

## War Stories

Contributed by AFMA members

### Stars and Stripes TV Shows

by Loren Johnson, Kent Gripenstraw,  
and Ashley Marquardt

**Ed McMahon** did an NBC patriotic special show with the SAC Band on July 4, 1976 for the Bicentennial year. He sang "76 Trombones" with the band while being strapped to a SAC Band bass drum with the SAC logo prominently displayed. The arrangement, as I recall, was by **Tommy Newsome**, the lead alto player with Doc's Tonight Show band. Tommy was a former member of the SAC Band while SAC was headquartered at Andrews AFB, MD. SAC moved to Omaha in 1948. Tommy roomed with **Dexter "Danny" Abbot** who later became CMSgt with the SAC Band in the late 70s, early 80s.

The SAC Band performed these 4th of July specials for NBC for several years with filming a week prior to the 4th at the Myriad Convention center in Oklahoma City. Many stars were headliners including **Tennessee Ernie Ford**, **Anita Bryant**, and **Bob Hope**, of course. We always enjoyed Les's brother, **Stumpy**, who played bass trombone. He was so short he couldn't reach 7th position without having a string tied from his finger to the trombone slide. He was a great example of someone having a physical disability yet still able to perform at a very high level.

We always looked forward to these annual "Stars and Stripes" shows on NBC which concluded with the 1976 Bicentennial year.

**Loren Johnson**

I've enjoyed seeing all the recent highlights of **Johnny Carson's** career and the tributes paid him...it made me think back to when the SAC Band performed with Ed McMahon at the "Stars and Stripes" bicentennial TV shows. I remember our rehearsing with him in the parking lot of the theater. I also remember strapping on a snare drum for the **Chita Rivera** number. Although I still have a program of the show I wonder if a tape of the show would still be available?

It never dawned on me to ask for anybody's autograph, like Bob Hope, Tennessee Ernie Ford, Ed McMahon, **Les Brown**, **Anita Bryant**, **Dionne Warwick**, **Kate Smith**, **Mike Douglas**, **Chita Rivera**, **The 5th Dimension**, **Mickey Mantle**, **Miss America**, **Alan Shepard**, **Gen "Chappy" James**, and on and on.

**Kent Gripenstraw**

## AFMA CODA Directory Additions -- New Members

### CMSgt David Nokes (Sharon)

219 12th Street SE  
Washington, D.C. 20003

### Richard S. Williams

11001 Brandy Oaks Way  
Chesterfield, VA 23832-2724

### Jose M. Ibanez

11446 Cedar Park  
San Antonio, TX 78249

### Ernie Thomas

16160 Isla Maria Circle  
Moreno Valley, CA 92551-2061

### Frederick E. McDermott

8323 Sageline  
San Antonio, TX 78251

### James G. Simmons

P.O. Box 690103  
Orlando, FL 32869-0103

### Derek R. Reiss

P.O. Box 16  
Elba, NY 14058

### Thomas L. Schwieterman (Janet L.)

567 Ross Road SE  
Lancaster, OH 43130-9655  
(740) 969-3603

### Virgil L. Odell (Margaret A.)

4244 W. Myrtle  
Phoenix, AZ 85051  
(632) 937-1513

### Daniel L. Crowley

2527 Country Club Drive  
Titusville, FL 32780

### Stephen A. Maniscola

P.O. Box 13482  
Pensacola, FL 32591  
samcolo@bellsouth.net

### David L. Swanson

4689 Dudley Drive  
White Plains, MD 20695  
(301) 893-9063

### Harold L. Blanchette

902 Mission Hill Road  
Boynton Beach, FL 33435-7286  
(561) 732-9559  
blanchetteh@bellsouth.net

### Carl Radespiel, Jr.

531 Samuel Chase Way  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
(410) 571-9007  
BaronRad@aol.com

### Glenda R. Shepela (John)

10605 Spring Knoll Court  
Waldorf, MD 20603-3251

### Julius L. Walker, 111

1925 De Soto  
Houston, TX 77091-3926  
(713) 682-0342

### Stanley F. Bialomizy

518 W. Gore Road  
Erie, PA 16509

### Rodney Ruth

129 Schuyler Road  
Allendale, NJ 07401

### Horace E. Frazier (Nancy F.)

2720 Birchwood Way SW  
Marietta, GA 30060

### Rand R. McFarland (Sharon M.)

1004 Harmon  
Urbana, IL 61801  
(217) 344-3866



I remember those "Stars and Stripes" shows as really nice TDYs...the parties afterward in the Petroleum Club were something special to attend, particularly for midwestern farm boys like me.

**Jerry Miller** (bass player) was doing a lot of the arranging for the band in those days, and he helped piece together the Ed McMahon number.

We used to watch the Tonight Show regularly at Stella's Bar and Grill in Bellevue, (**Max Poe**, **Mark Prestzgor**, **Lon Ewing**, **Mike Wells**, **Jerry Miller** and occasionally **Dan Crowley**). I don't think any of the current late night shows are as good or as timely as Johnny's...he was in a class by himself.

**Ashley Marquardt**