



SCHOLARSHIP IN HONOR OF

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**GENERAL  
SAMUEL C. PHILLIPS**

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U.S. AIR FORCE

# General Samuel C. Phillips

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General Sam Phillips' 33-year military career parallels America's coming of age in space. His many assignments kept him at the crest of Air Force developments and he consistently rose to the challenge. He directed research and development activities and provided leadership for a number of significant defense and space programs ranging from the B-52 to Minuteman to Apollo.

General Phillips was born February 19, 1921 in Springerville, Arizona. His military career began with ROTC at the University of Wyoming. In his senior year, with one year of pilot training behind him, he won a commission as a second lieutenant in the regular army. The most significant event of that officer candidate's senior year, however, occurred thousands of miles away at Pearl Harbor. Soon after the surprise attack of December 7, 1941, Sam Phillips applied for a transfer to the Army Air Corps and was called to active duty on June 11, 1942. Eventually assigned to Muroc (now Edwards AFB) to train with the P-38 pilot group, he was, by late 1943, bound for England. For the remainder of the war in Europe, he flew combat missions with the Eighth Air Force, earning the rank of Major by war's end. He project-engineered and managed a number of research and development endeavors at Wright-Patterson AFB. He was responsible for the design of remote control systems for drone airplanes as well as the conversion of World War II B-17s into drones. Those converted aircraft were assigned to fly through nuclear tests in the Pacific and General Phillips accompanied them as electronic officer.

His last project at Wright Field was the development of the B-52 bomber. He was the B-52 program director when the first bomber was turned

over to the Strategic Air Command 30 years ago. Those aircraft continue to fly today.

Anxious to return to the operating Air Force after six years of technical work, General Phillips transferred to the Strategic Air Command in England. There he divided his time between SAC mission activities, piloting a B-47, and technical pursuits, serving as officer in charge of materiel. Back in the U.S., the Air Force, under General "Bennie" Schriever, was organizing the ballistic missile development effort. The early Thor missiles were to be deployed in England. General Phillips, in charge of SAC acquisitions, became intensely involved with planning implementation activities. His resulting relationship with the ballistic missile organization convinced General Schriever that Sam Phillips was the man he wanted to run the Minuteman program. In 1959, General Phillips returned to the U.S. to do just that. The Minuteman development and production program, for all its complexity, was considered to be one of the most successfully expedited development initiatives undertaken by the government, making its leader, General Phillips, an obvious candidate to oversee Apollo. (The U.S. program to put the first man on the moon.)

When President John Kennedy sounded the clarion to place a man on the moon by the end of the decade, NSA was a young organization with much technical talent, but little management experience. Sam Phillips, then a one star general with extensive research and development experience and a demonstrated ability to manage large, complex programs, was selected to serve, on detached service, as Apollo's Deputy Director. Seven months later he found himself in charge of the entire effort. He was responsible for the spacecraft

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activities in Houston; Saturn rocket development at Huntsville; launch preparation at Cape Kennedy and communications work at Goddard. At its peak, the massive endeavor employed some 400,000 people including industry contractors, government and military personnel. Just five years after accepting the assignment, General Phillips watched Neil Armstrong make the first footprint on the moon. A short time later, satisfied that the job was done, he returned to the Air Force.

With the Apollo program's success assured with the first moonwalk in 1969, General Phillips returned to California to command the Air Force Space and Missile System Organization. In that role, he was responsible for the development and deployment of a number of spacecraft and missile programs. Among them, the Defense Communication Satellite system (DCSS), the Defense Sup-

port Program (DSP) spacecraft, navigation and weather satellites, Minuteman 3 and the upgrading of earlier Minutemen.

In August of 1972, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird selected General Phillips to head the National Security Agency at Fort Mead. A short time later he was promoted to the rank of General and named Commander of the Air Force Systems Command at Andrews AFB, Maryland.

In 1975, General Phillips retired from the Air Force and continued to contribute to technology advances, working in private industry.

General Phillips was a member of the Board of Trustees of the Falcon Foundation until his death in 1989.

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*Dear General Bellis,*

*I am personally pleased to nominate General Sam Phillips as an honoree of the Falcon Foundation Scholarship Program and U.S.A.A is proud to establish a scholarship in his honor, funded in perpetuity.*

*General Phillips is unchallenged as an outstanding commander, dedicated American and successful director of a number of our countries highest priority and most complicated research and development programs. His career is an ideal pattern for future Air Force leaders to follow.*

*Sincerely,*



*Robert F. McDermott  
B Gen., U.S.A.F (Ret.)  
Chairman  
U.S.A.A*



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The Falcon Foundation is a 501(c)(3), non-profit foundation. Its purpose is to provide scholarships to College or Preparatory Schools for motivated young people seeking admission to USAFA and a career in the Air Force.

Although it is a separate organization, the Falcon Foundation works closely with USAFA.