

USAF HEARTLAND OF AMERICA BAND

LINEAGE

702nd Air Force Band

STATIONS

Offutt AFB, NE

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The mission of the 702 AF Band is to participate in and provide music for military functions and ceremonies; to provide musical support for recreational and entertainment programs at Air Force installations; to provide music support for Air Force personnel procurement programs; and to provide musical support for Air Force community relations programs.

The band is conducted by Lt Col James L. Johnson, who assumed duty on 25 June 1973.

Delighting audiences since 1943, this 45-member unit represents more than 325,000 dedicated Air Force professionals who diligently watch over the skies of our country and our national interests, and who stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our allies protecting and defending all those who cherish freedom.

Whether presenting multimedia extravaganzas or traditional concerts, the Heartland of America Band dramatically conveys the bravery, sacrifices and commitment of our expeditionary Airmen, encourages veterans in VA hospitals, educates students of all ages on the importance of airpower and the mission of our Air Force, and buoys the spirits of Airmen thousands of miles from home by deploying to their locations with special performances, bringing uplifting messages of support from Americans back in the States.

The Heartland of America Band is comprised of Night Wing, which specializes in popular and country music, The Noteables jazz ensemble, the Brass in Blue brass ensemble, the Winds of Freedom woodwind quintet and the New Horizons clarinet ensemble. Members from these groups also form a brass quintet and a popular music group entitled Raptor. When joined together, the members of the squadron can form a Concert Band, Ceremonial Band or Marching Band.

The Heartland of America Band has received four Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards and five Air Force Organizational Excellence Awards. The band has the singular distinction of being the only Air Force musical unit deployed throughout the entire area of responsibility in support of troop morale during Operation DESERT SHIELD. In April 2006, Night Wing deployed to the desert, travelling 24,000 miles bringing music and messages from home during 37 shows to troops engaged in Operations IRAQI FREEDOM and ENDURING FREEDOM. Later that year, the unit celebrated the 60th Anniversary of the Air Force by presenting the 2006 Inaugural 55th Wing Tattoo, "The Call of Freedom." In May 2008, Raptor deployed to the desert in support of IRAQI FREEDOM and ENDURING FREEDOM, and most recently the unit supported the celebration of Air Force Week in the Heartland.

The USAF Heartland of America Band, Offutt AFB, NE, returned to its "roots," Thursday, May 22, 2003, to celebrate its 60th anniversary since its organization at Ardmore in 1943 as the 402nd (702nd) Army Air Forces Band. The 40-member concert band presented a Pre-Memorial Day, Pre-Dedication, 7:00PM concert at Heritage Hall (Civic Auditorium), 30 C Street NW, in Ardmore. The two-hour, free performance, sponsored by the Daily Ardmoreite, was given in remembrance of the men who lost their lives in training accidents while at Ardmore during both airbase activation periods. The Band did a tremendous job of entertaining approximately 1200 attendees of various ages with their musical talents. Each rendition was rewarded by long rounds of applause, several with standing ovations. The Band entertained from the same stage and building that the original 15-member 402nd Army Air Forces band did in 1943. The Civic Auditorium had just been completed at that time.

Sources