

MEMORIALIZATIONS

ON

COLUMBUS AFB
MISSISSIPPI



JANUARY 2016

Forward

The intent of the Air Force memorialization program is to provide lasting honor and pay tribute to deceased as well as living Air Force military and civilian personnel with records of outstanding and honorable service. This program also fosters favorable relationships and goodwill between the local community and the Air Force. Only the most deserving persons are selected.

NOTE: The number after the memorialized name corresponds to the number on the map, which shows the location of the plaque, monument, building, etc. The street names are labeled on the map. To obtain a copy of the map for locations of the memorial sites, contact the History Office.

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SIMLER BOULEVARD

Simler Boulevard was named after Lieutenant General George B. Simler. He was the commander of Air Training Command from August 1970 until his death in September 1972. He was killed in a T-38 jet trainer mishap at Randolph AFB, Texas. The plaque is located on the median of Simler Boulevard, shortly after entering the East gate.



Lt Gen George B. Simler



LOCKHART STREET

“Second Street” was renamed Lockhart Street after Captain George Lockhart. Captain Lockhart was a 1971 UPT graduate from Columbus. He died in 1972 during a B-52 mission in Vietnam when his aircraft was hit by a surface-to-air missile. He was MIA until August 1989 when his remains were identified and repatriated.



WARD STREET

“Fifth Street” was renamed Ward Street to honor Staff Sergeant Rufus A. Ward, Sr. Mr. Ward lived in Columbus as a small child. He enlisted in the US Army Air Corps and became a B-17 tail gunner with the 8th Air Force. He was shot down over Germany on his sixth mission, captured and held as a prisoner of war. After he was liberated, he returned to Columbus.



PRYOR STREET

“A Street” was renamed Pryor Street to recognize Colonel Roger C. Pryor, a Mississippi native. He joined the US Army Reserves and received his pilot rating in May 1941. Col Pryor was commander of the 2nd Fighter Squadron, when he was shot down in an F-6D over Burma and held as a POW for two months. He was credited with five kills and three probables.



BRADT STREET

“B Street” was renamed Bradt Street in honor of Captain Douglas Bradt. He graduated with Class 86-04 and later flew the OV-10, F-111A and EF-111. He posthumously received the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Purple Heart for combat actions during Operation DESERT STORM.



TUSKEGEE ARMEN DRIVE

Flightline Road was renamed Tuskegee Airmen Drive to honor the first African-Americans to be trained as World War II military pilots in the Army Air Corps.



IMES STREET

The name of “C Street” was changed to Imes Street after Mississippi native, Mr. Vinton Birney Imes, Sr. Mr. Imes became the principal owner and editor-in-chief of the *Commercial Dispatch* after the owner’s death. In 1940, he became the Chairman of the Columbus Air Base Commission, working to secure land for a pilot training field. After the base was placed on inactive status after World War II, he worked with US Senate and Congressional delegations to reopen the base permanently in the 1950s. Mr. Imes was also active in many community activities.



SHUMAKE STREET

“First Street” was renamed Shumake Street to remember Colonel Glynn Shumake. He flew a B-17 in World War II and was a POW in Barth, Germany. He was also a barracks mate of Staff Sergeant Rufus Ward, Sr. of West Point. As a Columbus resident, Col Shumake served as a member of the Mississippi State Legislature and House of Representatives from 1972-1980.



CARLYLE HARRIS STREET

“D Street” was renamed Carlyle Harris Street to honor retired Colonel Carlyle “Smitty” Harris. Colonel Harris was an F-105 pilot and Vietnam POW for more than seven years. He perfected and spread a tap code that became the gold standard for communication between prisoners during the Vietnam War.



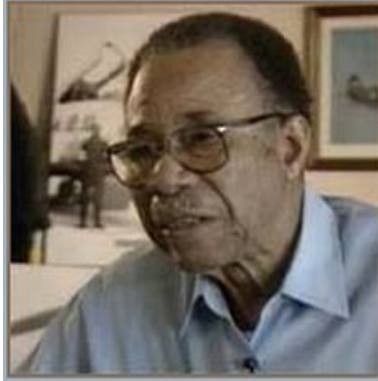
DOWNS STREET

“E Street” was renamed Downs Street in honor of Major William Downs who graduated from Columbus in Class 89-07. During his career, he flew the B-52, C-130, MC-130 and OV-10. He served in Operations DESERT STORM, DESERT SHIELD, ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM. Major Downs was assisting the newly established Iraqi Air Force, when his aircraft went down near the Iranian border on Memorial Day in 2005.



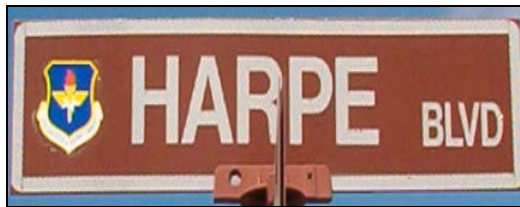
ALVA TEMPLE ROAD

“A Drive” was renamed to honor Lieutenant Colonel Alva N. Temple. Lieutenant Colonel Temple was born in Alabama and lived in Columbus from 1962 until his death in 2004. He joined the Army Air Corps and completed pilot training at Tuskegee Army Air Field in Alabama. He graduated in Class 43-G and was commissioned as a second lieutenant. He was one of the first African-Americans to train as a military pilot. A total of 992 African-American pilots graduated during World War II and became known as the Tuskegee Airmen. Lieutenant Colonel Temple flew 120 combat missions over Italy, Southern Europe, Southern France and the Balkans.



HARPE BOULEVARD

Harpe Boulevard runs perpendicular in front of the wing headquarters building. The street is named after Major General Winfred S. “Scott” Harpe. He was the wing commander from July 1978 to July 1980. He was killed in an aircraft accident near Madrid, Spain, in 1988. (See #12 for related information.)



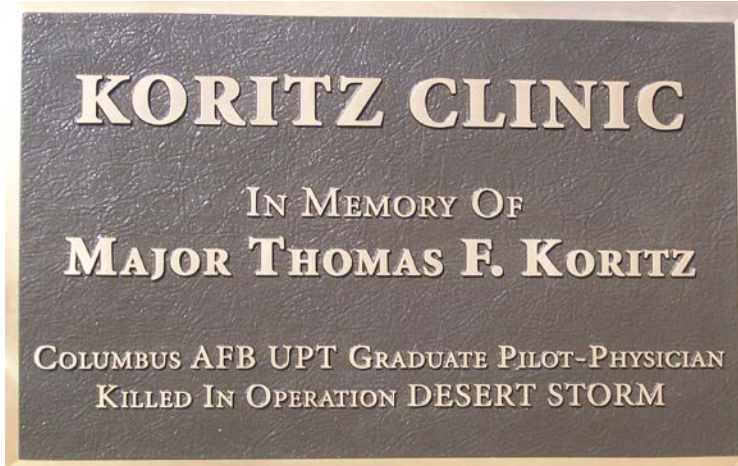
WEBB STREET

“F Street” was renamed Webb Street in memory of Mr. Ralph L. “Chicken” Webb. Mr. Webb, a long-time resident of Columbus, was president of the Chamber of Commerce from 1941-1943, working on the committee to secure land for a pilot training field. After World War II, Mr. Webb, as a member of the Air Base Committee, worked with senate and congressional delegations to reactivate the base as a permanent facility. Mr. Webb was also active in many local organizations and was selected as one of the original Wingmen for Columbus Air Force Base.



KORITZ CLINIC – 1

In January 2008, the 14th Medical Group renamed the base clinic, Koritz Clinic. Major Thomas F. Koritz was a former flight surgeon in the US Air Force. Major Koritz graduated from the base with Class 82-01. He was an F-15E pilot who was killed in action on the first day of Operation DESERT STORM on a mission over Basra, Iraq. At the time of his death, he was one of five actively flying flight surgeons in the Air Force.



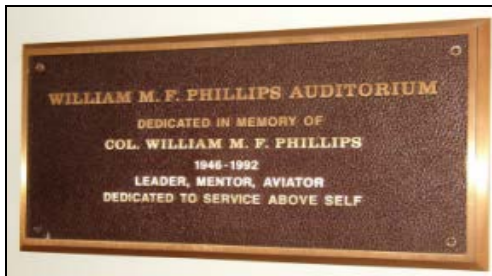
KAYE AUDITORIUM – 2

On September 21, 2007, the base theater was officially dedicated “Kaye Auditorium” after Captain Samuel Kaye, Jr., a World War I fighter pilot from Columbus. In the entry way to the auditorium, five display cases feature artifacts that depict the different eras of the base’s history. The central display case houses Capt Kaye’s uniform, photos of his personal and military life and replicas of his medals. In addition, special murals, painted by Mr. Eugene Poole, pay a special tribute to the heritage of Columbus AFB.



PHILLIPS AUDITORIUM – 3

Phillips Auditorium, located in building 236, is named after Colonel William M. F. Phillips. He was the 37th Flying Training Squadron commander from January 1985 to July 1987.



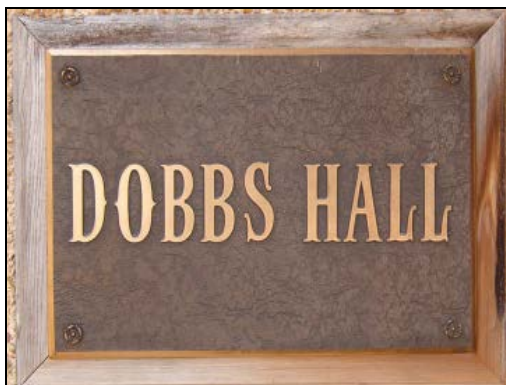
BLASSIE HALL – 4

The Operations Support Squadron, building 230, is dedicated to First Lieutenant Michael J. Blassie. Lieutenant Blassie was a graduate of undergraduate pilot training Class 72-02. Shortly after leaving Columbus, he was killed in action while flying a Cessna A-37 aircraft at An Loc, Republic of Vietnam, on May 11, 1972. From 1984 to 1998, he rested in the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery. In 1998, DNA tests confirmed his identity and returned his remains to his family for burial.



DOBBS HALL – 5

Building 268, Operations Group, is dedicated to Captain Mark L. Dobbs. Captain Dobbs was stationed at Columbus AFB from February 1973 to May 1979. He graduated with Class 76-05 and served as a T-37 instructor pilot and an academic instructor. He died in a KC-135 training mission at Castle AFB, California, on 19 September 1979.



TUSKEGEE AIRMEN – 6

On March 4-6, 2004, the base held a Tuskegee Airmen memorial event. The event included the dedication of the Tuskegee Airmen display located in building 268, presentation of medals to First Lieutenant Quitman C. Walker's family and a banquet. The Tuskegee Airmen display is a memorial to all Tuskegee Airmen and the 10 Tuskegee Airmen from Mississippi.



MALLORY HANGAR– 7

The small aircraft maintenance hangar, building 440, is named after Colonel Louie C. Mallory. Colonel Mallory arrived at Columbus in June 1941 as commanding officer in charge of construction of the base. He later assumed command of the base in October 1941.



DUNCAN FIRE HALL – 8

The old fire station, building 830, was dedicated to Raymond C. Duncan. He served as the base fire chief from 1952-1984. He designed a T-38 aircraft mockup, which is still used today to practice putting out fires. After the new fire station was completed in 2007, the old fire station was demolished in 2008. As a result, the name 'Duncan Fire Hall' was retired. The plaque is located in the fire station.

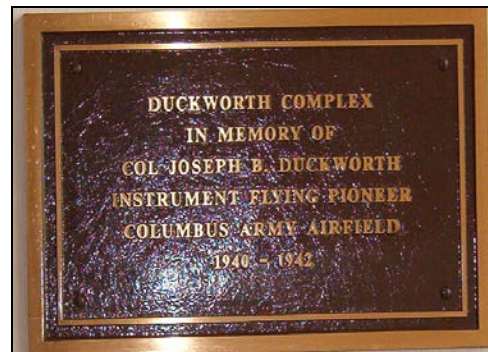


JOE B. DUCKWORTH COMPLEX – 9

The Joe B. Duckworth Complex, also known as Base Operations, is located in building 847. It is named after Colonel Joe B. Duckworth. He was the director of training at Columbus Army Flying School in the 1940s. He developed a system of instrument training on which future Air Force and Federal Aviation Administration flying was based. He also established the Flying Evaluation Board, which was used to evaluate instructors.

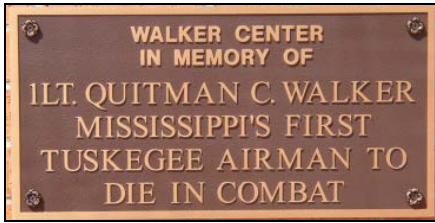


Col Joe B. Duckworth



WALKER CENTER – 10

The Walker Center, building 1030, is dedicated to First Lieutenant Quitman C. Walker. He was a Tuskegee Airmen from Indianola, Mississippi. He was the first Tuskegee Airman from Mississippi to give his life for his country. A shadow box representing Lt Walker’s military career hangs in the entrance to the Walker Center.



1Lt Quitman C. Walker



RICHARD “GENE” SMITH PLAZA– 11

The Ceremonial Plaza in front of the wing headquarters building was renamed Richard “Gene” Smith Plaza in honor of retired Lieutenant Colonel Richard “Gene” Smith. Lieutenant Colonel Smith was an F-105 pilot and POW for more than five years during the Vietnam War. He later became the 50th FTS commander and director of operations for the wing. The plaza was initially dedicated on October 18, 1996. One side of the monument honors the Air Force Medal of Honor recipients. In December 2000, A1C William H. Pitsenbarger was awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions in Vietnam. His name was added to the wall on May 25, 2001. The other wall of the monument honors Columbus pilot training graduates since 1972 that have died in military aircraft accidents. At the center of the monument is a large replica of pilot training wings. The location is used for different ceremonies and is a favorite picture taking spot after graduations.

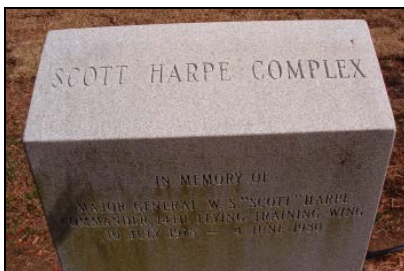


SCOTT HARPE COMPLEX – 12

The Scott Harpe Complex was also named after Major General Harpe. It was dedicated on August 27, 1990, upon completion of the new headquarters building. A painting of Gen Harpe hangs in the headquarters building. It was painted by a former international pilot training student, Ahmed Ragheb. The painting was donated by Gen Harpe's family and was accessioned in to the Air Force Art Program.



Maj Gen Scott Harpe



CHAPEL WINDOWS – 13

The previous stained glass windows at the Chapel were installed in 1968 and dedicated to two B-52 crews stationed at Columbus who perished during the Vietnam War in two different aircraft mishaps in 1967. A total of eight men died in those accidents. In addition, while on temporary duty to Vietnam, four Columbus KC-135 crewmen were killed while on a mission with a KC-135 from Westover AFB, Massachusetts, in 1968. A plaque near the window serves as a memorial to the 12 men. In 1992, the base chapel was renovated. The new windows were rededicated to the 12 crew men. Some of the glass from the old windows was used to make the new stained glass windows.



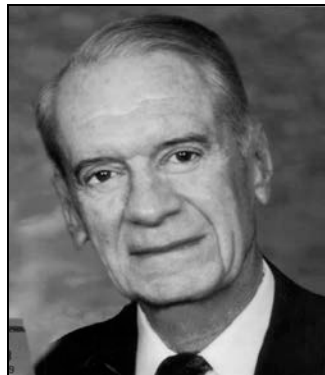
PERSONNEL BUILDING MONUMENT – 14

The monument at the south corner of building 926, the personnel building, was dedicated in December 1979 to honor the men and women of the Air Force who have served and are presently serving at Columbus Air Force Base.



MONTGOMERY VILLAGE – 15

The new, enlisted dormitories were dedicated to former Mississippi Congressman G. V. “Sonny” Montgomery on January 15, 1999. Congressman Montgomery was instrumental in supporting Columbus AFB and other national defense requirements. Former wing commander, Colonel Michael G. Lee, also named Congressman Montgomery as a Columbus Wingman in 1996.



Congressman Sonny Montgomery



MEDAL OF HONOR MONUMENT– 16

Earlier, on April 21, 1995, the base planted 41 trees as part of Earth Day and to honor two Army Medal of Honor recipients from Mississippi, known as the Medal of Honor Park. The park was dedicated to Sergeant. John A. Pittman from Carrollton, Mississippi, who received the Medal of Honor for service during the Korean War; and to Private Robert T. Henry from Greenville, Mississippi, who received the Medal of Honor for gallantry in Germany during World War II.



Pvt Robert T. Henry



Sgt John A. Pittman

Due to logistic concerns it became necessary to move the Medal of Honor Park to Freedom Park. The park is commemorated with a Medal of Honor Monument and trees.



Medal of Honor Monument

FREEDOM PARK – 17

The original Freedom Park (also known as Rocket Park for those who have been around awhile) was built in 1976. A bicentennial committee came up with the idea to build a small park and place a time capsule in it to commemorate America's 200th birthday.

After 20 years, the 1970s-era playground equipment was determined to be unsafe. As a result, on September 18-22, 1996, the base built a new playground in Freedom Park. The project was jointly funded by 19th Air Force and Columbus AFB. Approximately 150 Columbus AFB youth provided input and ideas on what would be built in the playground. More than 1,100 volunteers from the base and local community worked for five days (three shifts per day) to complete the playground. Each year the base has a work day to spruce up the playground.

Two time capsules are buried at the park. One was buried under the wire sculpture monument in 1976 when the park was initially built. Some of the items in the time capsule include the March 26, 1976, base paper, the March 8, 1976, *Commercial Dispatch*, 35-mm slides, a taped presentation of the wing commander's welcome briefing, a set of bicentennial coins and a lithograph showing the Air Force aircraft inventory. It is scheduled to be opened on July 4, 2026. The second time capsule was buried in 1996 when Freedom Park was renovated. Some of the items it contains are a base newspaper, pictures of the base, children's art work and favorite items donated by children from the Child Development Center. The time capsule is scheduled to be opened on September 22, 2046.



MELENDEZ RADIO SITE - 18

On 9 April 2009, Columbus Air Force Base dedicated its Ground-to-Air Transmitter and Receiver Site after SSgt Luis Melendez-Sanchez to honor his accomplishments and memory. Sergeant Melendez-Sanchez was born in Bayamon, Puerto Rico on 8 November 1972. Upon his entry into the Air Force and completion of training at Kessler AFB, MS, he went on to serve with the 100th Communications Squadron, RAF Mildenhall, England, from 1996 to 2001. In 2001, he was transferred to Columbus AFB, MS, as a Ground Radio Maintenance Journeyman with the 14th Communications Squadron from December 2001-July 2005. Following this assignment he was sent to Langley AFB, VA with the 1st Communications Squadron, Combat Systems Flight. While deployed to Djibouti with Joint Task Force- Horn of Africa, he participated in supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. He was killed on a training mission when two CH-53 helicopters crashed into the Gulf of Aden near Ras-Siyyan, in northern Djibouti.



MCALLISTER FIRE STATION - 19

On 21 May 2009, the base dedicated its fire station in memory of SMSgt. (Ret.) Robert A. McAllister. Sergeant McAllister was a pioneer of pilot and aircrew rescue and extraction as a part of the elite Airborne Rescue Specialist/Firefighter during Vietnam. He flew over 1,155 combat missions, earning an unprecedented 33 Air Medals including the Silver Star for his participation in the recovery of a downed B-52H tail gunner who crashed in a mine field, two Bronze Stars (one for valor), six Meritorious Service Medals and six Air Force Commendation Medals. During his time in Vietnam, SMSgt. McAllister was responsible for saving the lives of 17 Airmen and recovering several remains of those killed in action, so they could be honored in a manner deserved of fallen heroes. Upon his retirement in 1981, he joined the Federal Civil Service and served as fire chief at Columbus Air Force Base until 2002. He died 9 November 2005.



FAULKNER AUDITORIUM - 20

On 24 April 2009, the 50th Flying Training Squadron dedicated its squadron auditorium in honor of Major David B. Faulkner. Major Blair “Bama” Faulkner was an instructor pilot serving with the 43rd FTS and was killed in a T-38 crash on 23 April 2008 along with his student Second Lieutenant Matthew Emmons. Maj. Faulkner was an outstanding instructor and pilot, who served both in Afghanistan and Turkey in support of combat operations.

