

WILD BLUE COUNTRY

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WILD BLUE COUNTRY

Incredible versatility, broad repertoire, and show-stopping professionalism enable Wild Blue Country to support every Air Force mission, from community relations and recruiting to troop morale and support. A favorite in country music circles, Wild Blue Country has regularly been featured on the Grand Ole Opry and television shows like Nashville Now and Opry Back Stage. They have appeared with country recording artists such as Charlie Daniels, Conway Twitty, Boxcar Willie, Hank Williams, Jr., Louise Mandrell, Reba McEntire, Roger Miller, Ray Price, "Whispering" Bill Anderson and Mickey Gilley. As a favorite of military and civilian audiences alike, Wild Blue Country continues to captivate audiences through their worldwide appeal.

The United States Air Force Academy Band is a 76-member organization that performs for millions of people each year in support of United States Air Force recruiting and community relations. As one of the two premier bands in the Air Force, the United States Air Force Academy Band performs from coast to coast, as well as meeting a demanding performance schedule for The Air Force Academy and other military commands in the Colorado Springs area, totaling more than 600 performances each year. A tradition of musical excellence, one of the core values of The United States Air Force Academy Band, is maintained through rigorous auditions. Each member of the Band brings to every performance a wealth of educational and professional experience that greatly enhances every musical selection.

The United States Air Force Academy Band and Wild Blue Country appear on behalf of the Superintendent, USAF Academy. All performances are presented **free and open to the public**.

Fact Sheet

Who they are	A six-piece country group of full-time professional musicians One of ten performing groups that make up the 76-member United States Air Force Academy Band
What they do	Support the United States Air Force through nationwide public performances, USAF recruiting and military functions Provide support for community relations
What makes them unique	They perform a variety of musical styles including country, classic rock and country rock suitable for all ages The first Air Force country group to perform on the Grand Ole Opry
Group Leader and Musical Director	Senior Master Sergeant Scott Barbier, Group Leader Master Sergeant Jerome Oddo, Musical Director

The United States Air Force Academy Band

Key Personnel	Lieutenant Colonel Philip C. Chevallard — Commander/Conductor Lieutenant Michael J. Willen — Deputy Commander/Conductor Chief Master Sergeant Marcelle S. M. Hureau — Band Manager, Logistics Chief Master Sergeant Randall A. Doersch — Band Manager, Support Mr. Frederick C. Correll — Director of Operations
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Group Leader

Senior Master Sergeant Jim E. Christian

Senior Master Sergeant Jim Christian, *fiddle, mandolin and guitar*, was born in Vinita, Oklahoma. He earned his Bachelor and Master of Music Degrees in Theory and Composition from Pittsburg State University in Pittsburg, Kansas. He began his Air Force career in 1978 as a guitarist with the 8th Air Force Band at Barksdale AFB, Louisiana. His next assignment took him to the Air Training Command Band at Lackland AFB, Texas, where he performed for a number of years with Sky Country. Sergeant Christian joined The United States Air Force Academy Band Wild Blue Country in 1992. He has studied with Mark O'Conner, Byron Berline and many other internationally recognized fiddle players. His versatility playing the fiddle, mandolin, harmonica, banjo and guitar, as well as his arranging capabilities, brings a refreshing dimension to country music and offers the best in American country entertainment.

Musical Director

Master Sergeant Jerome Oddo

Master Sergeant Jerome Oddo, *bassist and Musical Director*, hails from Detroit Michigan. He graduated from New Smyrna Beach High School in 1990, and attended Daytona Beach Community College. Sergeant Oddo joined the Air Force Band program in 1994. His first duty assignment was at Robins AFB, Georgia where he performed with Reserve Generation, High Flight, the Concert Band and the Jazz Ensemble. In 1998, Sergeant Oddo was reassigned to the Air Force Band of the Pacific at Elmendorf AFB, Alaska. He joined The United States Air Force Academy Band in June 2000. Jerome performs bass and vocals with Wild Blue Country, arranges music for the band, and coordinates local and national tours. He has performed with Lari White, Mila Mason, Crystal Gail, Christ Church Mass Choir, Nashville, TN, and Bud Shank. Sergeant Oddo has studied with Jeff Berlin, Kim Stone, Mariam Delapp, Tom Thorsen and Jim Graves.

Members of Wild Blue Country

Master Sergeant James Bristow, *guitar*, is a native of Manhattan, Kansas. He joined the United States Air Force Academy Band in 1989. As a guitarist, he has been a contributing member in virtually all of the Band's commercial settings, including jazz, rock, rhythm and blues, Concert Band, and country music. Sergeant Bristow majored in music at Kansas State University and graduated from the Musicians Institute in Hollywood, California in 1980. His mentors include guitarists Dawayne Bailey of the group Chicago, Bob Segar, Steely Dan's Larry Carlton, Robben Ford, Lee Ritenour, as well as Joe Pass, Tommy Tedesco, and Pat Martino. James has performed throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe. His military decorations include the Air Force Commendation Medal, one Oak Leaf Cluster, the Air Force Achievement medal, Parachutist Jump wings, and the US Army Assault School.

Master Sergeant Edgar Price, *banjo*, was born in Huntington, West Virginia. After high school he toured with various bluegrass bands, playing five-string banjo for all the major Bluegrass festivals on the East Coast, including Bill Monroe's Bean Blossom Festival where he judged the five-string banjo competition. While not performing at bluegrass festivals, Ed attended Marshall University where he studied tuba and electric guitar. He joined the Air Force in July of 1984 as a crew chief at Reese Air Force Base, Lubbock, Texas and was voted the best T-38 crew chief of 1986. Ed retrained into the band career field in 1987 and was assigned to the 502nd Air Force Band in Biloxi, Mississippi as a bass guitarist. In 1989, Sergeant Price was reassigned to the Air Force Band of the West in San Antonio, Texas as a steel guitarist where he performed with the group Sky Country. His next assignment took him to the Band of Flight at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio. In 1997, Sergeant Price joined The United States Air Force Academy Bands' Wild Blue Country.

Master Sergeant Michael E. Riley, *audio engineer*, is a native of the Rochester, New York. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in 1990, from SUNY College, Fredonia, New York. Mike then worked as a recording engineer and free-lance musician in the Rochester area until 1993, when he was invited to join The United States Air Force Academy Band as an audio engineer. Since joining the Band, Sergeant Riley has worked with virtually every component group, providing live sound reinforcement and recording services.

Master Sergeant Timothy D. Wilson, *vocalist*, a native of Tucker, Georgia, has been a member of the United States Air Force since 1979. He has studied voice with Gladys M. Huff and William D. Riley. In addition to numerous acclaimed performances throughout his military career, Sergeant Wilson has performed the baritone lead in Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*, Puccini's *Il Tabarro*, and the tenor soloist for performances of Mozart's *Requiem*. He has sung the National Anthem for sporting events at Atlanta Fulton County Stadium, Cynergy Stadium in Cincinnati, Ohio, and Erickson Stadium, Charlotte, North Carolina. Tim has also appeared with jazz legend Rob McConnell, contemporary gospel sensation, Babbie Mason and country music legend Larry Gatlin. His military awards include the Air Force Commendation Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, the Air Force Achievement Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, and the National Defense Medal. He holds an Associates Degree in Music from the Community College of the Air Force and a Bachelor of Science degree from Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia. He joined The United States Air Force Academy Band in March 2001, and is a vocalist with Wild Blue Country.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY BAND

Colorado Springs, Colorado is home to one of America's most exiting military band organizations. The United States Air Force Academy Band supports military ceremonies and esprit de corps functions benefiting the men and women of our nation's armed forces. The Band also presents free public concerts throughout the United States in support of Air Force recruiting and Air Force Academy community relations.

The Band's high standards can be traced back to its inception in 1942 as a group called the "Flying Yanks," which was started by two American airmen in England. This band was eventually designated the 739th Army Air Force Band in March 1944 and performed for radio shows, the general public and for Eighth Air Force Victory Bond drives.

The 739th Band, which came to be known as one of the best bands in Europe during WWII, was inactivated on October 20, 1945. It was reactivated on May 10, 1955 and assigned to the new United States Air Force Academy at Lowry Air Force Base, Denver, Colorado. Bandleaders throughout the Air Force were asked to screen their musicians for the best personnel that would fill the positions in what became the Air Force Academy Band.

In 1958 the Band moved to the new campus of the Air Force Academy near Colorado Springs to support the Cadet Wing at wing parades, military ceremonies, and athletic events. From 1958 to 1993 the Air Force Academy Band contributed to the training and development of more than 26,000 cadets.

In 1993 The Air Force Academy Band was renamed The United States Air Force Band of the Rockies and reassigned to Headquarters, Air Force Space Command, Peterson Air Force Base, also located in Colorado Springs. On October 1, 2003, the Band returned to its roots as The United States Air Force Academy Band. The United States Air Force Academy Band is proud to continue its long-standing commitment to musical and military excellence in its service to the nation.

