993, stark cultural and societal differences existed between the United States and Saudi Arabia, influenced by their distinct historical, religious, and political contexts. These differences necessitated adaptations from U.S. and allied forces, presenting several challenges:

- ◆ Lack of Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). Without a SOFA, military personnel faced significant legal and jurisdictional challenges. This agreement typically clarifies the rights and responsibilities of foreign forces in a host country. The absence of a SOFA meant that issues such as criminal jurisdiction, tax liabilities, and operational permissions were often unclear or problematic.
- ◆ Islamic Law: Wahhabi Sunni Islam was deeply intertwined with law and governance in Saudi Arabia, with Sharia law as the legal framework. Public religious observance, including daily prayers and fasting during Ramadan, was both expected and often enforced. The religious police (Mutawa) would sometimes detain troops for failing to pray.⁴
- ◆ Gender Roles: In 1993, women were not allowed to drive,

and their roles in public life were severely restricted. Travel for women typically required permission from a male guardian (mahram), and gender segregation was commonplace in restaurants, schools, and public events. As a result, we had to provide male drivers to transport women to work.

- ◆ Alcohol and Entertainment: Alcohol was strictly prohibited by law; possession could lead to arrest or deportation. In 1993, there were no public cinemas or music concerts, and Western media faced restrictions and censorship. The U.S. military adhered to General Order #1, respecting these customs.
- ◆ Environmental Compliance: The 4402nd faced dilemmas regarding environmental policies. The U-2 required special fuel, JPTS, which was delivered in 55-gallon drums. After use, the residue was toxic and could not be removed. Contracting the Saudis for disposal would violate U.S. policy, and shipping the empty drums back was not financially feasible. This situation put us in a "Catch-22."
- ◆ Social Interactions and Customs: Social norms were generally more formal and segregated by gender. Physical contact between unrelated men and women was prohibited, and greetings typically involved right-hand-only handshakes and formal Arabic phrases. Business meetings often began with tea or coffee and lengthy pleasantries.
- ◆ Government System and Freedoms: Saudi Arabia operated under an absolute monarchy without national elections, with limited press freedom and restricted political expression.

In conclusion, Americans in Saudi Arabia, particularly military personnel and contractors, had to navigate these cultural differences with care. Commanders were held accountable for any infractions, and the U.S. approach emphasized individual freedoms and secular governance, contrasting sharply with Saudi Arabia's adherence to religious law, conservative social customs, and gender segregation. Respecting these customs was crucial for diplomacy, business, and peaceful cultural coexistence, which proved to be quite challenging, especially for commanders who could face prosecution for any deviations.

OPERATIONS

Shortly after I assumed command of the 4402 RS, I was called in for an intelligence briefing regarding our upcoming mission over Somalia. The pilot for this mission was Major Don Pickenpaugh, who also served as our Director of Operations.

Preparing for a U-2 high-altitude flight was an extensive process, as the pilot would be operating in a high-threat environment while enduring the demanding and hazardous

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physiological conditions of flight above 70,000 feet for 8 to 12 hours in a full pressure suit. At those high altitudes without the pressure suit, our blood would boil and our bodies would burst from the lack of pressure. The U-2 cabin altitude was 29,900 feet. The two pilots, a primary and a backup, began their preparation the day before the flight, starting with monitoring their diets to ensure they consumed high-protein meals. Foods like beans and certain vegetables could lead to gastrointestinal discomfort due to the pressure differential during the flight. A strict 12-hour crew rest period before the launch was adhered to by the pilots.

On the day of the flight, the pilot and mobile officer arrived two hours and fifteen minutes prior to launch. They received weather and intelligence briefings and took the time to eat a high-protein meal of steak and eggs, which was crucial for sustaining energy during the lengthy flight without any gastrointestinal issues. The mission pilot underwent a pre-flight physical examination conducted by the flight surgeon,



Major Don Pickinpaugh

while the backup pilot assumed the role of "mobile officer," responsible for inspecting the aircraft. Personnel from the Physiological Support Division assisted Major Pickinpaugh in donning the full pressure suit, which was necessary for high-altitude flying.

One of our intelligence officers provided a detailed intel briefing about the mission, including potential threats. I vividly remember this briefing, which not only covered the mission overview but also highlighted the risks. The officer advised against ejecting over land due to hostile indigenous personnel, as well as over water due to the presence of man-eating sharks. When I inquired about what they would recommend in such a situation (smiling), they suggested, "Maybe a call out over Navy Common," hoping to connect with the carrier USS Lincoln. The mission was planned to last 11.5 hours, comprising about 3+ hours of flight to the south, 4+ hours on station, and then another 3+ hours returning to base. It was a lengthy mission. Major Pickinpaugh later described the mission in detail. (Pickinpaugh, 2023)

"In October (1993), our military took a hit in Somalia when several Black Hawk helicopters went down, and vicious fighting ensued. The Pentagon tasked us to fly support missions for the



4402nd Group Picture

Army in Somalia. I was up on the schedule to fly my longest mission yet, eleven and a half hours. It would take three hours to get to Somalia and then three hours to return.

The day before, I planned my mission and reviewed all my options in case something went wrong. There were a few friendly countries between Taif and Somalia. Chuck and I decided that if I had problems in the aircraft to head to Nairobi or Djibouti. Both places had a small contingency of Americans there. My biggest threat was from Yemen and their Surface to Air missiles on two islands I would fly over.

The night before, I made sure I got plenty of sleep. Takeoff was scheduled at sunrise, with my return just before sunset.

The following day, I woke up rested and ready to go. I got myself mentally prepared for this extended mission. As I lifted off, I turned the aircraft south and headed toward the Red Sea. I would not have an AWACS or RJ to talk to today. I would check in with the USS Lincoln aircraft carrier off the coast of Somalia when I arrived on station.

The first part of the mission was smooth, as I spent most of my time sightseeing along the Red Sea. I had never flown in this part of the world before and only knew some of the countries from high school geography class. Two hours into the flight, I passed over the Yemen islands and their Russian-built SA-2 surface-to-air missiles. I was pleasantly surprised that the Yemenis did not light me up on their radars as I passed overhead.

The Dragon Lady turned to the left as I entered the Gulf of Aden. I could see Somali coming into view out my right window. My track today had me heading straight for the port of Bosaso, then to Mogadishu, and finally to Kismayo in the southern part of Somalia. After Kismayo, I would retrace my track back to the north.

As I hit Bosaso, the U-2 did not turn south like it was supposed to. The Dragon Lady continued heading straight toward the middle of the Indian Ocean. Something was wrong. The plane should have turned right. I grabbed my map boards and confirmed the plane should be in a right turn. I checked the waypoints page on the navigation system to match them

against my flight boards. My navigation points were all off. Oh crap, I muttered to myself. I deselected the Nav mode and turned the heading knob to the south so the U-2 would not be too far off track.

I then started to punch the new coordinates into the nav system. I was struggling because the tiny buttons were too hard to select with my spacesuit gloves. The large gloves covered several buttons, making it difficult to hit the right one. After a few tries,

I finally got the correct coordinates in the navigation box. Once satisfied, I selected Nav mode again on the autopilot. The U-2 jinked a bit but was now heading in the right direction. I finally began to breathe again.

I checked the next coordinate. It was wrong too. What the heck was happening? Did the mission planner get the coordinates wrong? The mobile pilot should have checked the coordinates on his preflight.

I spent the next hour punching new coordinates into the navigation system, trying to stay one step ahead of the aircraft. It was a long hour, but eventually, I confirmed all the new coordinates were correct all the way back to Taif.

I then realized I had yet to check in with the USS Lincoln. I wondered if they thought something was wrong. I keyed up the radio and told them I was on station and would appreciate it if they monitored my frequency.

The voice replied, "Yep, no problem."

That was the response, short and sweet with no small talk. It was the only words I would hear on my long flight.

The Navy probably wondered what they were supposed to do if I did have a problem. I was sure they would not let me land the Dragon Lady on an aircraft carrier loaded with fighter jets. Landing the U-2 on the USS Kitty Hawk aircraft carrier years earlier was met with limited success.

If I had any problems in the southern part of Somalia, my plan was to head to Nairobi. Any problems in the northern part of Somalia, I would head out near USS Lincoln and eject. An ejection at 5,000 feet would give me time to make a safe parachute landing in the water. I assumed the Navy helicopters would pick me up. That was my plan, at least.

I made two more tracks up and down Somalia before starting my long three-hour journey home. It had been a long day, and the sun was setting when I landed in Taif.

In the debrief, we had a long discussion on what went wrong with my coordinates in the navigation system. Everyone said they did their job, so we just chalked it up to Gremlins. The Somalia flight would be my longest flight in the U-2 program." (Pickinpaugh, 2023)

For Major Pickinpaugh, the mission lasted about 12 to 13 hours, including pre-breathe before flight, in a pressure suit, at a cabin altitude of 29,900 feet.

A few days later, I prepared for an Olive Branch mission over

Iraq. Our intelligence officer provided a comprehensive mission briefing, highlighting the threats and areas of concern that I would soon be flying over. The briefer mentioned that Saddam Hussein was still condemning the U-2 missions, stating, "We are receiving reports that Saddam has repeatedly ordered, 'Bring me the head of a U-2 pilot!'"

Suit-up, cockpit integration, and launch all went smoothly. The flight was routine for the first 90 minutes above 70,000 feet. However, once over Baghdad, the defensive systems activated, indicating active targeting by Iraqi air defenses. The defensive system informed me that the U-2 was being tracked by an Iraqi surface-to-air missile, the SA-2, with active guidance. I immediately aborted the mission and executed aggressive evasive maneuvers (details remain classified). The pressure suit performed flawlessly.

After exiting Iraqi airspace, I felt soreness in both forefingers but pressed on. I made a coded abort call on HF and returned to Taif. During descent—about 40 minutes from above 70,000 feet—with speed brakes and gear down, I received troubling news: a Saudi truck had collided with the ILS antenna, disabling it. The TACAN navigation aid signal was intermittent. Although Taif Tower reported "all green," my newly installed GPS, still cutting-edge technology at the time, was my only reliable navigation aid. The GPS was so new there were no instrument approach plates (procedures) to use. So, I improvised and used the published TACAN approach plate using GPS. Highly irregular but it worked. Then I discovered that the flaps were stuck in the up position.

A no-flap landing in a U-2 is extremely demanding. The standard approach has a 3-degree glideslope, but a no-flap landing requires a shallow 1.5-degree glideslope—low, slow, and unforgiving. Air speed must be precise; for every knot over the speed limit, the ground run is extended by 1,000 feet. The aircraft must be stalled from two feet above the runway, and the margin between stall speed and approach speed is razor thin.

As I emerged from the cloud deck, I had to deal with visual illusions caused by the desert's tan and brown hues and the visibility-limiting haze. Both the ILS and TACAN failed completely. Relying solely on GPS, I identified the runway. Carefully managing crosswinds and avoiding a mosque near the approach path, I safely landed the U-2.

After taxiing in, I removed my gloves to find raw spots on both forefingers from a seam in the new gloves—the only flaw in an otherwise excellent new suit. For future missions, I decided to revert to the older gold gloves.



AFTERMATH AND RESULTS

After changing into my flight suit and completing the debriefing with superiors in Dhahran, I drafted a message to inform all concerned parties about the mission, the potential threats, and to request the status of the new defensive system. I submitted the message to our officers for input, refinement, and my final approval.

We sent the "cable" or message out the next day. Lt. Gen. Tom Griffith, the JTFSWA Commander, and Brig. Gen. Hall, the 4404th Composite Wing Commander, called to express their appreciation. The Joint Staff were eager for more information. However, the Air Force seemed more concerned about how widely the message had circulated. I did feel some "heat" from the Air Force the following year upon returning stateside.

The good news is that the Air Force responded promptly. They quickly fielded a temporary "band-aid" System 29 defensive system for three aircraft, and the U-2's survivability systems were elevated to a high priority. The subsequent improvements have made the system, as it stands today, vastly better than before. Additionally, the Desert Dragons won the Best Unit of the Year Award for their many mission accomplishments.

Little did I know that ten years later, I would be working for General Colin Powell again—this time, he was the Secretary of State.

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END NOTES

¹ The U-2 is a single-seat, high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft capable of collecting imagery intelligence (IMINT) and signals intelligence (SIGINT) while flying above 70,000 feet. It can remain airborne for more than twelve hours. According to Coy Cross, the 9RW Historian, "The TR-1, which made its first appearance in 1981, was essentially the same aircraft as the U-2R. It was designated as tactical reconnaissance to differentiate it from the U-2 'spy plane' associated with Gary Powers. The TR-1 was assigned to the 17th Reconnaissance Wing at RAF Alconbury, United Kingdom. During Operation Desert Shield/Storm, personnel from the 1704th Reconnaissance Squadron (P) considered both aircraft as U-2s.

Parts and pilots were interchangeable between the two... The TR-1 was redesignated as a U-2 in October 1991." (Cross, 1996)

² The MIPE, was a deployable ground station with 15 environmentally controlled vans and organic transportation and support equipment, which was a U-2 (and SR-71) wet film processing system.

³ SENIOR BLADE provides a processing/exploitation capability for the U-2R SENIOR YEAR Electro-Optical (E/O) sensor. The SENIOR BLADE van on the ground controls the electro-optical sensor and receives, processes, exploits, and reports digital imagery collected to theater commanders and national authorities.

⁴ The notorious morality police -- officially titled the Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice but known simply as the mutawa -- were previously tasked with enforcing the observance of Islamic moral law. That included overseeing any action considered immoral, from drug trafficking to bootleg smuggling -- alcohol remains illegal -- down to monitoring social behavior including the strict segregation of the sexes.



Change of Command Ceremony Henicheck to Wilson



Pilots Roebuck, Williams, Wilson, Walby, Jungeman

COLD WAR CONVERSATIONS



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AS YOU KNOW, WE BEGAN this Series well before COVID and originally did all of them in-person. When COVID forced the closing of our doors and suspension of all of our activities, we had to rethink many things. Since people could no longer gather in large groups, we got a Zoom license and converted to 100% online. This has been highly successful for us, since it allows both audience and speaker to be from anywhere in the world, so we will continue with Zoom streaming but eventually also return to the in-person option where the speaker is local; we'll do that when COVID conditions allow, although not in our prior venue of the Old Bust Head production floor since that is no longer available. Because of the popularity and scope of the Zoom format, we've expanded to doing these about every 3 or 4 weeks.

UPCOMING LECTURES

October 25, 2026 – 7 pm EST (ZOOM only): All Eternity Lies Before Me: Hope, Faith, & Love After the Loss of Navy Alfa Foxtrot 586: Speaker: Loreen Gibbons interweaves a dual narrative account about her memories as a Navy pilot's wife with a tale of what happened to her husband's crew after the ditching of the crippled plane in the frigid, stormy North Pacific waters off the coast of the Soviet Union in 1978. A propeller malfunction causing four engine fires which burned dangerously close to a wing fuel tank forced the ditching, and left the crew in life rafts for twelve hours before being rescued by Russian fishermen and taken to the Soviet Union. After an extensive search, Loreen would not know the fate of her husband for three days. *All Eternity Lies Before Me* is a suspense filled, real-life drama that reads like an action movie. This story is more than a tale of military heroism; it is also a story of faith, hope, love, and resilience with a deeply spiritual core. It is likely that several of the eight living survivors will plan to join in the Zoom program as well as members from the Air Force, Navy, and Coast Guard SAR crews.

[Click HERE for tickets](#) (NOTE: To avoid paying the

suggested Service Fee of 17%, click on the drop-down menu and select "Other" to enter your own amount which could also be zero).

November 15, 2026 – 7 pm EST (ZOOM only): *The Wireless Operator*: Speaker: David Tuch, in this riveting debut, recounts the astonishing true story of his cousin, Harold Derber: a British Merchant Navy radio operator who carried his wartime training into the clandestine networks of the Cold War. He worked with Fidel Castro to smuggle Cuban refugees off the island, while tangling with Cuban intelligence, the Miami Mafia, and the CIA. Attorney James Donovan features heavily in his book because his cousin's ship, *The Empress of Bahamas*, was selected to return the Bay of Pigs prisoners after Donovan's successful negotiation. The Red Cross reneged on the deal but his cousin went ahead anyway, which brought the full weight of the CIA and State Department crashing down on him, eventually leading to his deportation as a national security risk. By the 1970s, Derber had become the largest marijuana trafficker in American history, pioneering the use of "drug motherships" and running a guns-for-drugs trade to arm Marxist guerrillas in Latin America. Drawing on declassified files, an unpublished memoir, and accounts from the undercover investigators who pursued him, *The Wireless Operator* uncovers how one man's secret life at the crossroads of espionage, organized crime, and revolution during the Cold War helped ignite the modern war on drugs.

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January 17, 2027 – 7 pm EST (ZOOM only): *My greatest and most critical SR-71 Mission to Support President*

Carter. Retired SR-71 pilot and Cold War Museum board member, Buz Carpenter, will discuss the March 1979 Saudi SR-71 flight during the Arabia & Yemen border dispute. Time was critical and there were not satellites able to cover the area. The SR-71 was tasked for a quick reaction mission flying from the UK; first ever mission approved by the UK Government into the Middle East. You will learn of SR-71 capabilities, culture, diplomatic countries clearances, tanker basing arrangements, operational timelines and what has to take place to complete a successful mission. The reason why the SR-71 was eventually retired will be revealed, and it was not because of a military threat.

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February 21, 2027 – 7 pm EST (ZOOM only): *The Cambridge Spy Ring: The Treachery of the Five Who Got Away*. Speaker Shawna Morris will discuss the formation of the Cambridge Spy Ring which began with the recruitment of Kim Philby, followed by Donald Maclean, Guy Burgess, Anthony Blunt, and John Cairncross, all elite graduates of Cambridge University. They began their careers during the interwar period, during which Great Britain experienced mass unemployment and economic depression. It was also the Stalinist era, the most brutal period in Soviet history. Their spying continued through the Second World War and into the Cold War, as their influence and access grew to alarming levels. Due to their accomplishments and, most importantly, their connections, the Cambridge spies were able to commit the longest running and most destructive espionage operation in British history. More shocking still, none were ever prosecuted for their treasonous crimes. The history of the Cambridge Spy Ring is well-known across the pond, but many Americans have never heard of them. Their actions during the early years of the Cold War, particularly those of Kim Philby and Donald Maclean, caused a rift in the intelligence community between the Americans and the British. The failure of British intelligence and law enforcement to prosecute them left a lasting wound on the Anglo-American "Special Relationship" that never fully healed.

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March 21, 2027 – 7 pm EST (ZOOM only): *Rickover: Underway, My Way*. Author Joann DiGennaro offers a

rare and deeply personal portrait of Admiral Hyman G. Rickover, the architect of the U.S. Navy's nuclear propulsion program, revealing not only his revolutionary leadership, but also the private character behind one of the most formidable figures in American military history. Joann DiGennaro co-founded the Center for Excellence in Education (CEE) with Rickover. Her book by the same title, provides an unprecedented look into the life, leadership philosophy, and enduring legacy of a man who reshaped both naval power and educational excellence in the United States.

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April 25, 2027 – 7 pm EST (ZOOM only): *Steinstuecken: A Little Pocket of Freedom*. Author Donald Smith tells the story of a West Berlin neighborhood that was part of the American Occupation Sector---but was completely surrounded by Communist territory. The Americans had no ground access to the neighborhood; they could only fly to it by helicopter. Yet the Americans kept the neighborhood safe, and out of Communist hands, for more than 20 years. While researching the Steinstuecken book, Don learned about the 1946 Berlin City elections. In the fall of 1946, Berlin, then under Four Power occupation, was due for citywide elections. Cold War tensions had started to emerge by then, between the Soviets and the Western powers. The city elections became a de facto referendum on whose postwar visions and governing philosophies the people of Berlin preferred---the communist East or the capitalist West. The election, and the campaigning that led up to it, became one of the first "battles" of the Cold War.

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STEINSTUECKEN: A LITTLE POCKET OF FREEDOM

Donald Smith

Acclaim Press, 344 pages, 2022

<https://www.acclaimpress.com/books/steinstuecken>

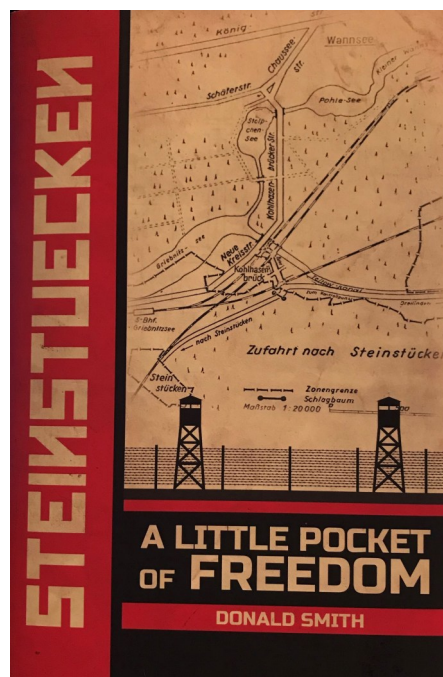
Donald Smith, a retired Army officer and Cold War veteran, served in Germany from 1986 to 1989. (He left Germany two months before the Berlin Wall opened.) While in Germany, he visited divided Berlin three times---and learned about a fascinating episode in America's Cold War history. So interesting, in fact, that he wrote a book about it!

Steinstuecken, a West Berlin neighborhood, was part of the American Occupation Sector. However, Steinstuecken itself was COMPLETELY surrounded by East German territory. All the roads and trails connecting it to the rest of Berlin crossed East German land. The Americans couldn't even send soldiers or supplies to the village without risking a confrontation (and possible combat) with the East Germans or Soviets!

Yet, for more than 20 years, American soldiers and diplomats kept Steinstuecken out of Communist hands. The village's residents showed determination, and even courage, in resisting Communist pressure. They also managed to live relatively normal lives, and build a bond with the Americans that stays strong to this day. At the same time, the Americans and Soviets managed the village's situation in a way that kept tensions down and prevented a crisis.

This book tells how they did it. It's an interesting, even inspiring story that deserves to be remembered.

Cold War Museum members can get the book for a 20% discount, if they order directly from the publisher, Acclaim Press. Use the code CWMUSE (for "Cold War Museum") at checkout.

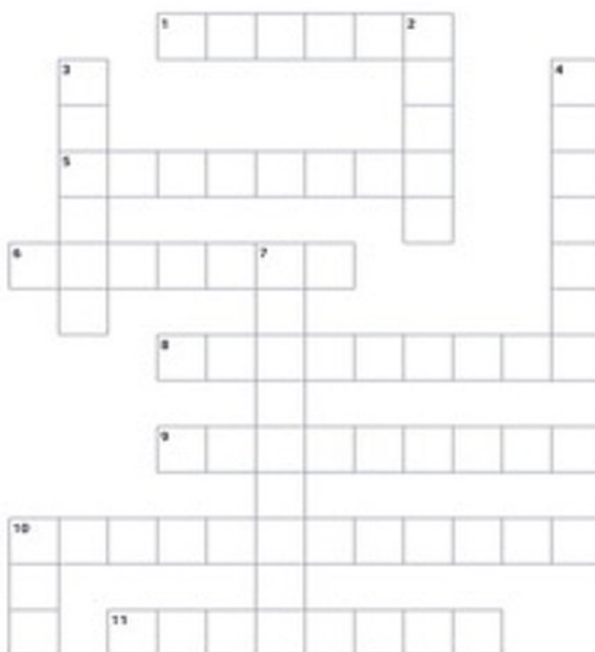


**Deadline for
Spring
Issue
March 15, 2027**

COLD WAR CHALLENGE



The Cold War Challenge: Surveillance & Defense Crossword



ACROSS

1. An underground shelter designed for protection against nuclear attacks.
5. A state of extreme suspicion often felt by nations during the era.
6. The act of protecting a country against military threats.
8. To stop or catch a communication meant for someone else.
9. The automatic recording and transmission of data from remote sources.
10. The act of carefully watching someone or something for information.
11. Someone who leaves their own country to join the opposing side.

DOWN

2. A system that uses radio waves to detect the position of aircraft.
3. A secret method of writing used to encode classified messages.
4. Radioactive particles that settle after a nuclear explosion.
7. An orbiting device used for intelligence gathering and communication.
10. A person who secretly collects information about an enemy.

Answers on page 32

Life has its challenges.
**As a Veteran,
you don't
have to solve
them alone.**



Visit [VA.gov/REACH](https://va.gov/REACH) for resources
or Dial **988** then Press 1 to reach
the Veterans Crisis Line.

Don't wait. **Reach out.**

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

WHAT ADULTS NEVER UNDERSTOOD



By Patricia Hesse

Patricia Hesse is an educator and writer whose work centers on preserving story and exploring how meaning is carried through lived experience. Over a 47-year career in education, she developed story-centered learning experiences that extended beyond the classroom into community-based projects. Her work has been recognized at both the state and national levels, including the Milken Educator Award, Arkansas Rural Teacher of the Year, and a Christa McAuliffe Award.

She also participated in Fulbright programs in Japan and Eastern Europe and was selected as a Mandel Teacher Fellow with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum—experiences that deepened her interest in memory, place, and the ways history is carried forward.

After retiring from teaching, she returned more fully to this work, drawing together years of collected stories, documents, and questions into a sustained study of local history. She is particularly interested in how everyday lives shape identity and the continuity of community. Her work has found its fullest expression in narrative history that draws on multiple writing forms that enable readers to care about history by making it human.

My Mama and Daddy watched Walter Cronkite every single night. I remember whining, “Do we have to watch the news?” Mama and Daddy probably thought I found it boring—that wasn’t it. It’s true, I kept playing with my Revlon dolls in the middle of the floor, just as my tomboy sister continued moving her farm animals and little tractors around a large toy barn. We seldom looked up at our seventeen-inch television, but “seldom” was not “never.” I paid attention to those reports even as I appeared to ignore them. Sometimes during the news I’d pick up my dolls to escape my fear and go to the bedroom I shared with my little sister. But our bedroom opened off the living room. The television spoke even there.

A new issue of LIFE magazine arrived each week. Mama didn’t look at it that much, but Daddy read it cover to cover. Sometimes when Daddy was at work and Mama was in the kitchen, I looked at the pictures inside.

It seemed to me that Walter Cronkite was always talking about “polio.” I still sneaked a look at his scary reports on the news—I saw children in heavy metal leg braces. I heard him say words like paralyzed, iron lung, and stay away from swimming pools. LIFE magazine and even Daddy’s newspaper showed pictures of children my age trying to walk with funny-looking metal crutches in both hands and metal braces on each leg. Walter Cronkite said that polio was infectious. I asked my mother what that word meant. She explained it meant you could catch it. Then, she added, “Don’t worry. You

won’t get polio.” I heard the kids at school say you could die. Did Mama know that?

I began making sure to play with my toys in the living room when the news came on. What would he say this time? One day I saw a little girl that looked a lot like me ... she was inside one of those iron lung things. It looked like it was swallowing her. Walter Cronkite said it was so she could breathe. I knew what it was like not being able to breathe—sometimes when my friends and I were at Grundon’s swimming hole, we tried to see who could stay under water the longest. I never won. I saw a picture in LIFE magazine that showed a bunch of kids in iron lungs. They couldn’t see their bodies or even touch their own faces. I showed Mama the picture. She told me, “You do not have to worry about this. You will not get polio.” I didn’t say anything but I knew she didn’t know that for sure. Walter Cronkite said it was happening even in other countries. He called it a disease.

The words “March of Dimes” were everywhere. At school, each student in my first grade classroom was given a blue and white March of Dimes card to fill with dimes. The double-sided, flat card was stiff and looked like white cardboard. I liked the pictures around the edges. Our teacher told us the dimes we put in the cards would help raise money to find a cure for polio. She rolled in the school’s projector, threaded the film, turned out the light, and showed us a movie about children with polio. It showed a movie with children in iron lungs and kids trying to walk. They were all smiling. I already knew about all of this, and I knew those children were told to smile. My friends stared at the film and didn’t say a word. I suspected they hadn’t been watching Walter Cronkite like I had. But I was sure they knew. We talked about polio at recess. I think they were like me—fearing they would be next. Then the teacher handed out a March of Dimes card for us to take home and fill with dimes. That night on the news Walter Cronkite talked about the March of Dimes and showed children handing their teacher a full card of dimes. I figured this was so parents would give their kids money.

At some point, polio didn’t scare me like it had. I hadn’t gotten it, and I didn’t know anyone who had. I guess you could say us kids got used to being scared and didn’t think about it much. But sometimes, at night when I’d go to bed, I’d run my hands up and down over my legs, and the fear came back.

Weeks passed. Then, Walter Cronkite began to talk about a new polio vaccine that would be given in all schools. I asked my Mama what a vaccine was. I didn’t like it when she said it was a shot. Would I have to take a shot? I don’t remember Walter Cronkite talking badly about the “vaccine”—I felt grown-up using the real word—his face was smiling. I never saw him smile before. I could tell Mama and Daddy were happy about the vaccine, which I didn’t think was fair. They

wouldn't have to take a shot. I knew Mama had lied to me when she said, "You won't get it." Was she making me take the vaccine? All along, she was afraid my little sister and I might get it.

The day Mama took my sister and me to school to get the vaccine, I saw my friends there. I remember parents filling out papers and then watching their kids get the shot. Many kids cried and some threw a fit. I think this was on a Saturday. Probably the teachers said that crying kids writing their ABCs on a shot day wouldn't work. The line got shorter. My turn was next. Anytime I got a shot at the doctor, Mama expected me not to cry. I didn't cry that day either.

After we got home, my Mama and Daddy talked about being thankful there were doctors who knew how to do things they didn't understand anything about. I'll say this: I learned that day to trust doctors who made sure children could run and play and never have to be in an iron lung.

That night I didn't rub my hands up and down over my legs.

I remember Walter Cronkite showing kids lined up and smiling as they got their shot. It's a good thing they didn't film at our school; there was a lot of crying. The only people smiling were parents.

Polio taught me that adults could not promise I would be safe. I knew that terrible things happen to children. I knew my parents sometimes lied.

After the shot, I noticed that Walter Cronkite kinda quit talking about polio. Now he talked every single night about something called the Cold War. I didn't understand what he was saying. I thought the word "cold" was weird and decided it must be a war at someplace like the North Pole. The words he said were not words I knew: fallout shelters, atomic bomb, nuclear war, civil defense, missile silos, radiation. I listened, trying to remember each one, which was easy because he said them almost every night. Those words didn't mean anything to me. Were they meant for children not to understand? I knew the words "bomb" and "war," and decided the others were dangerous too. He repeated the names Russia and Khrushchev over and over. And what was a "Doomsday Clock?" Each day, warnings interrupted our television shows saying something like, "If there's a nuclear attack, find shelter." Shelter? Where was a shelter?

I didn't ask Mama or Daddy anything about what it all meant. I feared they might tell me the truth. I didn't think I wanted to hear the truth. Besides, if they said, "Don't worry about the Russians" I'd know it was a lie. Walter Cronkite never smiled anymore.

My little sister and I talked about the Cold War in bed when the lights were turned off. She was in school now. She watched Walter Cronkite too. We were pretty sure a bomb would be dropped on our town. It would hit our house, our church, our movie theater, our school, and kill everyone. Now we looked at the pictures in Daddy's LIFE magazine together. I remember finding a picture of what was called a "mushroom" atomic bomb. I read those words myself. One night on the news, we

saw a man banging his shoe on a table. There were a lot of men around him. He was our enemy. He was Khrushchev—the one from Russia who would send us the bomb.

I had a friend named Carolyn who went to the Lutheran Church in Waldenburg. At school, she bragged to the rest of us that if they dropped the nuclear bomb, her church basement was a fallout shelter. By this time, I knew what a fallout shelter and a nuclear bomb were. We kids talked to each other at recess—some proudly told the rest of us what it all meant. Some of the boys bragged that they weren't scared at all. Sometime after that, Carolyn took me to a party in her church basement. She showed me the huge barrels with lids on the top that were marked with what she said was the nuclear symbol. I asked her what was inside but she didn't know. She said it was something that kept you alive. I wondered if the shelter was for everyone or just their church.

I later heard that the bottom level of our big rice dryer was a fallout shelter. I didn't know if this was true or not but figured it wasn't. I still saw trucks loaded with rice going in the bottom and coming out empty. A boy in my sister's class told her his family had built a fallout shelter. I remember getting up the nerve one night to ask Mama and Daddy if we could build a fallout shelter. Daddy told my sister and me, "We will be fine where we are. Russia isn't coming to Weiner." I knew that was a lie. I knew more than they thought I did.

My sister and I often talked about what we'd do if there was an attack. Sometimes when I was outside playing, I imagined seeing a Russian airplane flying high over Weiner. I saw it dropping, coming straight at us.

A block from our house was the Victory Theater. I knew a lot of people thought the theater was little but it seemed big to me. The place where you bought your goodies was right there when you walked in. It was always full of people coming in and others trying to buy popcorn. A coke was ten cents, popcorn ten cents, and most candy was a nickel. With fifty cents I could buy a twenty-five-cent ticket and still have enough money for popcorn, candy, and a coke. There were four narrow steps on both sides of the concession stand leading into the theater. Each movie had a cartoon first. I can't remember my parents ever going to the movies.

Mama allowed my little sister and me to walk to the movie by ourselves, even when we were very young. After all, she could stand in the yard and see us until we paid for our ticket and went inside. We'd watch anything. I don't think Mama ever knew what movies we were seeing. We watched westerns, war movies, murder movies, and even scary movies. We never paid any attention to what was coming on because it didn't matter. We'd be there. I'd meet my school friends there, proud to be on my own.

One Sunday afternoon, soon after my little sister and I bought our popcorn and a coke, the movie began—we'd missed the cartoon. The title always showed first when a movie started. This one was called "On the Beach." *I saw a submarine underwater. There were sailors inside. One man looked through what's called a periscope. I took piano lessons so I always*

listened to the music. It was pretty and kinda slow. It felt a little happy and a little sad to me ... my teacher taught me that music talked like that. Then, the submarine came up. The sun was shining. The submarine went pretty fast across the water. Then, I saw some different people that were somewhere else. I saw a city that was much bigger than Weiner but there were no people. Trash was blowing around. The music stopped sounding sad. Now it sounded afraid. I saw another city that looked bigger ... no people ... just trash blowing around. I had to see what was going on. I think I figured it out.

There must have been a Cold War that happened, and armies used atomic bombs. There weren't enough fallout shelters so everyone in the world died except Australia. Only people in Australia were alive because there was a radioactive cloud that was killing people everywhere it went. It hadn't gotten there yet. The people in Australia knew it was coming because no one could stop it. I wondered why they didn't build fallout shelters before it got there. I knew that people in Arkansas were dead.

The submarine from our country went to Australia, but the people on it weren't families. The people in it got out. I guess they wanted to live there. I wasn't really sure about all that. For a while, the cloud didn't come. It was like living here now. People in Australia even went swimming on the beach. I couldn't understand that. How can you go swimming if you know a cloud is going to kill you? Now this is the bad part—everyone had a pill they could take so they'd go ahead and die and not hurt. I didn't see the cloud but I know it got there. The pretty music played again and did the same thing it did when the movie started. The sailors got back in the submarine—I guess they decided to go back. For some reason, they showed that same big city without people and paper blowing. Then, the music got loud and scary. I think it showed the same empty city it did the first time. Maybe it was a city in Australia and everyone had taken the pill.

No one talked or laughed that day like they usually did. No one talked or laughed when they left the movie theater either.

My sister and I walked the block home without speaking. When Mama asked us how the movie was, we said the same thing we always said, "It was good." But we didn't talk about the movie like we usually did not, even that night when we went to bed.



DECEMBER 1, 2026, EARLY GIVING NOVEMBER 17, 2026

[The Cold War Museum | GivingTuesday](#)



PACT ACT: VIETNAM ERA VETERANS COLD WAR ERA VETERANS



The **PACT Act**, signed into law August 10, 2022, expands health care and benefits for Vietnam era Veterans.



PACT Act Health Care Eligibility

Veterans who served in these countries during specific time periods are eligible to enroll in VA health care **effective August 10, 2022.**

Republic of Vietnam

January 9, 1962 - May 7, 1975

Guam or American Samoa

(or in their territorial waters)

January 9, 1962 - July 31, 1980

Cambodia

at Mimot or Krek,

Kampong Cham Province

April 16, 1969 - April 30, 1969

Thailand

Any U.S. or Royal Thai base

January 9, 1962 - June 30, 1976

Laos

December 1, 1965 -

September 30, 1969

Johnston Atoll

(or on a ship that called there)

January 1, 1972 - September 30, 1977



The law **expands eligibility for health care and benefits** for Veterans who participated in **certain nuclear response or cleanup activities.**

Enewetak Atoll

January 1, 1977 -
December 31, 1980

Palomares, Spain

January 17, 1966 -
March 31, 1967

Thule, Greenland

January 21, 1968 -
September 25, 1968



Toxic Exposure Screenings

As a general matter, there are several types of possible exposures or hazards Veterans may have experienced during their military service, including:

- Air Pollutants
- Chemicals
- Radiation
- Warfare Agents
- Occupational Hazards

ON NOVEMBER 8, 2022: VA will begin incorporating toxic exposure screenings. Every Veteran enrolled for VA health care will receive an initial toxic exposure screening and a follow-up screening at least every five years. Eligible Veterans not enrolled Eligible Veterans who have not enrolled will have an opportunity to enroll and receive the screening.



PACT Act Benefits

The PACT Acts adds two new Agent Orange presumptive conditions:

- **Monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS)**
- **High blood pressure (hypertension)**

Family members or dependents of a deceased Veteran may qualify for various VA benefits due to the additional disabilities defined in the PACT Act if they meet eligibility requirements. More information for survivors is available online at [VA.gov/PACT](https://va.gov/PACT).

4 EASY WAYS TO APPLY FOR VA HEALTH CARE



Apply online at
[VA.gov/health-care/apply/
application/introduction](https://va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction)



Mail a completed, signed
Application for Health Benefits
[VA Form 10-10EZ](https://va.gov/health-care/apply/form-10-10EZ)



Call the toll-free hotline
877-222-8387 Mon – Fri,
8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. ET



Bring a completed, signed [VA
Form 10-10EZ](https://va.gov/health-care/apply/form-10-10EZ) to the nearest VA
Medical Center or clinic.

4 EASY WAYS TO GET STARTED WITH CLAIMS



Learn more at
[VA.gov/disability/
how-to-file-claim/](https://va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/)



Call the Benefits hotline
(for specific questions)
at 1-800-827-1000



Visit a VBA Regional Office
[VA.gov/benefits/
offices.asp](https://va.gov/benefits/offices.asp)



Work with an accredited VSO
[VA.gov/ogc/apps/
accreditation/index.asp](https://va.gov/ogc/apps/accreditation/index.asp)

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Learn more and sign up at [VA.gov/PACT](https://va.gov/PACT)
Download the [VA Health and Benefits App](https://va.gov/health-care/health-benefits-app)
Call us at 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411)
Find a VA at [VA.gov/find-locations/](https://va.gov/find-locations/)

COLD WAR LINKS OF INTEREST



Matt About Town : [Uncover the hidden history inside the DC area's Cold War Museum](#)

Matt About Town: [How this small Virginia farm town became a massive part of the World War II D-Day invasion](#)

Matt About Town: [How one Virginia man's quest for the classified truth about his father changed his life](#)

Abandoned Nike missile site in Waukesha, Wisconsin: <https://www.onlyinyourstate.com/experiences/wisconsin/abandoned-cold-war-missile-silo-wi>

The spy plane that just won't die: U-2 Dragon Lady gets another reprieve: <https://migflug.com/afterburner/de/u-2-dragon-lady-reprieve-fy2027-congress-blocks-retirement-2026/>

So that there are no new Bloody Sonnets: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ktBav32JL7g>

The Cable – IUSS Caesar Alumni Association: <https://www.iusscaa.org/>

JFK Assassination Records: <https://www.archives.gov/research/jfk/release-2025>

Cuba: The Capital of 21st Century Capitalism: <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/Cuba-Report.pdf>

Black Cat Squadron: Taiwan's U-2 Pilots Over Mao's China: [Black Cat Squadron: Taiwan's U-2 Pilots Over Mao's China | MiGFlug](#)

First to Fly the Blackbird: Honoring Air Force Test Pilot Capt. Robert Gilliland Sr.: <https://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/Blog/Post/15113/>

[First-to-Fly-the-Blackbird-Honoring-Air-Force-Test-Pilot-Capt-Robert-Gilliland-Sr](#)

Top Secret Spy Satellite Declassified By National Reconnaissance Office: https://www.twz.com/space/top-secret-signal-intelligence-satellite-declassified-by-national-reconnaissance-office?utm_source=sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=mil-ebb

A Secret Soviet Plan to Nuke America From the South Pole Was Working. Until UFO Hunters Looked Up.: https://www.popularmechanics.com/military/weapons/a70479765/the-secret-soviet-space-weapon-mistaken-for-a-ufo-history/?link_source=ta_first_comment&taid=69dd3dc14035d10001b22c18&utm_campaign=trueanthemFBPOP&utm_content=69dd3d824035d10001b22c15&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook

Guardians of Memory: The Matsu Islands and the Legacy of Cold War Military Heritage Conservation: <https://youtu.be/7GUA4mwD3p0>

Hill AFB hosted SAC's 'satellite alert' facility during the Cold War: <https://www.hill.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/2179619/hill-afb-hosted-sacs-satellite-alert-facility-during-the-cold-war/>

Our Valley History | Behind three fences: The secret nuclear site at Westover: <https://www.yahoo.com/news/articles/valley-history-behind-three-fences-190330746.html>

Book details secret Westover Cold War operation: https://www.masslive.com/living/2015/07/westover_book_details_secret_operation.html

RAMOS: The Russian-American Observation Satellites: <https://www.drewexmachina.com/2014/06/21/ramos-the-Russian-american-observation-satellites/>

Midcourse Space Experiment: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Midcourse_Space_Experiment

Atlas ICBM Silo Crisis: Albany's Cold War Close Call (article on page 4): <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/ktr4tbmvsk16assdp2sdg/The-Albany-News-Volume-150-Number-6.pdf?rlkey=9qz2pn7nof1a10u0tgn6lxtze&st=yyjd21e7&dl=0>

Is An SR-71 Blackbird Returning to Flight 27 Years Later?: [Is An SR-71 Blackbird Returning to Flight 27 Years Later? - The Aviationist](#)

Raptor: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockheed_Martin_F-22_Raptor

Program Inception: The F-35 Joint Strike Fighter Unveiling: <https://news.lockheedmartin.com/2006-07-05-First-F-35-Joint-Strike-Fighter-to-Be-Unveiled>

Historical Footage: The Blackbird in Rest status: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lr2-HNVMvOY>

TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES



Gary Powers Jr. 2027 Cold War Espionage Tour of Germany & the Czech Republic in partnership with VCNCV

Travel Dates: April 28 to May 7, 2027

10 days/8 nights



Join famed Cold War author, historian and lecturer Gary Powers Jr. on this exciting, 10-day tour of Cold War and espionage related sites in Germany & the Czech Republic in partnership with the Veteran Community Network of Central Virginia (VCNCV).

What's Included on this Tour:

- Round-trip air transportation from Richmond, VA
- 8 nights in centrally-located, four-star hotels
- Full-time, professional CHA Tour Director throughout
- Valuable insight & informative commentary by Gary Powers Jr.
- Breakfast and three-course dinners daily
- On-tour transportation by private touring motorcoach
- Sightseeing tours & visits/entrances to sites listed below:

The Berlin Airlift Memorial • Checkpoint Charlie Museum • Glienicke Bridge ("Bridge of Spies") • Teufelsberg Spy Station • Allied Museum on Clay Allee • Hohenschönhausen Memorial • DDR Museum • German Spy Museum • Leipzig's Museum in Der Runde Ecke • Leipzig Forum of Contemporary History • Dresden's Military History Museum • Bezovka Nuclear Bunker • Atom Museum • The Nuremberg Trials Memorial • Technik Museum Sinsheim

*Visits subject to change based on availability

For more information and to enroll online, please scan the QR Code at right or visit:
www.cha-tours.com/garypowers/vcncv

Full Tour Price: \$5,695 per person

Land Only Price: \$4,795 per person
(airfare & airport transfers not included)

Early Enrollment Discount:

Enroll by Nov. 15, 2026 & save \$100!

Prices above are based on double occupancy in hotels. A \$750 single room supplement is required for travelers without roommates.

A \$495 is required when enrolling.

Final payment due January 10, 2027.



Gary Powers Jr.'s 2027 World War II & Cold War Espionage Tour of England, France, Belgium & Germany 12 days/10 nights

Travel Dates: October 5-16, 2027

Join renowned author, historian and lecturer Gary Powers Jr. on this exciting 12-day educational tour of World War II & Cold War espionage related sites in England, France, Belgium & Germany



What's Included:

- Round-trip air transportation from Newark International Airport
- 10 nights in centrally located, four-star hotels
- Valuable insight and informative commentary by Gary Powers Jr.
- Full-time CHA Tour Director
- On-tour transportation by private motorcoach and Eurostar train
- Breakfast & dinner (or lunch) daily
- Sightseeing entrances and visits

Prices & Deadlines:

Full Tour Price: \$6,395 per person

Land Tour Price: \$5,495 per person
(does not include airfare or transfers)

Price based on double occupancy.
A \$900 single room fee will apply for travelers without roommates.

Enroll by April 1, 2027 with a required deposit of \$495. Final payment is due by July 1, 2027.

Enroll Early & Save!

Enroll by February 1, 2027 and save \$100 on the above prices.
(Repeat Gary Powers travelers will receive a \$200 discount!)

Tour Highlights:

Churchill War Rooms • Imperial War Museum London • Bletchley Park • Royal Air Force Museum • La Coupole History Center • D-Day Beaches and American Cemetery • Arromanches Invasion Museum • Caen Memorial Museum • Reims' Museum of the Surrender • Bastogne War Museum • Luxembourg American Cemetery • Stuttgart Cold War Bunker • Nuremberg Trials Memorial • Dachau Concentration Camp & Memorial Site • Aviation Museum Flugwerft Schleissheim • Hitler's Eagles Nest in Berchtesgaden

*included visits subject to change based on availability

For more information and to enroll online, scan the QR code or visit www.cha-tours.com/garypowers/2027



GARYPOWERS.COM

Author | Historian | Speaker

SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA COLD WAR HISTORICAL SOCIETY



*Preserving history through the memories
of those who created it.*



a 501(c)(3) organization

www.ColdWarHistory.org
mail@ColdWarHistory.org

Find us on Facebook and YouTube!
View our Veterans Wall of Honor Project:
www.SEPAVeterans.com

Founded in 2010, The Southeastern Pennsylvania Cold War Historical Society is an organization dedicated to preserving the contributions that current/former residents of southeastern Pennsylvania (and nearby regions) made toward protecting the United States during the Cold War. Our initial work focused on the collection of oral histories.

We are also the historian for the Johnsville Centrifuge, which was operated for nearly 50 years (1950 to 1996) by the Navy at the Aviation Medical Acceleration Laboratory at the former Naval Air Development Center (later Naval Air Warfare Center) in Warminster, Pennsylvania. During its operational lifespan, the centrifuge was the world's largest and most powerful research tool for studying the mysterious acceleration, or "G" forces, encountered by pilots or astronauts during flight. Much of our modern understanding of these G forces was elucidated by researchers at this facility. X-15 pilots and astronauts from Projects Mercury, Gemini and Apollo trained at the facility in preparation for their spaceflights.

We also maintain a display room dedicated to history of the Naval Air Development/Warfare Center, located in the building where the Johnsville Centrifuge is housed.

More recently, we have started to celebrate the aerospace heritage of the greater Philadelphia Region. Check out our Facebook page for monthly posts celebrating that history!

In



June 2026, we debuted the **Philly Aerospace Trail** ([Philly Aerospace Trail](#)) to coincide with America250 celebrations. The site includes a map of the greater Philadelphia region highlighting over a hundred current and historical aerospace sites and people, along with descriptions of their contributions.



Since 2012, we have hosted an ongoing educational outreach lecture/webinar program entitled **"History in Our Backyard"**. Live lectures are held at the Fuge, an events facility where the Johnsville Centrifuge is located in Warminster, Pennsylvania.

In 2020, we had the opportunity to expand our programming to a monthly offering. Below is our 2026 lecture programming; our 2027 programming will be released soon.



The Southeastern Pennsylvania Cold War Historical Society
proudly announces its
2026 "History in Our Backyard" Webinar/Live Lecture Series



January 8 (Live)	Gary Campbell	A History of the A-10 Warthog
February 12	Buz Carpenter	The Ageless SR-71 Blackbird
March 12	David Stumpf	Sounding Rockets and Re-Entry Vehicles
April 9 (Live)	Roger Mola	Operation Skyshield: Grounding the National Airspace System
May 14	Mark Polmar	Cold War Radio
June 11 (Live)	Dan Basta	Among Honest Communists: Yugoslavia and Slovenia 1973-1975
July 9 (Live)	John Coyne	A Cold War Sailor: From Vietnam to the War on Terrorism
August 13	Matt Polner	B.F. Goodrich Pressure Suits and Space Suits
September 10 (Live)	Arthur Liese	The Fleetwings Seabird
October 8	Don Stanton	Cold War Atlantic and Pacific Airborne Radar and ASW Patrols
November 12 (Live)		SPECIAL EVENT! 16 th Annual Veterans Tribute
November 19 (Live)	Bryan Leese	At Sea Against the Soviet Fleet: The Evolution of U.S. Navy Operational Intelligence in the Cold War
December 10	John Lemza	The UFO Experience During the Cold War

Events (webinar/live lecture) begin promptly at 7:30pm EDT/EST
Live events held at The Fuge/780 Falcon Circle/Warminster, PA 18974 (most livestreamed)
Zoom link shared via email distribution list only on the day of the program
Inquiries/add to email list: mail@ColdWarHistory.org

If you would like to join us for the live programs, the address for the Fuge is: 780 Falcon Circle, Warminster, PA 18974. To participate in our webinars, please email us at mail@ColdWarHistory.org to be placed on our email distribution list to receive a Zoom link on the day of the webinar program. We archive our programming on our YouTube Channel: [Southeastern Pennsylvania Cold War Historical Society - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCv8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8)

What else have we been up to?

The President of our organization, Eleanor O'Rangers, was interviewed on Pennsylvania's PBS Channel 39 to discuss our organization, Philadelphia regional aerospace heritage, and our long-term goal to establish a **Philadelphia Aerospace Hall of Fame**.

Eleanor was also invited to become a Trustee with the **Wings of Freedom Aviation Museum**, located in Horsham, Pennsylvania ([Wings of Freedom Aviation Museum in Horsham, PA](https://www.wingsoffreedommuseum.org/)). Their mission is dedicated to preserving and celebrating the rich aviation heritage of the Delaware Valley Region, an effort complementing our own organization's celebration of aerospace heritage in the Philadelphia region.

Eleanor also had the honor of advising and being interviewed by filmmaker, Jason Sherman, for a new documentary entitled, **Before the Moon** ([Before The Moon – Documentary Film](https://www.beforethemoonfilm.com/)).

Before The Moon is a feature-length, award-winning documentary that uncovers the hidden story of how

America reached the stars — beginning not in Houston or Cape Canaveral, but in a quiet research base in Warminster, Pennsylvania. Long before rockets roared skyward, Bucks County's inventors, engineers, and test pilots were laying the technological groundwork for the Space Age.

A special premier of the documentary was hosted by The Fuge on July 18, 2026 in Warminster, PA. Over 800 tickets were sold for the event!



DVDs and Blu-Rays event are now available: [beforethemoonfilm.com/shop.html](https://www.beforethemoonfilm.com/shop.html)

We are excited because the documentary features the former Naval Air Development Center (NADC), a Cold War research hub where flight systems, guidance technologies, life-support innovations, and the world's largest and most powerful human centrifuge—the Johnsville Centrifuge-- reshaped our understanding of human endurance. Here, future astronauts like Neil Armstrong, John Glenn, and Buzz Aldrin pushed their bodies to the limit while NADC's laboratories pioneered many of the tools and techniques that made crewed spaceflight possible.

We may be reached at mail@ColdWarHistory.org, or via our Facebook page: [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ColdWarHistory.org).

BOOK REVIEWS BY MANSKE



The Cold War Museum's® book reviews are written by Brigadier General Chad Manske, USAF (Ret.), 30th Commandant of the National War College at Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C.

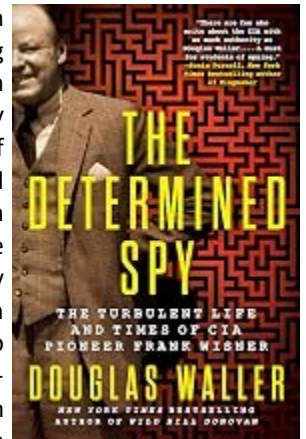
The Determined Spy: The Turbulent Life and Times of CIA Pioneer Frank Wisner

Douglas C. Waller

Dutton, 656 pages, 2025

Douglas C. Waller's "The Determined Spy" is a richly textured biography that turns Frank Wisner from a shadowy name in Cold War footnotes into a fully realized, deeply unsettling protagonist in the dawn of American covert power. Waller uses Wisner's life to trace how the United States stumbled, improvised, and often overreached its way into

covert action culture. The research is exhaustive without feeling suffocating; there is enough operational detail to satisfy specialists, yet the human drama of Wisner's breakdown and eventual suicide gives the story momentum and emotional weight. For anyone interested in how the "Mighty Wurlitzer" of American covert action was built—and the personal cost to the man who sat at its console—"The Determined Spy" is both an engrossing narrative and an indispensable case study in the perils of waging secret war.

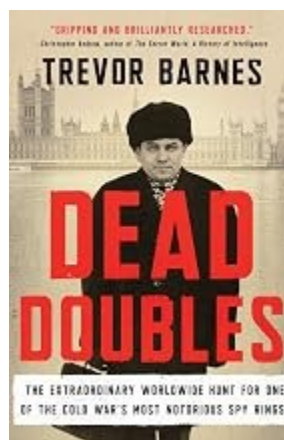


a world of political warfare that still shapes foreign policy today. The book opens with Wisner's formative years in the OSS, where assignments in Cairo, Istanbul, Bucharest, and Berlin taught him that sabotage, guerrilla support, and black propaganda could sometimes achieve what armies and diplomats could not. Waller deftly shows how these early operations hardened Wisner's fierce anti-communism and prepared him to build, almost from scratch, the CIA's clandestine service after 1947. The narrative really hits its stride in the chapters on Iran and Guatemala, where Wisner orchestrates coups that read like case studies in regime change—technically successful, strategically fateful, and morally ambiguous. What makes the book especially compelling is Waller's parallel story line: Wisner's battle with bipolar disorder, at a time when neither the medical profession nor the national security bureaucracy understood what that diagnosis meant. His manic bursts of creativity and ruthless drive fueled daring operations; his depressive crashes, hospitalizations, and electroshock treatments reverberated through his family and the small Georgetown circle that ran early Cold War Washington. Waller treats this not as tabloid material but as a central part of the history, asking what it means when a man so fragile psychologically holds such far-reaching authority over secret wars. Stylistically, Waller writes clear, accessible prose, occasionally slipping into breezy phrasing but generally maintaining a serious, analytic tone that lets readers draw their own verdict on Wisner and the CIA's

Dead Doubles: The Extraordinary Worldwide Hunt for One of the Cold War's Most Notorious Spy Rings

Trevor Barnes

Harper, 352 pages, 2020



Trevor Barnes' "Dead Doubles" is what happens when a meticulously footnoted case study steals a trench coat, slips into a back alley, and decides to live as a spy thriller. The Portland Spy Ring has been picked over before, but Barnes revives it with a novelist's timing and an archivist's obsession, turning declassified files into narrative nitroglycerine. The hook is irresistible: an apparently humdrum British clerk and his girlfriend quietly bleeding secrets from a Royal Navy submarine research center, while an elderly bookselling couple in suburban Ruislip turn out to be deep-cover American KGB illegals hiding under identities stolen from the dead—the "dead

VISIT THE MUSEUM'S LECTURE SCHEDULE: CWM_LECTURE SERIES

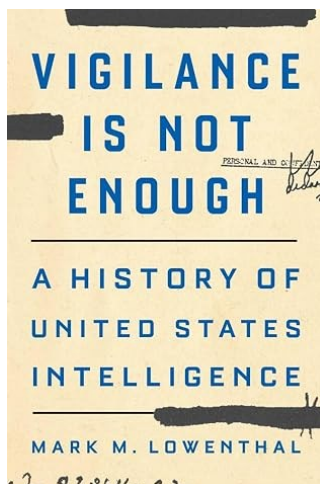
doubles” of the title. Around them orbits the enigmatic “businessman” Gordon Lonsdale, really Konon Molody, Soviet illegals maestro and Cold War shape-shifter, whose stolen life and cool self-possession would make even a le Carré hero look underdressed. Barnes’ great trick is pacing. He lets the investigation unfurl as MI5 actually experienced it: a cryptic CIA tip, the slow tightening of surveillance, the dawning realization that the enemy is not in some smoky Berlin bar but in the British commuter belt, watering the roses and chatting over the fence. The result is that the first arrests in 1961 land with the thump of a plot twist rather than a foregone conclusion. Yet this isn’t just atmospheric and tradecraft porn. Barnes uses newly released MI5 records and international archives to reconstruct how the KGB’s illegals program actually worked, from identity theft and document fabrication to the art of never, ever crossing paths with the corpse whose name you wear. He sketches the backstories of Molody and the Krogers/Cohens with enough texture to remind you these are not chess pieces but human beings, even as he shows how disinformation and self-serving memoirs have warped the public record for decades. If there is a quibble, it is that some readers may wish for even deeper psychological excavation of the principals. But as an electrifying fusion of case-file history and narrative drive, “Dead Doubles” more than earns its place on the modern espionage shelf. It proves—again—that in the Cold War, reality did not imitate spy fiction; it routinely outdid it.

Vigilance Is Not Enough: A History of United States Intelligence

Mark M. Lowenthal

Yale University Press, 832 pages, 2025

Mark M. Lowenthal’s “Vigilance Is Not Enough: A History of United States Intelligence” is an authoritative, engrossing survey of American intelligence that manages to be both sweeping in scope and unusually intimate in insight. It is the rare work that can serve simultaneously as a definitive reference, a primer for students and practitioners, and a bracing reflection on the dilemmas of intelligence in a liberal democracy. Lowenthal traces the evolution of U.S. intelligence from the improvised espionage of the Revolutionary era to the extraordinarily complex, technologically saturated system that undergirds



American power today. The narrative is not a mere procession of episodes; it is a carefully argued explanation of how a republic that once lacked any formal intelligence service became the world’s predominant intelligence power—and what costs and tradeoffs that ascent entailed. The result is a coherent, compelling story that makes structural change feel as vivid as any operational vignette. What distinguishes this book is Lowenthal’s dual vantage point as both historian and consummate insider. His decades in senior roles at CIA, the State Department’s INR, and on Capitol Hill inform a nuanced treatment of topics that are too often caricatured: the tug-of-war between secrecy and accountability, the persistent friction between security and civil liberties, and the stubborn reality that intelligence is a service function whose value ultimately depends on the proclivities of political leaders. That sensibility gives the book a rare honesty about the limits of intelligence, even as it underscores its indispensability to modern statecraft. Lowenthal writes with clarity, economy, and a steady hand, moving confidently from early American spycraft to the telegraph, codebreaking, and the transformative impact of modern signals and technical collection. He consistently links technological and bureaucratic developments to their strategic and political consequences, making the book as useful for policymakers and operators as it is for scholars and students. For anyone seeking a single volume that explains not just what U.S. intelligence has done, but why it looks and behaves the way it does, “Vigilance Is Not Enough” is indispensable—and likely to stand as the standard history of American intelligence for years to come.



GIVING TUESDAY

DECEMBER 1, 2026, EARLY GIVING

NOVEMBER 17, 2026

[Cold War Museum | GivingTuesday](#)

VISIT THE MUSEUM’S LECTURE SCHEDULE: CWM_LECTURE SERIES

BOOK REVIEWS BY WILSON



Colonel Charles P "Chuck" Wilson, USAF Ret., Past-Chairman of the Board - The Cold War Museum®; KC-135Q Pilot & Flight Commander; Cold War U-2 Pilot, U-2 Instructor & 2-time U-2 Squadron Commander; also, AF Group and C2 Center (became 505 C2 Wing) Commander; Pentagon Bureaucrat; State Department Diplomat; later Corporate Business Development executive; NASM DOCENT.

Flashes in the Dark Volume 2: USAF Nuclear Espionage in Argentina, 1960-1966

Gustavo Maron

Helion & Company Limited, 76 pages, 2026

Gustavo Maron was born in Argentina and graduated from the Law School of the National University of Cuyo and is a professor of Aeronautical Law at four Argentine Universities. In his second book of the series, "Flashes in the Dark Volume 2: USAF Nuclear Espionage in

Argentina, 1960-1966" presents a critical examination of a largely overlooked facet of Cold War history. The work focuses particularly on the United States Air Force's covert operations in Argentina during a time rife with geopolitical tension and concerns surrounding nuclear proliferation. Through a meticulous analysis, the author aims to illuminate the complex web of espionage activities that unfolded in the region, shedding light on the United States' efforts to monitor and influence nuclear developments in Argentina while navigating the intricacies of international relations.

The author organizes the book chronologically, detailing key events from 1960 to 1966 with precision and clarity. The narrative is enriched by the inclusion of primary sources, such as declassified documents, archival materials, and interviews with former officials, which serve to enhance the historical timeline with firsthand accounts. Structurally, the book is divided into sections that explore various dimensions of espionage activities, including technological advancements, political ramifications, and the roles of different governmental agencies involved in these covert operations.

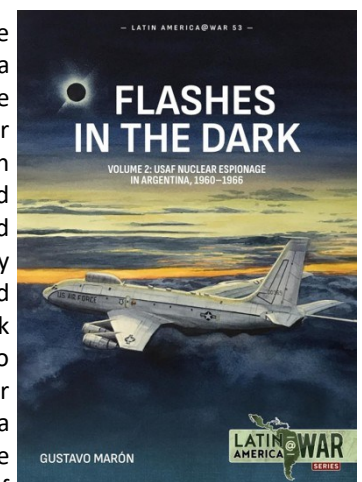
One of the book's most notable strengths is its depth of research. The author showcases a wealth of information that is both thorough and enlightening, making significant use of primary sources to fortify the narrative's authenticity and credibility. By effectively contextualizing the events within the larger dynamics of the Cold War, the author helps readers understand the motivations driving U.S. actions in Argentina. This contextual framework adds layers of complexity to the narrative and illustrates the often-fraught interplay between national security and diplomatic relations.

Furthermore, the author's engaging writing style makes the text accessible, breaking down complex historical and technical topics into understandable segments for a general audience while still catering to specialists in the field. This combination of depth and accessibility makes the book an intriguing read for anyone with an interest in military history, nuclear politics, and international relations.

However, "Flashes in the Dark Volume 2" does have its weaknesses. The specificity of the book's focus may limit its appeal to a broader audience, particularly for readers with little prior knowledge of Cold War history or nuclear policy, who might struggle with certain sections. Additionally, the author occasionally delves deeply into technical details regarding nuclear espionage, which could distract from the narrative flow and potentially overwhelm those readers who are more interested in the political and human aspects of the story.

Moreover, the book primarily presents the U.S. perspective on these events, which raises the concern of overlooking alternative narratives from other involved parties. A more balanced view could have enriched the discussion about international relations during this significant period, providing readers with a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities at play.

In conclusion, "Flashes in the Dark Volume 2" stands as a significant contribution to the understanding of U.S. nuclear espionage efforts in Latin America. It offers a detailed examination of a pivotal period in Cold War history, driven by thorough research and engaging prose. While the book may cater more directly to specialists in military history or political science, it remains a compelling read for anyone intrigued by the intersections of espionage, nuclear politics, and international relations. Ultimately, it provides significant insights into a complex topic that continues to resonate in contemporary discussions.



Flashes in the Dark Volume 3: USAF Nuclear Espionage in Argentina, 1967-1974

Gustavo Maron

Helion & Company Limited, 66 pages, July 2026

In his third book of the series, "Volume 3: USAF Nuclear Espionage in Argentina, 1967-1974" Maron continues the examination of United States Cold War activities in Argentina that began in earlier volumes. This installment delves into the pivotal years following the events outlined in its predecessors, focusing on the evolution of the United States Air Force's intelligence efforts to track nuclear developments within Argentina. By exploring this nuanced period, the book highlights the shifting political landscape and the increasing complexities of international relations that characterized this era.

Structured chronologically, this volume methodically covers significant events, policies, and operational strategies from 1967 to 1974. The author draws upon a rich array of primary sources, including declassified documents, government reports, and interviews with key figures who were instrumental in shaping U.S. intelligence operations during this time. Each chapter addresses pivotal moments in U.S.-Argentina relations, revealing how espionage activities were adapted in response to Argentina's domestic upheavals and its regional contexts.

One of the foremost strengths of this volume is its research. The author demonstrates commendable scholarly rigor, utilizing a diverse range of primary sources that provide a well-rounded view of the espionage activities of the era. This depth of research not only adds weight to the narrative but also serves to support the book's claims regarding the complexities of U.S. operations in Argentina. The author skillfully situates these events within the larger framework of the Cold War, exploring how U.S. policy decisions were influenced by both regional dynamics and global tensions. This careful contextualization allows readers to gain a deeper understanding of the motivations behind U.S. actions and how they were informed by external pressures.

Moreover, the author employs a clear narrative style that is both straightforward and engaging, making complex issues more accessible for readers. The balance between detailed analysis and an engaging narrative helps sustain interest throughout the volume, appealing to readers who may not be specialists in military history or Cold War studies.

However, the book does present certain weaknesses that should be noted. As with previous volumes in the series, the subject matter may primarily attract scholars, historians, or those with a vested interest in military history. General readers might find it less engaging due to the specialized nature of its content. Additionally, while focusing on U.S. activities, the book may underrepresent perspectives from Argentine officials or citizens. Incorporating more diverse viewpoints could significantly enrich the analysis and provide a more nuanced understanding of the implications of U.S. espionage.

Another challenge presented by this volume is the potential repetition of themes. As part of a multi-volume series, some discussions regarding espionage methodologies and political contexts may feel redundant for readers who have engaged with earlier volumes. This repetition could lead to a sense of familiarity without offering significant new insights.

In conclusion, "Volume 3: USAF Nuclear Espionage in Argentina, 1967-1974" serves as a fine addition to the historical narrative of U.S. military intelligence operations during the Cold War. Building upon the foundations established in previous volumes, it provides substantial insights into the complexities of U.S.-Argentina relations during a turbulent period. While it may cater primarily to a specialized audience, the research and compelling narrative style make this book a valuable resource for anyone interested in the intricacies of espionage, national security, and international relations during a significant chapter in history. Ultimately, it contributes meaningfully to our understanding of the Cold War era and the enduring implications of nuclear policies in Latin America.



Answer to Cold War Challenge from page 18

The Cold War Challenge: Surveillance & Defense Crossword



SAN FRANCISCO BOOK FESTIVAL



Cold War California

Francis Gary Powers, Jr., Chris Sturdevant and Franky Ortega

The History Press, 208 pages, 2026

Cold War California, written by Francis Gary Powers, Jr., Chris Sturdevant, and Franky Ortega, received two book festival awards in California in 2026. Published in May of this year, the book garnered Best Overall in the San Francisco Book Festival, as well as General Nonfiction winner in the Los Angeles Book Festival. The festivals were sponsored by JM Northern Media, and submitted by the History Press for consideration, publisher of *Cold War California*. Titles published in 2025 and 2026 were considered. Here is the link for the San Francisco Book Festival winning entries - SanFranciscoBookFestival.com.

The awards event took place in the Academy Room of the Roosevelt Hotel in Hollywood, CA on August 22, 2026. Chris Sturdevant, lead writer, traveled to the event from Wisconsin. Franky Ortega of Los Angeles, who served as local researcher in the state, also attended the ceremony. Gary Powers was unable to attend because of prior commitments. The Roosevelt Hotel hosted the first ever Oscars ceremony in 1929.

Synopsis: The focal point of western defense against Soviet aggression during the Cold War, California proved instrumental in preventing a Third World War during the twentieth century. The state's major military presence on land, air, and sea diverged with a peaceful counterpart that created the United Nations in San Francisco in 1946. Muroc Field, the future Edward Air Force Base, was the site of Chuck Yeager's feat breaking the sound barrier in 1947, and Lockheed Skunkworks produced the top-secret high-tech U2 Dragon Lady and SR-71 in Southern California. Cold War presidents, stalwarts Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan, both hailed from the Golden State. Billionaire Howard Hughes, who

made his mark in aviation and the movies, provided cover for the Glomar Explorer mission to recover a sunken Soviet submarine in the Pacific. Hollywood was a two-sided coin, supporting both pro-American movie messaging and becoming a flash point for government investigations into Communist sympathies.

Cold War California can be found online at www.arcadiapublishing.com, as well as other retailers.



Authors Chris Sturdevant and Franky Ortega



PACT ACT: VIETNAM ERA VETERANS COLD WAR ERA VETERANS



The **PACT Act**, signed into law August 10, 2022, expands health care and benefits for Vietnam era Veterans.



PACT Act Health Care Eligibility

Veterans who served in these countries during specific time periods are eligible to enroll in VA health care **effective August 10, 2022.**

Republic of Vietnam

January 9, 1962 - May 7, 1975

Guam or American Samoa

(or in their territorial waters)
January 9, 1962 - July 31, 1980

Cambodia

at Mimot or Krek,
Kampong Cham Province
April 16, 1969 - April 30, 1969

Thailand

Any U.S. or Royal Thai base
January 9, 1962 - June 30, 1976

Laos

December 1, 1965 -
September 30, 1969

Johnston Atoll

(or on a ship that called there)
January 1, 1972 - September 30, 1977



The law **expands eligibility for health care and benefits** for Veterans who participated in **certain nuclear response or cleanup activities.**

Enewetak Atoll

January 1, 1977 -
December 31, 1980

Palomares, Spain

January 17, 1966 -
March 31, 1967

Thule, Greenland

January 21, 1968 -
September 25, 1968



Toxic Exposure Screenings

As a general matter, there are several types of possible exposures or hazards Veterans may have experienced during their military service, including:

- Air Pollutants
- Chemicals
- Radiation
- Warfare Agents
- Occupational Hazards

ON NOVEMBER 8, 2022: VA will begin incorporating toxic exposure screenings. Every Veteran enrolled for VA health care will receive an initial toxic exposure screening and a follow-up screening at least every five years. Eligible Veterans not enrolled for VA health care who have not enrolled will have an opportunity to enroll and receive the screening.



PACT Act Benefits

The PACT Act adds two new Agent Orange presumptive conditions:

- Monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS)
- High blood pressure (hypertension)

Family members or dependents of a deceased Veteran may qualify for various VA benefits due to the additional disabilities defined in the PACT Act if they meet eligibility requirements. More information for survivors is available online at [VA.gov/PACT](https://va.gov/PACT).

4 EASY WAYS TO APPLY FOR VA HEALTH CARE



Apply online at
[VA.gov/health-care/apply/
application/introduction](https://va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction)



Mail a completed, signed
Application for Health Benefits
[VA Form 10-10EZ](https://va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction)



Call the toll-free hotline
877-222-8387 Mon – Fri,
8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. ET



Bring a completed, signed [VA
Form 10-10EZ](https://va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction) to the nearest VA
Medical Center or clinic.

4 EASY WAYS TO GET STARTED WITH CLAIMS



Learn more at
[VA.gov/disability/
how-to-file-claim/](https://va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/)



Call the Benefits hotline
(for specific questions)
at 1-800-827-1000



Visit a VBA Regional Office
[VA.gov/benefits/
offices.asp](https://va.gov/benefits/offices.asp)



Work with an accredited VSO
[VA.gov/ogc/apps/
accreditation/index.asp](https://va.gov/ogc/apps/accreditation/index.asp)

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Learn more and sign up at [VA.gov/PACT](https://va.gov/PACT)
Download the [VA Health and Benefits App](https://va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction)
Call us at 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411)
Find a VA at [VA.gov/find-locations/](https://va.gov/find-locations/)

AN ANALYTICAL DEBRIEF ON COINCIDENCE



By Greg O'Hara

Greg O'Hara joined the United States Marine Corps January 20, 1970, at the tender age of 17. After Camp LeJeune for training as an engineering equipment operator. I spent the rest of the year at 2nd Amtrak battalion doing minor road work and guard duty. I left the Marine Corps in 1976. He performed security work until he found my niche and his job as a DOD police officer at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base Dayton Ohio. He has 20 years of experience as a computer systems expert that led him to the secret service for a hacker case in 1991 in Dayton, Ohio. He worked for Hewlett-Packard who is a support aspect to Walmart's ends-in-store computer systems called smart. Within two weeks he found the problem and created a troubleshooting manual which is now in the store setup guide and reduced the 300 calls a day to field support down to almost zero for the same problem. After 9/11 he wanted to return to federal service at US Treasury as a police officer at their facility in West Fort Worth and what I like to become a part of it I was finally on my way to Federal Law Enforcement Training Center. After graduating a class president, he worked for the next 12 years to guard one of the most precious places in the United States with regards to financial calamity should it fall into the hands of terrorists - western currency facility in Fort Worth, Texas.

To those of us who have spent our careers in and around the intelligence community, patterns are our currency. We spend decades training our minds to separate baseline background noise from true anomalies. We look for indicators, timelines, and convergences. But every so often, a sequence of events crosses our desks—or our lives—that defies standard statistical probability. We are left with a phenomenon that is notoriously difficult to quantify: pure, unadulterated eeriness.

My baseline was established early. I was born at the Edwards Air Force Base hospital in December 1952. Growing up in Dayton, Ohio, the structural silhouettes of B-52 Stratofortresses split the sky above me so regularly that aviation became part of my sensory background. Aviation wasn't a novelty; it was an environment. Yet, looking back from the vantage point of a long career spanning the U.S. Marine Corps, the Department of Defense, and the broader

intelligence apparatus, a bizarre thread of aviation-related synchronicities has woven its way through my life. It is a sequence of intersections so specific that, if I saw it in a raw intelligence report, I would flag it as a highly coordinated operation.

The first true operational anomaly occurred in the summer of 1971. I was a seventeen-year-old Marine, freshly enlisted and recently deployed to Camp Hansen in Okinawa. One afternoon, a tremendous, localized sonic roar echoed from the south—a sound that shattered the standard acoustic profile of any aircraft I had ever heard. Looking up, I watched a massive, black, predatory silhouette streak into the cloud layer and vanish.

"What was that?" a fellow Marine asked.

"I don't know," I replied, my Dayton upbringing momentarily failing me. "But I've never seen anything like it." He laughed. "That's the Habu."

It was, of course, the Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird. For a kid from Ohio, the encounter was striking, but in our line of work, we accept single data points as mere happenstance. The anomaly deepens when the data points begin to cluster.

A few months later, while visiting the Kadena Air Base stables, a young woman on horseback struck up a casual conversation and invited me to her family's home for dinner. After a stiff drink and a hearty handshake from her father, a career Air Force veteran, I asked what he did on base.

His response? He was the supervisor in charge of special structural maintenance for the SR-71—the very same "Habu" I had watched vanish into the clouds just weeks prior. Because of the extreme operational variables and radiation exposure associated with the platform, it was his singular focus. For the remainder of my tour, our dinners became a masterclass in the technical realities of the world's most advanced reconnaissance asset.

If the universe were operating on a standard distribution curve, my narrative intersection with the Blackbird should have ended in the skies of Okinawa. Instead, the pattern went dormant, only to re-emerge decades later with absolute precision.

Fast forward to March 27, 1990. I was long out of the Marines, having transitioned through roles as a DOD Police Officer at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base (WPAFB) and into the private tech sector. On that particular day, the Air Force was scheduled to fly an SR-71 into WPAFB for its official retirement into the Air Force Museum. Armed with NYIP press credentials and an old pewter SR-71 belt buckle my mother had given me years before, I arrived at the flight line.

Thanks to an old connection with the head of the Security Police, Captain Tim Blue, I found myself bypassed through the standard press pens and positioned directly adjacent to the VIP dedication podium. When the massive black aircraft taxied to a halt, ending its final operational flight, I was close enough to look the crew in the eye. I stepped forward, held out the vintage pewter buckle, and walked away with the final, fresh autographs of the pilot and Reconnaissance Systems Officer (RSO) etched into the metal.

A single lifetime intersecting with the apex of cold-war stealth reconnaissance at its birth, its operational peak, and its absolute final resting place feels less like a series of random chance events and more like a deliberate tracking loop.

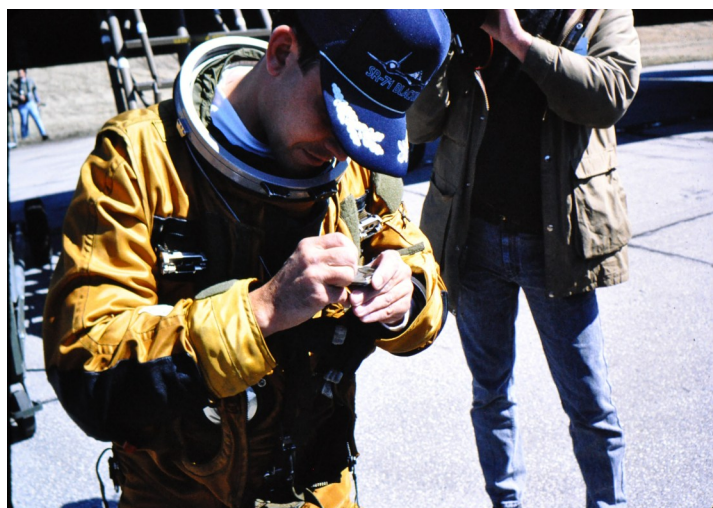
And yet, the aviation anomalies refused to close their loop. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, my career as a contractor consistently dropped me directly into the geographic epicenters of the next generations of low-observable technology. When the F-117A Nighthawk—the famous "Wobbly Goblin"—was delivered to the WPAFB Museum, I was on the tarmac to chronicle its arrival, later receiving a hand-signed photograph from the pilot and ground crew. When I relocated to Marietta, Georgia, in the late '90s, my backyard turned into the staging ground for the next leap in air dominance; my late wife, Bobbe, and I stood off Route 41 and watched the maiden flight of the F-22 Raptor climb out from Dobbins Air Reserve Base. Years later, a casual invitation brought me into the officers' club at NAS Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth to witness the unveiling of the Joint Strike Fighter program that would become the F-35.

As intelligence professionals, we are trained to ask: Cui bono? Who benefits? What is the driving force behind the trend line? When we look at global events, we search for the hidden hand of state actors or non-state networks. But when we look at the strange architecture of our own lives, we are forced to confront a baseline reality that cannot be mapped on a traditional threat matrix.

I don't claim to have an analytical explanation for why my life has been continuously shadowed by advanced American airpower. Perhaps some of us are simply calibrated to a

certain frequency, moving along pre-destined vectors that keep crossing the same high-altitude paths. It is an eerie reality, certainly, but to an old Marine and an analytical mind, it is also deeply comforting. It reminds us that even in a world of chaotic signal, the universe still keeps its own impeccable order.

Semper Fidelis.



*SRO Signing belt buckle
photo courtesy of author*



*Signed belt buckle
photo courtesy of author*

MEET THE COLD WAR NETWORK



An Organization Connecting Cold War Heritage Sites

For Americans, the Cold War can summon an instantly recognizable set of images: missile silos on the Great Plains, NORAD, duck-and-cover drills, the Berlin Airlift, U-2 spy planes and the long nuclear standoff with the Soviet Union. However, across the Atlantic lies another vast Cold War landscape that is greatly connected with the American story.

Scattered across the United Kingdom are former air bases, nuclear bunkers, radar stations, command centers, intelligence sites and museums preserving the heritage and history of the confrontation shaped the second half of the twentieth century. Many have direct connections to the United States and the thousands of American servicemen and women who served in Britain during the Cold War.

Helping connect and preserve these sites is the Cold War Network, a UK-based organization facilitates collaboration and knowledge exchange among individuals and organizations with an interest in the Cold War era. This includes those who own, manage or curate a Cold War site or collection or are involved in related research. The Network grew from a research project hosted at Leeds Beckett University and today has more than 750 members. It became a Community Interest Company in 2025. Its mission is not simply to commemorate the past, but to encourage collaboration, research and better public understanding of Cold War sites and collections.

Membership is currently free and anyone around the globe interested in Cold War sites, heritage and memory is welcome to join. Please visit our website: <https://www.coldwarnetwork.co.uk/> to become a member. With membership comes a variety of activities including conferences, webinars and access to National Cold War Heritage Week. In particular, National Cold War Heritage Week allows members to partner with Cold War Network to showcase their collections and stories to draw in new audiences. In 2026, over 26 sites participated and we are currently inviting sites to participate in the 2027 week in May.

Other upcoming events include the 2027 Cold War Network Conference at the Tank Museum on 9 February 2027 at the Tank Museum in Dorset, England. The Cold War Network also runs monthly webinars attended by interested members from around the world. In fact, this past month, we welcomed Gary Powers Jr to discuss his father, Bridge of Spies and separate fact from fiction. Please do join us for future webinars. A list of our upcoming events can be found on our website.

If you also share a passion for Cold War heritage and history, please reach out! Sharing the stories of this history helps preserve its memory for the future and ensures continued relevance for the next generation.

IN MEMORIAM



Here are the stories of a few of the many Cold Warriors who have passed on recently. Some you may have heard of, some not. All are worthy of our remembrance and respect, most because of what they did to protect the rest of us during the Cold War. In many cases they were ordinary people who were called upon to do extraordinary things, and who were then happy to step back from any spotlight, knowing that they'd done their duty. We also include other notable Cold War figures, including some from the East and some who are historically important because of their treachery.

ACREE, II, Col George W.

Colonel George W Acree, II "ACE, 93, a longtime resident of Linstead in Severna Park, Maryland, passed away peacefully on June 30, 2026, at his home.



Born on February 9, 1933, in Brooklyn, Maryland, George was the eldest of three children of Samuel Acree and Tresse Aiken. From an early age, he knew he wanted to fly. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering from the U. of Md, where he met the love of his life, Marjorie McCormick, affectionately known as "Marge in Charge." He later earned a Master's degree in Electrical Engineering from Auburn University and completed advanced studies at the U.S. Air War College, the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, and F-100 advanced fighter training.

George and Marge were married on June 15, 1957, and George joined the U.S. Air Force in January 1958. During a distinguished 27-year career that took the family through 37 moves around the world, they raised three children: Ginny, Louise, and Donna.

As a Wild Weasel (WW) fighter pilot, Colonel Acree flew the F-100, F-4, F-105, and F-15 Eagle, completing 243 combat missions in Southeast Asia. Over his career, he logged more than 5,500 military flight hours, served as a Fighter Weapons School instructor, commanded the famed Triple Nickel (555th Tactical Fighter Squadron), and later held key leadership positions including Tactical Division Chief at the Pentagon, Director of Tactical Fighter Operations in Bitburg, Germany, and Commander of Ramstein Air Base. Following his retirement from the Air Force in 1985, George continued his career with Westinghouse and ConQuest Software before retiring fully in 2000.

George (and Marge) remained deeply involved with the Wild Weasel community throughout retirement. He was named WW of the Year in 2013, served as Commander-in-Chief Emeritus of the Society of WW's, helped document the history of the F-105G, and served two years as Chief of the River Rats. Together, George and

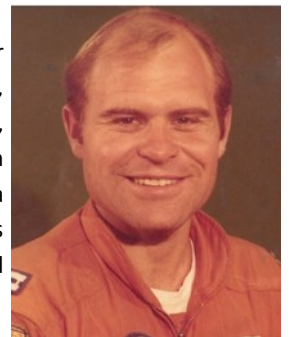
Marge also hosted 37 legendary Linstead community Bull and Oyster Roasts, rain or shine.

Among his many military honors were three Distinguished Flying Crosses, the Legion of Merit, and the Defense Superior Service Medal.

George is survived by his daughters, Virginia Acree and Donna A. Ellis; son-in-law Steve Sherk; grandchildren Alex and Brittany Acree, Taylor and Gunner Koff, Virginia Ellis and great-granddaughter Anna Louise Acree. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife, his daughter, Tresse Louise Acree; his parents; his sister and their spouses.

BALZLI, Lt Col Peter

Apr 20, 1948 — Sep 20, 2026. Peter John Balzli, 78, of Adams, Tennessee, passed away unexpectedly on Sunday, September 20, 2026. He was born on April 20, 1948, to Herman and Clara Balzli and grew up in California. His father was a pastry chef, and he carried a love of good food with him all his life.



Peter proudly dedicated 20 years of his life serving his country in the United States Air Force. He began his military flying career as a fighter pilot before going on to fly the U-2 spy plane, which took remarkable skill to fly at the edge of space. He even survived ejecting from a fighter plane, but the experience never shook his bravery or his love of flying. He retired as a Lieutenant Colonel and went on to do what he loved, flying as an airline pilot.

Flying was one of Peter's greatest passions. It brought Pete tremendous pride to see his son, Brian, follow in his footsteps and become an airline pilot. He also loved that his daughter, Bridjette, shared his passion for solar energy, and they opened a solar business.

Peter was a builder at heart who could fix just about anything, and he was remarkably talented at so many things. So much of what he had he built with his own hands, from his chicken coop to

a lookout tower and a huge metal building. He enjoyed tending to his garden and caring for his chickens, who were always happy to see him coming. He never went long without a project, and his family learned that “taking it easy” simply wasn’t in his vocabulary. He worked hard throughout his life to provide for his family.

Above all, Peter treasured his family. A handsome young pilot, he swept Lynda off her feet, taking her flying on one of their very first dates, and the two built a life together. His children and grandchildren meant the world to him, and he made sure they always knew how much he loved them. He never let anyone leave without one of his big hugs. To his grandchildren, he was simply “Peka,” a name his first grandchild, Jordan, gave him years ago, and it stuck for good.

Peter is survived by his wife, Lynda Balzli; his children, Brian Balzli (Stella), Bridjette Lambert (Ashley), and Melissa Giesecking; his grandchildren, Michael, Marissa, Ella, Zander, Hayle, Orion, Jordan, Dylan, Mariah, and Nora; and his brothers, Ralph Balzli and Roland Balzli. He was preceded in death by his parents, Herman and Clara Balzli.

Though Peter has taken his final flight, his love, his laughter, his hugs, and everything he built will remain with us always. His legacy will live on in the family he loved, the lives he touched, and the many things he left behind for others to carry forward. His youngest granddaughter, Nora, was talking about how much she would miss her Peka. Then she said, “Mommy, don’t worry—God will take care of him now.”

CAMPBELL, John W.

John W. Campbell, 89, of Winchester, died September 8, 2026, at Winchester Health & Rehab. He is survived by his wife, Christiana Campbell.



John and I go back to May 1972, when I reported for duty to Detachment L, US Army Security Agency Border Site Command, US Army Security Agency Field Station Augsburg at Gross Gusborn in the Luchow-Dannenberg Landkreis, Germany. That was that triangular-shaped land mass sometimes referred to as the Dannenberg Salient. It jutted way into East Germany and was bordered on the north by the Elbe River and was way up north in the British Sector, Aircraft flying to and from West Berlin in the northern flight corridor passed overhead. We were extremely close to Ludwigslust, East Germany where MAJ Nicholson and his NCO drove their US Military Liaison Mission vehicle to a Soviet tankodrom to take photos inside the main gun of the then newest Soviet tank to see if the tank was capable of firing fin-stabilized munitions. Nicholson was mortally shot and left to bleed out while his driver and others looked on. There were many other

happenings while we served there. See photo of the nearby bridge across the Elbe; it was partially destroyed when Germany was partitioned. See photo of Gross Gusborn's torii tower that bristled with antennas and raydomes. We were hit with residual hurricane force winds that felled forests, blew trains off tracks, and one of our raydomes and its dish antenna all the way into East Germany. We were that close. Occasionally Soviet gunship helicopters out on defensive fighter patrol accidentally lost their bearings and sometimes deliberately crossing into West Germany. On several occasions they directly overflew us so close we could see their underbellies and cameras.

Because we were so far from Augsburg and the big brass, it was a far more relaxed atmosphere somewhat akin to the movie and TV series MASH, which was in vogue in the early 70s. Frivolity was added to the relaxed atmosphere with Augsburg assigned the first ASA WACs to Gross Gusborn supposedly to get them as far from Augsburg as possible where they were safe from all the Reforger era GIs. John Campbell helped preside over the integration of the ASA WACs with the GI Joes. Operations were moved from Gartow to Gross Gusborn prior to my arrival. Gartow was even more primitive and closer to the tip of East Germany virtually surrounding that site. The Gartow crew started an underground newspaper that lampooned everything and everyone, including higher commands like Augsburg and the US Army. When the bridge crossing the Elbe was partially demolished, it cut off our Landkreis from the Brandenburg Province governance and culture. Young people left the Landkreis leaving behind the very old and the youth. In true lampooning fashion the underground dubbed itself "The Gartow Child Molester." That never happened but the guys consumed spirits in great quantity and frequency. The migration from Gartow to Gross Gusborn meant the underground newspaper needed a new name. It became the Gross Goose, which was depicted as an oversized goose being startled by a thrusting finger. That was always on the banner page. Each edition of The Gross Goose was properly marked with security markings because amid the lampooned content was vestiges of classified information about SIGINT operations. Somehow copies of The Gross Goose made its way to all the southerly border sites and even to Augsburg. It was not well-received there. Specifically, field grade Article 15s were on the table and information was sought. That never happened because everyone was well trained in how to keep a secret. However, The Gross Goose ceased to be published.

Gross Gusborn Det was in the British Sector. Eventually we handed off mission operations to H Troop of Her Majesty's Signals Regiment. We were attached to the British for a while. Then we were reassigned elsewhere. Both John and I went to Wobek Detachment. Ours was not a customary change of command. Not only did we change commanders, but Gross Gusborn was reflagged. See photos of Stars & Stripes being lowered and the Union Jack being raised. On this momentous occasion The Gross Goose was resurrected for the final hoorah. The final edition was

unclassified. It maintained its lampoon style and continued to include SI material. However, this time the security cautionary was "Appended Document Contains Special Interest Material." See attached cover page, first page which names John Cambell as Advisor and an interior page where John is pictured in a photo captioned The Rest of the Gang.

Being a warrant officer is tricky. You are on high wire with the brass on one end and the rank and file on the other. There is no net below in case you fall. John was a high wire master, a mentor, a role model, a SME, the epitome of experience and military bearing when things became unhinged. He had such a calm demeanor and never lost his cool. It was a pleasure to serve with "Soupy" - that's what he was called in The Gross Goose. I don't think anybody ever said it to his face. That is because John was loved and respected by all.

John retained his copy of "The Gross Goose Resurrected final edition, as I have. Clearly he cherished his time there even though more than 50 years have passed. Rest in Peace, John.

Written by Gary Leopold, aka Leadfinger

CHAVES, Ricardo Chaves

Ricardo Chaves, 89, a proud twelfth-generation New Mexican, passed away peacefully in his sleep on August 24, 2025, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He was born in Pajarito, to Nicodemus and Petrita Chaves.

He was preceded in death by his beloved daughter, Mykel Lynn; parents, Nicodemus and Petrita Chaves; sister, Avelina Battaglia, brothers, Nick, Ben, Manuel, Eloy, Frank, Dan and Paul; sister in-laws, Vidalia, Geraldine, Marie, Curla, and former wife, Margaret.

He is survived by his brother, Alex Chaves; daughters, Linda Chaves, Kathleen Chaves, Barbara Griffith, and son, Richard Chaves; five grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; and many cherished nieces, and nephews. The family extends their heartfelt gratitude to Luz Medina, Danny Romero, and Carlos Zentella for their loving support and compassionate help during this time.

Ricardo's journey began as the son of an apple farmer in Pajarito. After proudly serving in the United States Army, he graduated from the University of New Mexico and launched his first business, a café inside the Lomas Bowling Alley. With the encouragement of his father, he leased his first parking lot at 5th and Copper- a modest beginning that marked the start of a remarkable entrepreneurial career.

Soon joined by his brother, Alex, and later by their other brothers, Ricardo co-founded the Parking Company of America. Each brother took on responsibility for a city, and together they grew

the business into the largest privately owned parking enterprise in the United States- perhaps the world. Their partnership was more than a business; it was a bond of brotherhood, joy and perseverance. The company flourished across generations, with hundreds of parking lots nationwide, and continues today under the care of the family's second, third and fourth generations.

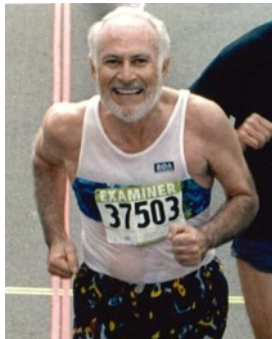
Ricardo will be remembered not only for his business acumen, but also for his extraordinary generosity. He was always ready to lend a hand- whether helping someone through illness, supporting a relative in need, fixing peoples' smiles or quietly paying for a student's education. He never lost sight of his humble roots and believed deeply in the power of kindness, no matter how small.

In gratitude, the family honors Ricardo's life and the vision he shared with his brothers and sister in founding their company.

Per his wishes, services will be kept simple. A Graveside Rosary will be held on Tuesday, September 2, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. at Pajarito Cemetery, rosary will be recited by his niece, Ava Garcia, followed by a reception.

"There is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in"
Leonard Cohen

As special note from Manny Pichardo - "We have lost Ricardo Chávez, known to his Brothers in Arms as "El Mejicano." He passed away yesterday afternoon in Monterrey, Mexico. We have also lost another of our own one of the CIA Cuban Exile Navy Veterans who fought in the Congo. He shared a bond with my father that went back decades. They met in Central America as MRR Veterans, becoming Brothers in Arms and close friends to the end. Ricardo was a great man: a devoted father, husband, and grandfather, and a loyal friend. He was also a Cuban patriot, a hero, and a true freedom fighter a warrior forged in the shadows of covert battles. On a night in 1965, Che Guevara and his men attempted to cross Lake Tanganyika in five small armed boats. Instead, they encountered the Cuban Exile CIA Navy the Makasi. A fierce firefight erupted, and four of those armed boats never made it across the lake. He served as the captain of a Swift Boat that, along with other Swift Boat, was involved in the 1965 shootout which last hours in Baraka with rebels while clearing the beach for the landing and disembarking of 5 Commando the "Wild Geese" Once their mission was complete and before leaving the Congo, he was also one of the Cuban Exile CIA Navy Veterans who helped train those 5 Commando on operating the two Swift Boats. A great warrior and patriot has now joined the ranks of the fallen. May they rest in eternal peace. Their bravery, sacrifice, and legacy will never be forgotten. My heartfelt condolences go out to his daughter Annette, his son Ricardo, and the rest of his family.



GUILD, Col Richard “Dick”

Richard “Dick” Guild, Colonel, United States Air Force (Retired), passed away peacefully on July 8, 2026, in Northern Virginia. He was 86 years old.

Dick was born on December 27, 1939, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. His parents were Hillis E Guild and Irene Reisinger Guild. He has three sisters: Jacqueline (deceased); Jean (his twin) and younger sister – Geniel (affectionately known as Aunt Jo). He attended the United States Air Force Academy, graduating with the Class of 1963. He married Alice Glim on the same day he graduated. He completed pilot training and fulfilled his lifelong dream of becoming a fighter pilot.

During his distinguished 25-year military career, Colonel Guild served multiple combat tours in Vietnam, flying fighter aircraft in defense of his country. He was an American fighter pilot, an American warrior, and a proud patriot who served with courage, honor, and unwavering dedication. His military service reflected his deep commitment to duty, excellence, and the men and women with whom he served.

After retiring from the United States Air Force in 1987, Dick began a second career as a consultant in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, where he continued to apply his leadership and expertise for many years. He was so pleased to have worked at Stavatti Aerospace and served on the Board of Directors as the Director of Military Aerospace.

He is survived by his two sons, Doug Guild (Nanette) and David Guild (Kellie); five grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren. He leaves behind a legacy of service, integrity, and love of country that will continue to inspire his family for generations.

Colonel Guild was laid to rest with military honors at the United States Air Force Academy Cemetery in Colorado Springs, Colorado.



MCCOY, Ronald Ted

Ronald Ted McCoy, 91, of Harrisonburg, Virginia, passed quietly from old age on Monday, February 9, 2026.

Born in Riverside, California, and raised in Elkton, Virginia, Ron lived a full and vibrant life defined by devoted service to his country, dedication to his family,



entrepreneurial drive, and a passion for flying, sports, and artistic creation.

He was married for 69 cherished years to his beloved wife, Louise Meadows McCoy. Together, they shared a love for their family, cherishing every moment with their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren as a great joy and legacy of their lives. He and his beloved wife Louise also shared a profound love of travel, visiting over 60 countries together. They especially enjoyed the opportunities that came with living overseas during his military assignments in the Philippines and Turkey, where they immersed themselves in new cultures and created lasting memories.

Ron proudly served his country as a Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Air Force, retiring after 23 distinguished years. He amassed over 5,000 flight hours and truly enjoyed the thrill and precision of flying. His assignments included piloting the T-39 Sabreliner as a general's aide, operating the T-33 Shooting Star, and flying C-47 Skytrains in Vietnam as part of the renowned "Dirty Thirty" unit. His uniform from that era is on permanent display at the USAF Museum in recognition of his contributions and service.

Following his military retirement, Ron channeled his energy into civilian endeavors, owning his own businesses and serving as President of two others, where his leadership continued to shine.

A man of deep faith, he served faithfully as both a deacon and elder at First Presbyterian Church of Harrisonburg, contributing wisdom and grace to his community.

Ron held three patents for his inventive creations and found joy in artistic pursuits. He passionately created art in stained glass, watercolor, and oils-mediums that allowed him to capture light, color, and beauty in ways that reflected his creative spirit.

He is survived by his loving wife, Louise Meadows McCoy; his children, Diane Schwalbach (husband Curt) and Brad McCoy (wife Kymble); his six grandchildren, Taylor Schwalbach (wife Olivia), Garrett Schwalbach (wife Alexandra), Courtney Schwalbach, Connor McCoy, Cale McCoy, and Colton McCoy; and four great-grandchildren, Lyla, Ben, Noah, and Eloise Schwalbach.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his son, Gregory Keith McCoy; brothers, Bob McCoy and Jack McCoy.

Ron's legacy endures through his loving family, his courageous service to his country, his business accomplishments, his inventive mind, and the enduring beauty of the art he created-along with the passion he carried from a lifetime of flying, traveling, and enjoying sports.

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MCGARVEY SR., Anthony Joseph "Mac"

December 14, 1942 – September 19, 2026. Anthony (Mac) McGarvey loved fast airplanes, slow sailboats and the darling girl he married when he was almost 19.



Mac was born on December 14, 1942, to Anthony and Frances McGarvey in Brooklyn, New York during the early years of World War II. His earliest memory was the launching of the USS Oriskany on October 14, 1945, at the Brooklyn Navy Yard where his father worked as a ship fitter. Other memories of the war years included the small victory garden in the tiny back yard of their house on Gerritson Avenue, the old Chevy that was put up on blocks in the garage due to shortages of rubber and gasoline and the buckets of sand in the garage to fight fires in the event of German air attack.

In 1949 his parents gave him the gift of a lifetime by moving the family to Texas. He grew up in the Oak Cliff section of Dallas with the freedom that a boy these days could only dream of. The freedom to roam the streets and neighborhoods of Oak Cliff with his buddies from dawn to dusk without adult supervision. The freedom to hop on the trolley as a ten-year-old and head to the YMCA in downtown Dallas to spend the day there swimming in the indoor pool and playing baseball on the fenced roof. The freedom to make his own choices and to feed the adventurous spirit that would guide his life.

In 1955 his parents gave him another wonderful gift when they moved the family to Irving, Texas because it was there that he would meet the beautiful Mary Jo Hastings when they were both sixteen. It was on a sultry summer night in 1959 when they sat on the steps of the little Catholic Church across the street from her house where they talked for hours and began the conversation that would last for the rest of their lives. In 1961 they would be married in that same church - a teenage marriage that some said would never last.

Mac was educated at parochial schools and at Dallas Jesuit High School. He credited his Jesuit education with giving him an equal love of literature and philosophy as well as of math and science. He chose math and science and received his BS in Industrial Engineering from Texas A&M University. Later he would earn an MS in Systems Management at the University of Southern California.

While at A&M Mac was an enthusiastic member of the Corps of Cadets and joined the US Air Force upon graduation. His first job in the Air Force was as an aircraft maintenance officer, but he soon became eager to fly the fighters he oversaw at Nellis Air Force Base, and he applied to pilot training at his first

opportunity. In 1968 Mac and his family moved to Laredo AFB where he joined pilot training class 69-06.

Assignments after pilot training were allotted according to class standing and Mac worked hard to be high enough in the class to get the fighter assignment he dreamed of. He finished third in his class but there were no fighter aircraft offered, so he chose what he considered the next best thing; an aircraft that was all pilot-in-command time and that carried guns and rockets – the OV-10. After six months of training, Mac spent the next year in Vietnam. He flew more than 240 combat missions earning 12 Air Medals and 2 Distinguished Flying Crosses.

He first provided close air support to elements of the 1st Brigade of the 25th Infantry Division and then was a member of the initial cadre of pilots that supported the Cambodian government in their fight against the North Vietnamese Army that had taken over their country. This battle, and Mac's part in it, is recounted in the book "The Rustics - A Top Secret Air War in Cambodia".

With no fighter assignments available after Vietnam, Mac once again chose the next best thing – an assignment as an instructor pilot in the supersonic T-38. For the next four and a half years, Mac taught students in the advanced portion of flying training both as an instructor and a flight commander.

At the end of this assignment, it appeared that a non-flying job was in his future. Early in his career Mac had been told that the mission of the United States Air Force was "to fly and to fight" and he had totally bought into that so he began to look for a flying assignment that was strictly volunteer so that he could avoid the vagaries of an Air Force assignment system. He chose the U-2.

For the next four years he flew high altitude reconnaissance missions all over the world in the aircraft that some called the Dragon Lady and that the newspapers usually called "The infamous U-2 spy plane". The U-2 has been referred to as the hardest airplane in the world to fly and flying this famous airplane has been described as like trying to roller skate on an ice rink. Mac spent his last year in the program as an Instructor Pilot in the two-seat version and had sharp memories of careening all over the runway as new pilots tried to learn how to corral "The Beast".

In 1979 Mac decided that he and his family had endured enough hardships and family separations and he resigned from the Air Force to try and make his way in civilian life. He joined Hydraquip Corporation, a small industrial distributor headquartered in Houston, Texas. He achieved success first as an outside salesman, then as general sales manager and then was appointed president in 1989 – a position that he would hold for the next 18 years.

In the 28 years that Mac was with Hydraquip the company grew to be one of the largest privately owned distributorships of its

kind in the country. He was proud of what had been accomplished but he was most proud that Hydraquip had become 100% employee owned through an Employee Stock Ownership Plan. Through the enthusiastic participation of employee/owners, the company was able to turn a profit, year after year, without ever laying off an employee in all the 25 years that he had been in management. A remarkable feat in the oil and gas boom and bust economy, a feat that he credited to an employee/owner culture that was willing to sacrifice together in the hard times to prosper together in the good times.

In 2007 Mac retired as president of the company and he and Mary Jo were able to spend full time doing all the things that they loved. First came family. They treasured the fact that all their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren lived within a 20-minute drive and they were able to see their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren on a regular basis. They were able to take their great grandchildren on many adventures and were able to bond with them. Then came travel around the world with family and friends; sailing their 36-foot sailboat “Irish Eyes” on Galveston Bay; and spending time at their Galveston Island beach house. The beach house was a good investment because family would often gather there. The same was true with the sailboat. Mac and Mary Jo would also spend time at these places by themselves, enjoying their time with each other.

Mac fought a courageous battle against lung cancer, the last two months in home hospice care. His family was able to spend many hours talking, telling stories, and reading aloud. He passed away on September 19th with his family by his side. Mac always said, “family is everything”. He was preceded in death by in parents Anthony and Frances (Fran) McGarvey and his sister Kathleen (Kay) Reames. He is survived by his wife of 64 years Mary Jo, brothers Dan McGarvey and his wife Sheree and John McGarvey and his wife Mary Kay, sons Anthony (Andy) McGarvey, and Matthew (Matt) McGarvey, daughter Kelly Fleming, son-in-law Bill Fleming, four grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren.

MERRITT, Don William, Col., USAF (Ret.)

Don William Merritt, 75, a resident of The Villages, Florida, passed away on December 27, 2025, in Leesburg, Florida, after a courageous four-year battle with lymphoma. Born on March 10, 1950, in Alliance, Nebraska, Don lived a life defined by service, adventure, and devotion to family and friends.



Don graduated from Lincoln Northeast High School in 1968 and enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, serving two years in Vietnam. For his valor, he was awarded the Bronze Star with combat distinction and the Navy Commendation Medal. Following his military service, Don earned his degree from the

University of Nebraska—Lincoln in 1972. He married his first wife, Mary, and completed pilot training at Moody Air Force Base in Georgia in May 1975, where his son Michael was born.

Don’s distinguished career in the United States Air Force took him across the globe and presented extraordinary challenges—including piloting the top-secret U 2 reconnaissance aircraft. Prior to moving to RAF Alconbury in England, he married his second wife, Chris, in Honolulu, Hawaii.

After 23 years in the Air Force, Don retired at Davis–Monthan Air Force Base in Arizona and transitioned to commercial aviation, flying for Northwest Airlines, later Delta Air Lines. Based in Detroit, Honolulu, and Minneapolis, he made his home in Hudson, Wisconsin, for more than a decade, where he met his longtime friend, Mitzi. After a long and accomplished career with Delta, he retired and moved to Wilmington, North Carolina, where he was fortunate to find a neighborhood of friends who became like family.

A generous supporter of charities serving veterans and his son’s cancer charity, Don gave freely of his time and resources to causes close to his heart. He shared countless happy hour moments with family and friends, pursuing his passion for golf on courses around the world. He also picked up cycling with his son and North Carolina neighbors, enjoying many events and rides throughout Brunswick Forest.

Don was preceded in death by his parents, Max and Arlene Merritt, and his brother Jerry Merritt (Kathy). He is survived by his son, Michael Merritt of Bentonville, Arkansas; sister in law Kathy and her son, David; stepson Joe Herger (Gina and their two children); sisters Kathryn (daughter Raven) and Jan (daughters Amber and Chelsea, son Skye); dear friend Mitzi; and many extended family members and cherished friends.

NEWMAN, Harry Thomas

November 17, 1943 – May 17, 2026.

Harry Thomas Newman, age 82, passed away Sunday, May 17, 2026. He was a loving husband, father, and grandfather.

Harry was born November 17, 1943 in Danville, Virginia to the late Sidney Onyx Newman, Sr. and Marjorie Doyle Newman. He has an identical twin brother, Sidney, and a sister, Marjorie.

He enlisted in the United States Army in 1966, was selected for and completed Infantry Officer Candidate School, and commissioned as an officer in the US Army in 1967. Harry served two tours in Vietnam with the Army Security Agency (ASA) and many of those he worked with became lifelong friends. After serving 21 years Harry retired in 1986 holding the rank of Lieutenant Colonel before embarking on a second career in the private sector. Harry was instrumental in founding the ASA



Veterans Association, whose focus is the establishment of a memorial in Arlington Cemetery for fallen ASA comrades. While in the Army, Harry married the love of his life, Celestial Ruth Newman, on March 22, 1970 and welcomed their first of two sons in September 1971. Ruth and their sons Tom and Kyle were the focus of Harry's life

Passion for cars lead Harry to be involved in many community car groups, organizing and participating in many car events in the area. His favorite was his Subaru SVX, but over the years owned everything from British sportscars, muscle cars and Porsche. His enjoyment extended beyond collecting. For many years, Harry was a driving instructor, teaching novice drivers the art of piloting their vehicles around road course circuits such as Summit Point Motorsports Park and Virginia International Raceway. His sons shared his interest and often participated at events together with him.

Harry was a great supporter of the greater Winchester area community. He supported Habitat for Humanity, receiving the Linda B. Calley award for his volunteer work. His further support included volunteering at the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, Ruritans and other local charities. He was loved and respected in his community. Harry was also very involved in activities and operation of Macedonia United Methodist Church.

Harry is survived by his wife of 57 years, Ruth, sons Tom Newman (wife Sherry) and Kyle Newman, grandchildren Sarah, Casimer, and Cael, his identical twin, Sidney O. Newman, Jr., and many nieces and nephews.

A visitation for Harry will be held July 24, 2026, from 6-8 PM at the Macedonia United Methodist Church, 1941 Macedonia Church Rd, White Post, VA 22663. His funeral service will be held on July 25 at 11 AM, also at the Macedonia United Methodist Church. Military Honors will be presented outside the church immediately after the funeral service. In lieu of flowers, Harry requested donations be sent to the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank.

PIANTADOSI, Col Louis J.

Colonel Louis J. Piantadosi, USMC (Retired), of Whitehouse Station, NJ, passed away peacefully at home, leaving behind a legacy of distinguished military service, and dedication to his family and community. He had resided in Whitehouse Station for the past two and a half years, having previously made his home in Woodbridge, Virginia.

Born in Bound Brook, New Jersey, he was the son of the late Pellegrino and Mary Piantadosi. A graduate of Bound Brook High School, Colonel Piantadosi continued his education at Ithaca College, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree.



In 1954, he began an extraordinary 32-year career with the United States Marine Corps. Throughout his military service, he served his country with honor and rose steadily through the ranks, earning promotion to Colonel in 1977. Upon his retirement in 1985, he had established a remarkable record of leadership, courage, and commitment to the Corps.

In recognition of his exemplary service, Colonel Piantadosi received numerous military decorations, including the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V," the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, the National Defense Service Medal with one star, the Vietnam Service Medal, and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.

He was a longtime member of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church, Woodbridge, Virginia. Following his retirement from active duty, Colonel Piantadosi remained devoted to his fellow veterans and Marines. He was an active member of the American Legion, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, along with the Marine Corps Law Enforcement Foundation, where he played a major role in numerous Scholarship Galas including Atlantic City, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C.

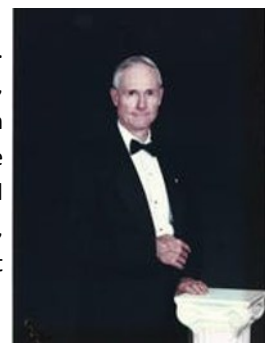
Colonel Piantadosi will be remembered as a proud Marine, respected leader, and a man of integrity whose life exemplified the Marine Corps values of honor, courage, and commitment.

He was predeceased by his wife, Betty Jean in 1998 and his two sisters, Rosemarie Conover and Lena Gentile.

He is survived by his devoted son, Brian Piantadosi and his wife, Michele Renda of Whitehouse Station; his granddaughter, Tessa Piantadosi and her husband, Even Lick; and his three great grandchildren, Amelia, Henry and Jonathan.

RILEY, Lt. Col Michael A.

November 5, 1943 – March 13, 2026. Lt. Colonel Michael A. Riley, USAF, Retired, died on March 13, 2026 at The Virginian in Fairfax, Virginia, where he resided. He was born on his family's farm in Girard Township, Pennsylvania, on November 5, 1943, a member of the fifth and last generation to live at the Riley Fruit Farm.



An Eagle Scout, Mike graduated from Rice Avenue Union High School in 1961. He received his bachelor's degree in journalism from Kent State University in 1965 and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the US Air Force upon graduation. He deferred his military service while he pursued a master's degree in political science at Kent State, which he received in 1967.

Mike began his career in the US Air Force in August, 1967. After completing training as a Navigator and Weapon Systems Operator

in F4D Phantom jet fighters, he was stationed at Royal Thai Air Force Base in Udon, Thailand, where he served as a member of the 13th Tactical Fighter Squadron. He flew 168 missions over Southeast Asia, including 26 missions over North Vietnam. For his exemplary service, he received the Distinguished Flying Cross, numerous Meritorious Service and Air Medals, multiple Oak Leaf Clusters, as well as other medals, badges, citations, and campaign ribbons.

Upon returning from the war, Mike continued serving as a Navigator and Weapons System Operator of F4E Phantoms with the 613th Tactical Fighter Squadron stationed at Torrejon Air Base near Madrid, Spain. In 1970, after completing pilot training at Webb Air Force Base in Big Spring, Texas, he received his wings and served as a Flight Training Instructor Pilot for T-37s, the first jet flown by pilot trainees. He later served at Dover Air Base as an Air Operations Officer and Pilot of C5 cargo jets flying transportation and airlift operations around the world. One mission involved delivering 2 Chinook helicopters strapped inside his plane to the Lake Placid Winter Olympics in 1980.

For the last eight and a half years of his service, Mike "flew a desk" as a Public Affairs Staff Officer, first at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland, and later at the Pentagon. He retired from the Air Force after twenty-four years of service in October, 1991.

Mike's exceptional service record helped him obtain a high-level security clearance, and following his retirement from the Air Force, he enjoyed a second career as a civilian employee of several defense contractors. His work included analyzing military program records and responding to Freedom of Information Act requests for various programs, including "Star Wars". On September 11, 2001, he was working next door at the Navy Annex and heard the plane hijacked by terrorists fly overhead before it crashed into the Pentagon.

After retiring from his work for defense contractors, he launched several businesses which he operated from his home in Falls Church, VA. A 33rd degree Mason, Mike was very active in Masonic activities, including serving as Deputy Grand Marshal.

In addition to his family and serving others, flying was Mike's great passion. For many years, he flew single engine aircraft as a hobby, and he thrilled in performing various aeronautical maneuvers. He also enjoyed skiing, sailing, and golfing.

Mike was predeceased by his parents, Steven and Mildred Snyder Riley, and his stepmother, Doris Silverthorn Riley. He is survived by his beloved wife, Lynn Campopiano Riley, whom he married in 2019; his siblings, Kathy Milford (Miriam Cartner), Peggy (Tim) Bonner, and Steven ("Tim") (Patty) Riley, Jr.; and his stepbrothers, Dick Silverthorn and Jim (Malynna) Silverthorn; his stepchildren, Scott (Cheryl) Bundek, Amanda Bundek, William (Terri) Schelhouse, Robert (Lisa) Campopiano, and Carole (Stephen) Hayward; as well as his many cousins, in-laws, grandchildren,

great grandchild, nieces, nephews, grandnieces, and grandnephews.

THORNELL, III, John Francis

John Francis Thornell, III, 80, of Leesburg, VA, sadly passed on March 16, 2026.



Born on March 7, 1946, in Goldsboro, North Carolina, to parents John F. Thornell Jr. and Pamela C. Thornell, John was the eldest of eight children and grew up in a close-knit family that shaped his lifelong values of dedication, integrity, and service.

John proudly served his country for many years, beginning in the United States Navy during the Vietnam War and continuing in the United States Marine Corps, where he rose to the rank of Colonel. Over the course of his distinguished military career, he held numerous leadership roles, commanded aviation units, and earned multiple honors including the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, and the Combat Action Ribbon.

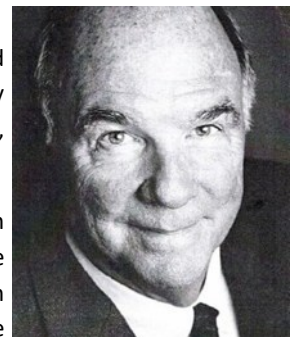
Following his military service, John built a successful career in the private sector, working in Information Technology (IT) with Apple, Intershop, Versata, HMS, and as Vice President of Loch Harbour Group before starting his own company, the Avenal Group. He was also an accomplished scholar, earning a Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science and advanced degrees in National Security and Strategic Studies. He was a published author and engaged member of his community, serving for 10 years as the Chairman of the Toys for Tots campaign of Loudoun County and 15 years as board Member, Secretary, and President of the River Creek Men's Golf Association.

John is survived by his family including his beloved wife of 59 years, Linda Lee Thornell, sister Kathleen (John) Bowings, brothers Stephen (Vickie), Mark (Barbara), Joseph (Kerry) and many nieces, nephews, good friends and neighbors. John is survived by his beloved dogs Hondo and Annie. John was preceded in death by his parents, brothers James and Timothy, and sister Candice. John had many wonderful dogs who also preceded him in death: Misty, Duke, Stoney, Penny, Barron, Brandy, Boggie, Skyler, and Remi.

WALRATH, Col Barry Alan

Barry Alan Walrath, Colonel, United States Air Force (Retired) passed away on July 24, 2026, in Colorado Springs, Colorado. He was 85 years old.

Barry was born in Ashtabula, Ohio on January 13, 1941, the eldest of three sons born to Walter and Ruth (Johnson) Walrath. He married the



former Nancy Bauer of Denver, Colorado in December of 1963 and they were blessed with two children, Kevin in 1964 and Paige in 1966.

Determined to fly from a young age, his dream started to become a reality when in his senior year at Edgewood High he was appointed to the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. He proudly graduated with the class of 1963 and proceeded to flight training at Vance AFB in Enid, Oklahoma. Throughout his Air Force career he piloted a wide variety of flying missions ranging from the smallest aircraft, an O-2 as the leader of a Forward Air Controller command post unit in Viet Nam, to the largest as commander of the E-4 (747) Advanced Airborne Command Post in support of the then president, Ronald Reagan. After receiving his MA in Geopolitics from San Diego State University, he had a number of assignments working in conjunction with intelligence agencies, including the CIA and DIA.

After retiring from the Air Force in 1987, Barry spent 26 years at Science Applications International Corp (SAIC) in Northern Virginia as a vice president/division manager. With his expertise in all phases of intelligence production, he managed teams of scientists, engineers, and intelligence professional in multiple programs involved in solving complex problems for the US defense and intelligence communities.

Barry's next chapter found him serving as a docent at Udvar-Hazy National Air and Space Museum in Chantilly, Virginia where, with his extensive background as a military and commercial instrument rated pilot, certified flight instructor, and with a depth of historical knowledge, he was adeptly able to assist visitors to the Museum.

A fine athlete in his youth, Barry remained avidly interested in sports throughout his life, particularly baseball. He and his wife, Nancy, had a beautiful and amazing life together with travels around the globe. He will be remembered for his love of family, his friendship, integrity, dedication, professionalism, and quiet sense of humor.

Barry was preceded in death by his son, Kevin. He is survived by his wife, Nancy; his daughter Paige Walrath of Annandale, VA; his daughter-in-law Daniela of Fairfax, VA; his grandchildren, Sydney Farkas of Los Angeles, CA, Meghan Farkas of Alexandria, VA, Brycen Walrath of Charleston, SC, and Alexandra Walrath of Fairfax, VA; his brothers, TJ of Hinckley, OH and Brian of Chagrin Falls, OH.

GIVING TUESDAY

Tuesday, December 1, 2026 is one of our most important fundraisers of the year, Giving Tuesday. None of our educational and museum activities come without cost, and even basic service provided to walk-in visitors requires exhibit space rental (our building), storage space rental, utilities, insurance, and other related costs. Like many museums in the U.S., our main income comes from tax deductible donations received throughout the year, with our Give Local Piedmont and Giving Tuesday capital campaigns leading the way.

It's especially gratifying to be able to tell you that we've received \$7,500 in matching grants from anonymous donors for this year's Giving Tuesday Campaign. That means that for every dollar you donate to the museum during the Giving Tuesday campaign will be doubled. **You could tap into that matching money with your own gift as early as November 17, 2026 which is the start of early giving, but if it's convenient for you to wait with your gift, the best way to help the Museum is to make your donation on December 1, 2026.** During this day donations received will not only be doubled though the matching grants but will also count towards Giving Tuesday cash prizes we are eligible to receive.

Either way, the Board and staff of the Museum hope you will join us in making a year-end tax-deductible donation on Giving Tuesday. Thanks in advance for what you can do to support our efforts to honor Cold War veterans, preserve Cold War history, and educate future generations about this time period.

DECEMBER 1, 2026

EARLY GIVING NOVEMBER 17, 2026

[The Cold War Museum | GivingTuesday](#)

PRIVATE TOURS OF THE MUSEUM



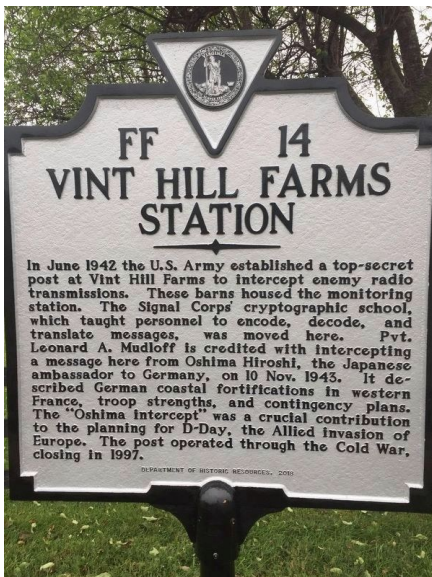
One of the ways The Cold War Museum® fulfills its key mission of educating about the Cold War is via presentations to local community groups. We are receiving more and more of these invitations as the museum gets better known locally. The purpose of such events is of course to attract people to the museum, encouraging them to visit either during public hours on the weekend when admission is free, or to arrange for private group tours during the week, for which there is a per-person fee, depending on the size of the group.

PRIVATE TOURS Are An Important Source of Museum Income

THE INCREASING NUMBER of private tours we arrange provides a significant percentage of the Museum's yearly operating income, so it's an important part of our many income streams, helping to stabilize our operating income from month to month.



April 7, 2026 – Antiquarian Ladies Group, photo courtesy of Cold War Museum®



To arrange a private tour led by one of the museum docents, please contact

Bryan A. Zwanzig

703-408-2039

bryan.z@coldwar.org

Cost (beginning January 1, 2027):

\$20 per adult

\$10 for children under the age of 18

Regardless of group size

No cost for active duty military personnel ever!

VISIT THE COLD WAR MUSEUM® TODAY!



May 20, 2026 – The Attaway Group, photo courtesy of The Cold War Museum®



June 20, 2026 – Walking Club, photo courtesy of The Cold War Museum®



June 30, 2026 – Ashby Pond Retirement Home, photo courtesy of The Cold War Museum®



July 10, 2026 – The Rogers Group, photo courtesy of The Cold War Museum®



July 13, 2026 – Vincent Hall Retirement Community, photo courtesy of The Cold War Museum®



September 11, 2026 – Janet Hall Werner's group, photo courtesy of The Cold War Museum®



September 14, 2026 – Family Group, photo courtesy of The Cold War Museum®



September 14, 2026 – Family Group, photo courtesy of The Cold War Museum®



September 24, 2026 – Linda Stouffer's Group, photo courtesy of The Cold War Museum®



September 25, 2026 — Tina's Group, photo courtesy of The Cold War Museum®



September 28, 2026 - Scout Troop 360, photo courtesy of The Cold War Museum®



October 8, 2026– Vint Hill Craft Winery Tour, photo courtesy of The Cold War Museum®

CARRYING THE MESSAGE



Three Main Goals of the Museum

- ◆ To keep knowledge of the Cold War and its significance alive for coming generations.
- ◆ To honor the service of those who had professional Cold War roles.
- ◆ To use the Museum's extensive collection of rare and, in some cases, unique artifacts in Cold War signals intelligence (SIGINT) and image intelligence (IMINT) to show how intelligence collection and analysis supports our policy, diplomacy, and military action. CARRYING THE MESSAGE Home of The Cold War Museum®: Vint Hill Farms, Virginia.

One of the ways The Cold War Museum® fulfills its key mission of educating about the Cold War is via presentations to local community groups. We are receiving more and more of these invitations as the museum gets better known locally. The purpose of such events is of course to attract people to the museum, encouraging them to visit either during public hours on the weekend when admission is

free, or to arrange for private group tours during the week, for which there is a per-person fee, depending on the size of the group.



September 5, 2026 – Staff member Clayton Vieg's entry in the Old Bust Head Brewery annual car show which had upwards of 200-250 visitors. Clayton talked to everyone who walked by about the Museum. Some actually didn't know that the museum existed, while others had visited us in the past.

THE COLD WAR MUSEUM®

The Museum's Challenge Coin is available for \$15 per coin plus \$10 shipping if mailed.

The coin pays homage to Vint Hill Farms as an active listening post from 1942—1997 and features The Cold War Museum® on the reverse side.



ORDER TODAY AT COLDWAR.ORG

2026 AIRSPACE AND CYBER CONFERENCE



The Cold War Museum marked a new milestone in its outreach efforts this September by exhibiting at the Air Force Association's 2026 Air Space and Cyber Conference at the Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center at National Harbor. This is the AFA's annual national conference. The Museum was able to introduce itself and our Cold War history mission to a high-profile audience of active duty and retired Air Force personnel, defense contractors, and the media.

This conference was the first time we could use a new generation of the museum's travel kit. The kit contains our displays, artifacts, and signage that we take on the road. The kit centers around a main four-panel display highlighting significant Cold War stories from our collection, such as the 1960 Gary

Powers U-2 incident, satellite reconnaissance, the Oshima Intercept at Vint Hill, and the Iron Curtain/ the division of Germany, while also giving an introduction to the museum and its exhibits. Signage is also included for donations, volunteering, and potential sponsorship opportunities. Custom tablecloths with the museum logo round out the package. This kit will allow us to present a clean and professional pitch at future outreach events.

Special artifacts were displayed such as a U-2 flight suit, a K-22 reconnaissance camera, and our East German "barber pole" border marker. These artifacts got a great reaction, especially the eye catching black-red-yellow striped barber pole. We brought some of our ever-popular Iron Curtain T-Shirts commemorating the end of the Cold War.

These shirts, available in our gift shop, were unsurprisingly very popular amidst an audience full of Cold War veterans!

We met the national director of the AFA, the head Air Force historian, (and one day after the conference an Navy History and Heritage Command historian at the 3rd Infantry Division symposium), the press officer who handles the Air Force's exhibits in the Pentagon, the National Nuclear Security Administration director, and more. Some Air Force personnel approached us about possible donations to the museum.

The greatest impact we had were the multitudes of officers and senior NCOs attending the conference who got their first introduction to the Museum and what we offer. Many of these individuals were either stationed in the local area or regularly traveling to DC on business and were very interested to hear about our private tour offerings, both for themselves and their offices. The museum is well positioned to benefit current and future Air Force servicemembers by helping them understand how their missions, their threat environments, and their wider strategic picture have changed due to the Cold War and its ongoing legacy. Every major conflict active in the world today has Cold War origins, directly or indirectly, and so too has every piece of high technology from computing to missiles to GPS. Over the next year, we hope to see an increase in private tours because of this conference.

The Museum was represented by staff members Mike Washvill, Bryan Zwanig, Clayton Vieg, and Doug Harsha. Board members Gary Powers Jr., Buzz Carpenter, Chuck Wilson, and Fred Carr were also present. Many thanks to the staff and board members who came out to National Harbor to help introduce the Museum on a national stage and "press the flesh."

Our presence at the 2026 AFA conference was an accomplishment for the museum. It marked our entry into the big leagues where we brought the Museum and our mission to a high-level national audience of active and retired Air Force servicemembers, defense contractors, and government officials – exactly the types of people

who might be interested in supporting the Museum in the future. Our success in this conference is also proof that we have improved our offerings, exhibits, and outreach to where we can operate and compete on a national stage. Not bad for an almost entirely volunteer-run organization! If donations permit, we hope to repeat this success at the we hope to repeat this success at the Association of the US Army and the Navy League's annual conferences, as well as future AFA conferences.



FAIRFAX CITY FALL FESTIVAL

The Cold War Museum made a strong impression at the Fairfax City Fall Festival, October 10, 2026, where an estimated 150,000 visitors gathered across six square blocks in the heart of downtown Fairfax. The museum's booth featured an impressive collection of Cold War artifacts, including a piece of the Berlin Wall, which drew considerable attention from festivalgoers.

A steady stream of visitors stopped by throughout the event, reflecting the high level of public interest in the museum and its exhibits. Dedicated volunteers Bryan and Karen Zwanzig warmly welcomed countless guests, answered questions, and shared information about the museum's mission and collections. Board members Chuck Wilson and Fred Carr were also on hand to support the booth and engage with visitors.

Visitors did not know that there was a Cold War Museum, much less that there is an actual building they could visit! They asked questions about volunteering as well as how to donate artifacts. A nine year old knew the significance of 1962! His mother said he was a history buff and that she had to quiz him every night. They were fascinated by the canned water.

The festival provided an excellent opportunity for The Cold War Museum to connect with the community and introduce thousands of people to this important chapter in history.



VFW
POST 7916
OCCOQUAN, VIRGINIA

*Serving Our Veterans
and the Families
of Our Fallen.*

Happy 79th Birthday U.S. AIR FORCE

SEPTEMBER 18, 1947 – 2026

AIM HIGH ★ FLY ★ FIGHT ★ WIN



SERVICE
INTEGRITY
EXCELLENCE
ALWAYS



Cake Cutting Recap

Tonight, VFW Post 7916 took a moment to celebrate the 79th birthday of the United States Air Force with a traditional cake cutting.

Thank you to everyone who joined us — and especially our Air Force veterans — for helping us honor the Airmen, past and present.

VFW POST 7916 | 204 MILL STREET, OCCOQUAN, VA 22125 | 703-491-1884