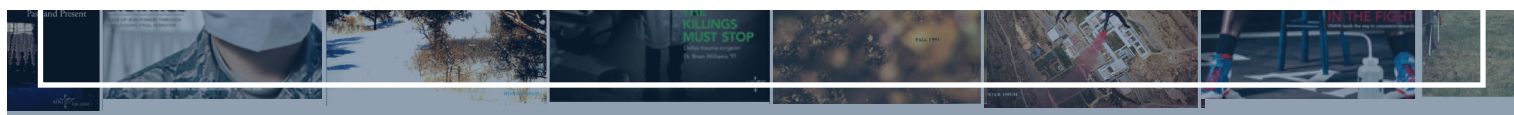
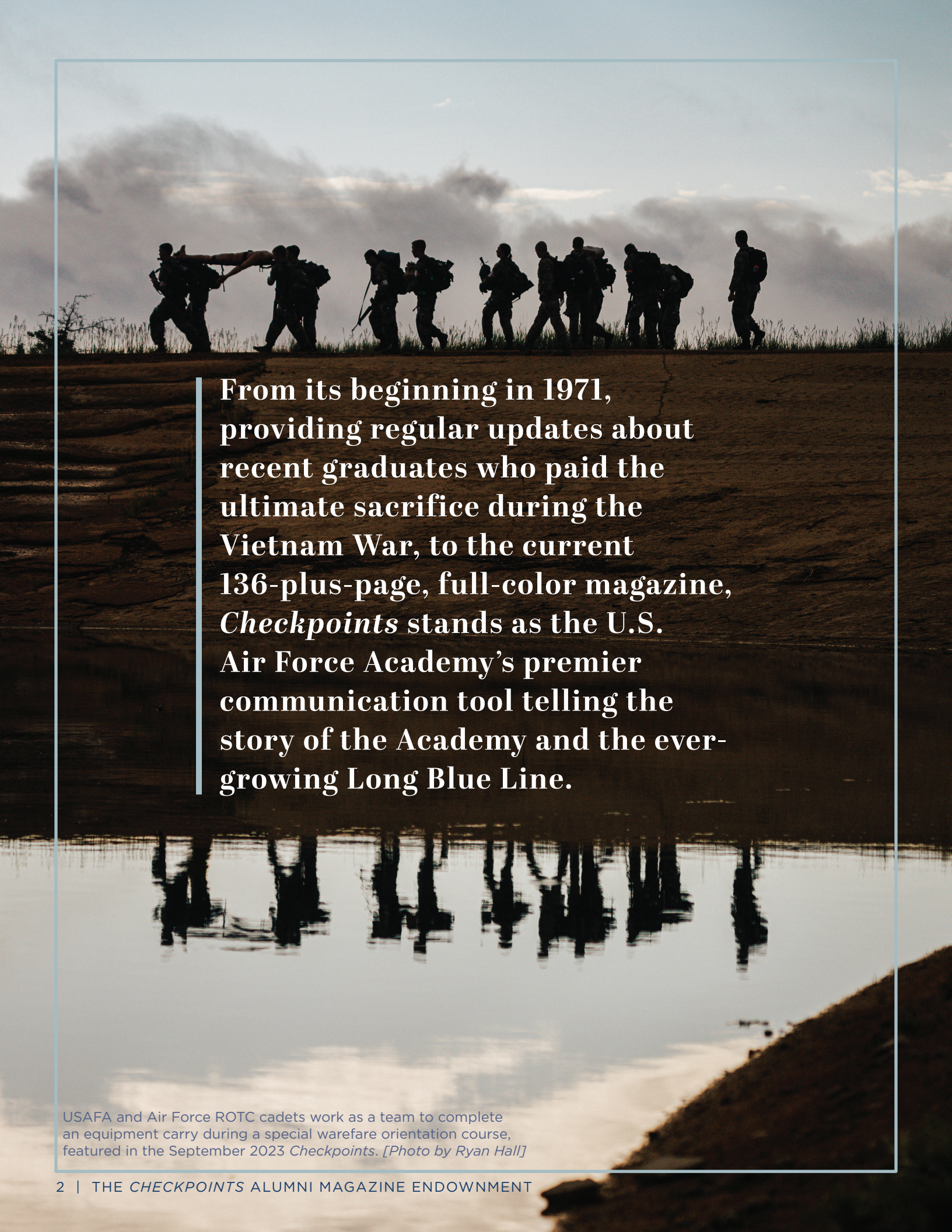


STRENGTHENING BONDS

►► The *Checkpoints* Alumni Magazine Endowment



A photograph showing a line of Air Force ROTC cadets silhouetted against a bright, cloudy sky at dusk or dawn. They are carrying large backpacks and equipment, moving across a grassy field. The scene is reflected in a body of water in the foreground.

From its beginning in 1971, providing regular updates about recent graduates who paid the ultimate sacrifice during the Vietnam War, to the current 136-plus-page, full-color magazine, *Checkpoints* stands as the U.S. Air Force Academy's premier communication tool telling the story of the Academy and the ever-growing Long Blue Line.

USAFA and Air Force ROTC cadets work as a team to complete an equipment carry during a special warfare orientation course, featured in the September 2023 *Checkpoints*. [Photo by Ryan Hall]



[Photo by Ryan Hall]

“*Checkpoints* is important since it is the one medium that provides a cradle to grave thread for our Long Blue Line experience. It allows alumni to view stories of the unvarnished enthusiasm, achievements, and aspirations of our young cadets, bookended by the Academy’s senior statesmen who continue to shape the next generation by contributing their time, wisdom, and resources. Concomitantly, *Checkpoints* enables us to keep our finger on the pulse of the Academy to include its leadership and initiatives. Finally, *Checkpoints* helps us stay updated on our classmates, and most poignantly, it provides a venue to remember and honor our fallen.”

—Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Dana Born '83

Every three months, U.S. Air Force Academy graduates and their families receive the newest edition of *Checkpoints* in their mailbox or inbox. The magazine allows each member of the Long Blue Line to reconnect with their alma mater, find out what classmates are up to and get a booster shot of Falcon pride.

When the magazine arrives, many immediately flip directly to the back of the publication to read the Class News section, catching up on marriage announcements, promotions, retirements, travel reports, deaths and more.

Readers then consume interesting content throughout the publication

- inspirational stories of graduates making a difference in the Air Force and Space Force, in the defense industry, in business and beyond
- remembrances recounting the history and heritage of the institution
- tales of cadets crushing it and making the most of their four years at USAFA



Ron McCracken '69, working on a B-26B Martin Marauder Model, featured in the June 2019 *Checkpoints*. [Photo by Ryan Hall]

- articles documenting the Academy's ongoing evolution as it prepares the next generation of warrior-scholars for the global challenges that lie ahead.

Checkpoints also offers space for the graduate community to offer feedback and suggestions through the expanded and highly read letters-to-the-editor section.

Graduates also engage with *Checkpoints* video features available on YouTube.

The hefty helping of Academy-related and graduate news ultimately brings renewed confidence in the institution and the leaders of character it produces.

PART OF OUR LEGACY

For more than 50 years, *Checkpoints* has served as the glue connecting and informing the USAFA graduate community. Not surprisingly, throughout its history, *Checkpoints* has been honored dozens of times by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education for excellence when compared to other college and university magazines. The *Checkpoints*

team travels the nation, and sometimes the world, to bring readers compelling stories designed to inform and inspire. Each quarter, the *Checkpoints* team plans and executes another edition that readers can be proud of, and it's the team's sincere hope that excellence will continue for generations to come.

To ensure *Checkpoints* remains a premier publication that reflects the excellence of the Air Force Academy and the Long Blue Line, the Association of Graduates and the Air Force Academy Foundation envisions a potential additional source of funding through private support. The goal is to tap into the generosity of the graduate community and the extended Academy family to endow *Checkpoints'* production and open the door to new possibilities for the Academy's official alumni publication.



Writer, Jeff Holmquist interviews Commandant of Cadets Brig. Gen. Gavin Marks '96 for a feature story in the September 2023 *Checkpoints*. [Photo by Ryan Hall]

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUPPORT

There are several new opportunities to support *Checkpoints*' legacy and have a lasting impact on your fellow graduates, their families and your alma mater:

► **1. Named endowment for the managing editor, \$2 million**

This endowment would provide approximately \$100,000 annually to:

- a) Plan and coordinate the content for each edition of the award-winning alumni publication.
- b) Gather and edit stories, submissions, death notices, Class News items and more.
- c) Work with the print vendor to produce and distribute the magazine to subscribers around the world.
- d) Finalize and upload the digital version of *Checkpoints*.

► **2. Named endowment for print production, \$6.2 million**

This endowment would provide approximately \$320,000 annually to support the printing and delivery of *Checkpoints*, including:

- a) Printing on high-quality paper, which helps maintain the excellence graduates have come to expect.
- b) Maintaining historical page counts to provide

available space for important stories and information.

c) Expanding the distribution of the magazine to all graduates who opt in to receive a physical copy.

d) Mailing under the Publication rate of USPS, necessary to send the magazine to graduates around the globe.

► **3. Endowment for story assignment travel budget, \$300,000**

This endowment will generate about \$15,000 a year to

- a) Ensure the *Checkpoints* team's ability to travel to where graduates live and work, gathering stories of inspiration and pride to share with fellow alumni.
- b) Provide funding for two to three trips per magazine issue so the writer, photographer and videographer can create the best possible stories.
- c) Class or individual named endowment for print production of one issue per year, \$1.6 million (see 2a-2d)

► **4. Named endowment for printing costs in perpetuity, \$4.85 million**

Once fully funded, this endowment would provide \$250,000 annually (see 2a and 2b)

Jim Donaldson '74 and spouse, Signe, pose with *Checkpoints* during their cruise across the Drake Passage to Antarctica.
[Photo submitted for 'Checking in with Checkpoints']



“Checkpoints is more than just a magazine; it’s a lifetime of information and inspiration. It highlights the successes and contributions of alumni, offering a sense of shared identity and accomplishments. This communication channel is invaluable as it not only acknowledges the past, but also keeps us informed about opportunities, events and current advancements and activities ongoing at our Academy. It strengthens our connection with our alma mater and each other, reminding us that we are part of a dynamic and supportive family.”

— The Hon. Frederick Gregory '64



THE ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATES

MAGAZINE • JULY 1973

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY



Humble Beginning

In the early years of the Association of Graduates, the alumni organization generated a simple four-page newsletter and mailed it to its 4,000 active members to maintain connection with the graduate community. To catch up to the Army and Navy alumni organizations who were producing magazines at that time, the Association of Graduates began publishing the new Association of Graduates Magazine in 1971. The name of the magazine eventually changed to *Checkpoints* in the summer of 1979.

“*Checkpoints* serves as an invaluable tool for staying connected, not only with my class, but also for keeping grads, parents, and other interested folks abreast of the happenings in the entire Academy community. Would I change anything? Yes, I would increase it to six times a year. It’s an invaluable connection for our alma mater. I’ve saved most of them.”

— Col. (Ret.) Dr. Mike Lambert '70



Cadets in the Air Force Academy soaring program were featured in the June 2024 *Checkpoints* photo essay. [Photo by Ryan Hall]

Explore *Checkpoints* online: usafa.org/Checkpoints

ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATES
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY



AIR FORCE ACADEMY
FOUNDATION