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photo by Ken Hackman

BUZZ ALDRIN

BIOGRAPHY

Colonel (Ret.) Buzz Aldrin is a 21 year Air Force veteran who served as a jet pilot and is best known as the second astronaut to walk on the moon. Aldrin graduated from West Point in 1951 with a B.S. in mechanical engineering. He was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force and served as a jet fighter pilot during the Korean War. Aldrin flew 66 combat missions while on duty in Korea and shot down two MiG-15 aircraft. He also flew F-100s as a flight commander at Bitburg, Germany. In 1963, Aldrin was selected by NASA to become an astronaut. On July 20, 1969, as the Lunar Module pilot on Apollo 11, Aldrin became the second human being to set foot on the moon, following mission commander Neil Armstrong. Aldrin retired from active duty in 1972.

To this day, Colonel Aldrin has remained at the forefront of efforts to ensure America's continued leadership in human space exploration.

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photos by Staff Sgt. Brittany Barker

RICHARD ARMSTRONG

BIOGRAPHY

Sergeant (Separated) Richard Armstrong served for 10 years as an F-16 Jet Simulator Specialist. "My most memorable moment in the Air Force was while I was stationed in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia during Operation DESERT STORM. We were working 12-hour shifts taking turns sleeping under the desk. Then we heard the air warnings. Scud missiles were launched on us, we took evasive action and donned our chemical gear. It was quite the experience." It made me think about what life for my family would be like without me," said Armstrong. Armstrong says that the Air Force helped him grow up really fast. "I enjoyed the military and I miss the camaraderie. There is nothing like it in the civilian world. My advice to other Airmen is to stay strong in your commitment to the service. I enjoyed being in the military." He is currently an active member with the Veterans of Foreign Wars. "I wish more people would recognize veterans and honor their service, " said Armstrong.

Armstong works as a Support Supportability Specialist for the Defense Logistics Agency at Hill Air Force Base, Utah.

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photo by Lance Cheung

DALE ARMWOOD

BIOGRAPHY

Chief Master Sergeant (Ret.) Dale Armwood served from April 1963 to October 1989 mainly as a Training Instructor at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas. She was the first woman instructor at then Strategic Air Command Academy, Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana. She was also the first woman to develop curriculum for the Leadership and Management Development Center at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. As a Technical Sergeant, Dale Armwood taught Seminar C World Affairs at the Strategic Air Command Non-Commisioned Officer Academy. It was not uncommon for students to initially doubt her abilities as an instructor because she was a woman, but they regularly left convinced she was one of the best. Chief Armwood's advice to new female Airmen: "Don't use it as an excuse - Suck it up."

Armwood has now retired in San Antonio, Texas where she and Chief (Ret.) Carol Poyner get together to find great food at diners around San Antonio.

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photos by Tech. Sgt. Jacob N. Bailey

JOSEPH BRUCKER

BIOGRAPHY

Staff Sergeant (Separated) Joseph Brucker was a Staff Sergeant in the U.S. Army Air Forces during WWII. He was drafted in 1943 and served as a B-25 Mitchell tail gunner until the war's end in 1945. Brucker served with the 11th Bomb Squadron and was forward stationed in China where B-25 crews flew missions throughout the Pacific theater attacking Japanese targets.

After the war, Brucker became a lawyer and practiced law for 58 years. He recently retired and lives in Springfield, Ohio.

Brucker visited Grimes Field, Ohio, on April 14, 2010, on the occasion of the Doolittle Raiders' 68th reunion. The event commemorated the anniversary of the Doolittle Tokyo Raid. On April 18th, 1942, U.S. Army Air Forces Lt. Col. Jimmy Doolittle's squad of 16 B-25s bombed targets in response to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

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photo by Lance Cheung

JIM BYERS

BIOGRAPHY

Sergeant (Separated) Jim Byers is a seven year Air Force veteran who didn't fly a sleek F-86 Sabre jet into "MiG Alley" to shoot down enemy planes during the Korean War. He was a statistical draftsman; one of more than 5.7 million "average Joes" who served there. "There was no glamour in what I did. I drew charts and flipped them at briefings," he said. "I knew I was helping do something important. I wasn't in the fight. But passing information was the next most important thing in Korea." In 1953 he left his mark. While visiting a soldier buddy near the front lines in Korea, he was invited to join a 15-man Army patrol. After a while, the point man found signs that enemy soldiers were in the area. Byers spotted the first Chinese soldier. A voice behind him yelled, "Shoot him before he shoots you. The Airman didn't freeze up, and within seconds the rest of the platoon opened fire on other Chinese soldiers. They killed several enemy combatants and suffered no casualties. After the platoon leader filed a report to headquarters, Byers bid his buddy good-bye and headed home for Osan.

Jim is retired and lives with his wife in Jamison, Pennsylvania. They have four grandchildren.

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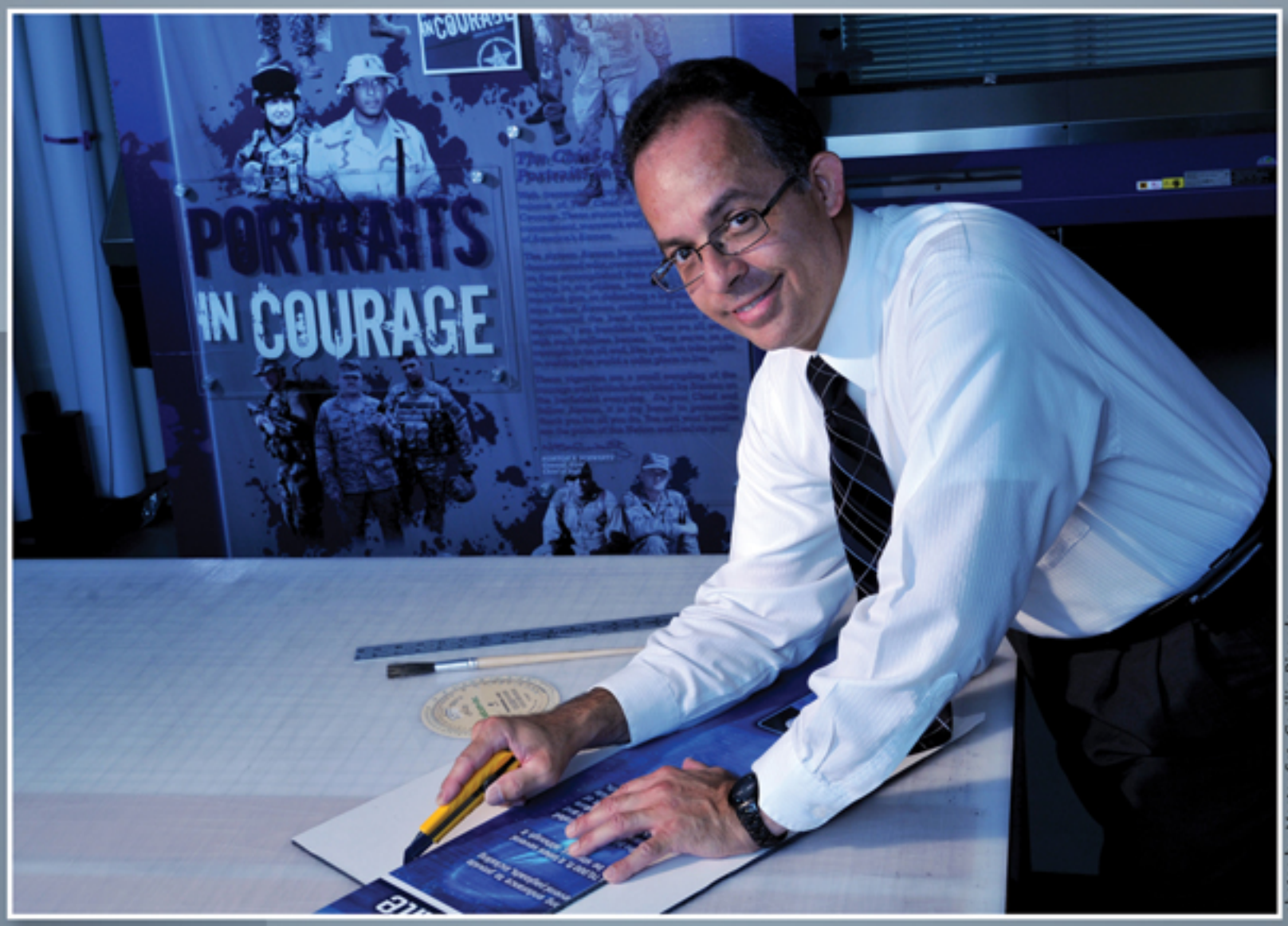

photos by Master Sgt. Cecilio Ricardo

ADAN CARABALLO

BIOGRAPHY

Master Sergeant (Ret.) Adan Caraballo was an Air Force Graphic Specialist from July 1982 to October 2002. During his time in the Air Force he was able to fulfill a life long dream. As a young boy, he had an 11-mile paper route and hasn't stopped cycling since. Twelve years into his Air Force career, then Staff Sergeant Caraballo had a chance to pursue his dream of biking across the United States. Bikes for Tykes was a cross-country event in 1994 sponsored by the D.C. Air National Guard to raise money for Children's Hospital in Washington D.C. While training for the event, a Public Affairs representative heard about his challenge, publicized it and the base commander granted Caraballo a 45-day permissive TDY (Temporary Duty). "I couldn't believe it, my job in the Air Force was to bike across the country for 45 days." Some days he biked a total of 110 miles and felt like quitting but thanks to the support of his friends and the knowledge that he was representing the Air Force, he didn't quit. He biked a total of 3,165 miles and helped Bikes for Tykes raise $10,000 that year.

Caraballo is currently working in the Headquarters Air Force Information Management Multimedia Services, Pentagon, Washington D.C. He still loves extreme sports such as sky diving, bungee jumping, hang gliding and long distance cycling.

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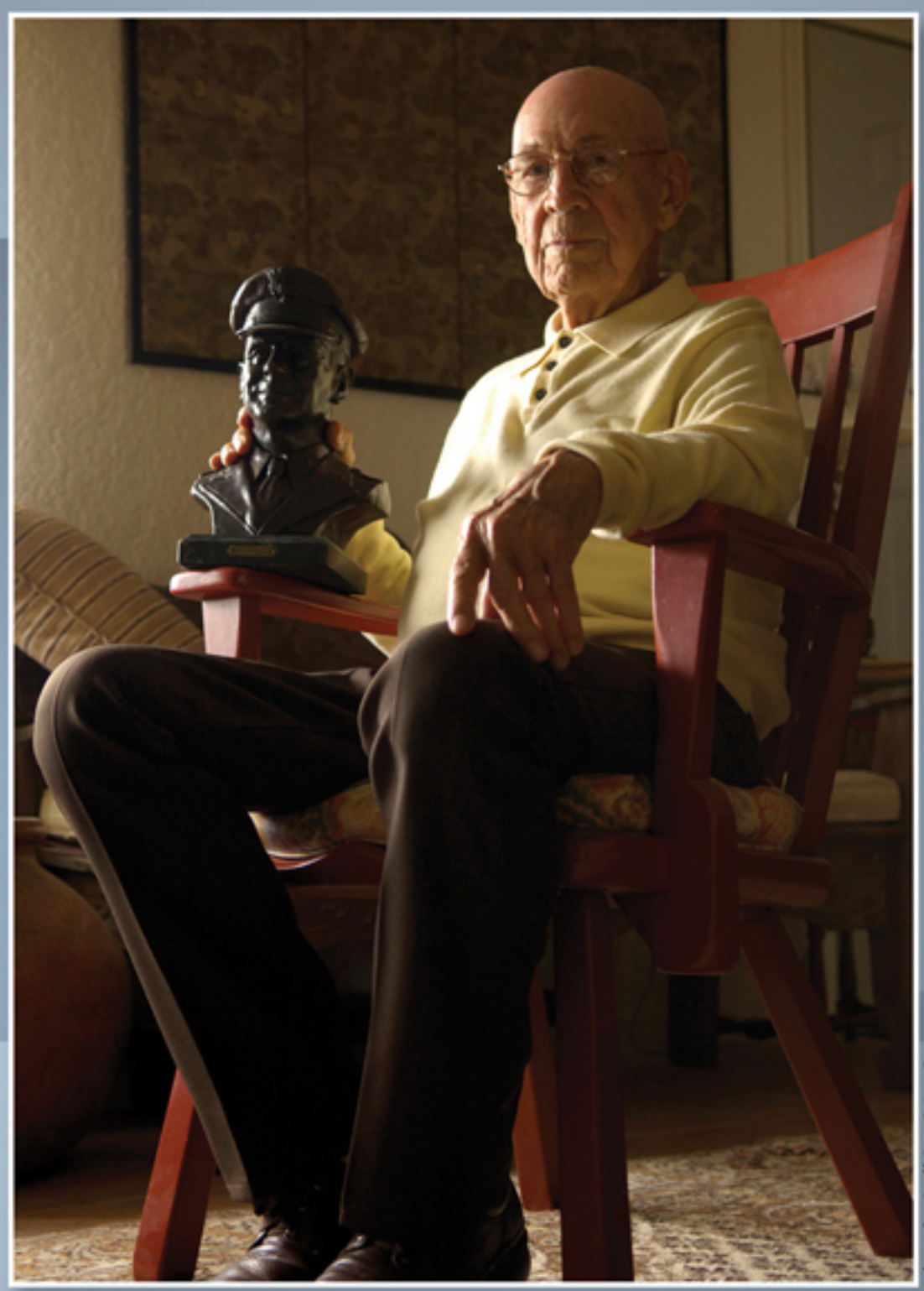

photo by Staff Sgt. Brian Ferguson

RICHARD COLE

BIOGRAPHY

Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) Richard Cole was one of 80 men led by then Lieutenant Colonel James Doolittle, assembled to execute a surprise attack over the islands of Japan in 1942. It would be the first time any of them would take off from a carrier. Armed with enough fuel for a one-way trip to Japan and a landing in China, they planned to launch off the USS Hornet about 450 miles from Japan. The U.S. ships were spotted early and the Doolittle Raiders were forced to depart about 650 miles from their intended target. The B-25s arrived from varying directions, confusing the Japanese. The bombers hit their targets and escaped Japan of their own accord. The mission was a success and it turned up the spirits of Americans during World War II.

Cole remains active on his farm in Comfort, Texas

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photo by Tech. Sgt. DeNoris Mickle

WESLEY CROSSON

BIOGRAPHY

Senior Airman (Separated) Wesley Crosson is a Air Force veteran who served five years as a Civil Engineer Water Treatment Technician. "The most memorable time in the Air Force was an exercise I participated in near Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana. We were going to rebuild a playground and ended up building two homes for children," said Crosson. "But what I remember most about the Air Force was the friendships, the brotherhood."

Crosson traveled to Los Angeles to receive treatment at the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center for his missing leg. He is currently unemployed and on disability and living in Los Angeles, California.

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photos by Lance Cheung

MIGUEL DELEON

BIOGRAPHY

Technical Sergeant (Ret.) Miguel DeLeon was a mobility Non-Commissioned Officer and a Transportation Squadron Superintendent of Combat Readiness. He served in the Air Force from 1980 to 2001 during Operation ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM. As Superintendent of Combat Readiness, he led trainers who taught units how to deploy their people and equipment. Care, concern and a large dose of creativity have been DeLeon's approach to life and his mission. He was a great leader and an inspiration to most for winning a constant battle with Diabetes. Diabetes dealt this warrior a severe blow -- nearly robbing him of his sight. Of his former unit, he said it was a "great team, and I'm very thankful for them." One of those former team members said it was she who is thankful. "I've learned so much more than just the job from Sergeant DeLeon," said 2nd Lt. Kate Nenni, the squadron's combat readiness flight commander. "I have to take care of myself when I'm young," she said. "Having realized this through his example, I try to live life to the fullest and thank God for the gifts I've been given. Because in a flash it can all change."

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photos by Don Sutherland

EDWARD GARLAND

BIOGRAPHY

Colonel (Ret.) Edward Garland is a highly decorated F-4 pilot with more than 2,500 flying hours and has been awarded the Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, Purple Heart, and Air Medal with five oak leaf clusters. During the Vietnam War, Garland's F-4 was the first to be shot down by an air-to-air missile. Garland also served as a flight instructor with the 12th Flying Training Wing and after retirement, as Vice Commander and briefly as Wing Commander of 433rd Airlift Wing in the Air Force Reserves. The Wing provided worldwide airlift support, flying C-124Cs, then C-130Bs, and later the C-5A.

Edward Garland has served his country in many capacities and all with distinction. He is motivated each day by his love of God, his family, his country and his Air Force.