

# HOME AT LAST

Falcon football brings home  
the **Commander in Chief's Trophy** By Lewis Carlyle



# The Falcons Take on Georgia Tech at the Independence Bowl

**O**n Saturday, Nov. 6, 2010 at West Point's Michie Stadium, the Air Force Falcons took down the Black Knights 42-22 to clinch the Commander in Chief's trophy for the first time since 2002. After rumbling past Navy earlier in the season, the trophy is at long last back at its rightful home here at the Academy. Head football coach Troy Calhoun, '89, has always possessed a very humble spirit when it comes to discussing the accomplishments of the Falcon football program. Bringing home the trophy is no exception, and during his interview with *Checkpoints*, he was quick to shift all due credit over to the Academy and the cadets who fought so hard to help Air Force reclaim its title as the nation's top service academy.

"It's great for the school," Calhoun beams, "especially considering the level of dedication and commitment it took. We're lucky to have an incredible leadership—just the general staff officers we have here at the Academy on active duty and all of the staff and support personnel are fantastic. Bringing home this trophy is not just a football accomplishment, it's an Air Force Academy accomplishment."

USAFA Athletic Director, Dr. Hans Mueh, '66, shares similar sentiments with Coach Calhoun. "This is a trophy for the whole Air Force. It gives bragging rights to both airmen and officers around the world. The trophy is a significant symbol for our men and women from the Middle East to the Pacific."

Mueh recalls the nail-biting tension of facing both Navy and Army. It is the first time in almost a decade that the coveted trophy has changed hands (it has remained at Navy since 2003). Remembering back to the Army game, Mueh recounts his excitement as the Falcons finished off the Black Knights. "I could hardly hear myself talk it was so loud! My feelings were a mixture of relief and joy. As soon as the clock hit zero on the field at West Point, I called my colleague at Navy and made arrangements to have our truck swing by Annapolis and pick up the trophy on the way home. There



was certainly no time wasted in getting the trophy back where it belongs."

The victory was certainly heard around the world. Graduates watching the game everywhere had reason to rejoice as soon as the Falcons clinched the trophy. In a letter written to the Academy Spirit this fall, Capt. Jonathan Hicks, '03, reminisces about his time as a football player at USAFA. "Going to the White House to be presented the CIC Trophy was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Being in the same room as the most powerful man in the world, being able to shake his hand and have a brief conversation with him was truly inspiring. Sharing that moment with my brothers from the football team made that moment even better."

Dr. Mueh brings another interesting point to life when he discusses the trophy's long absence from the Academy. "Today, we have a group of cadets who have never seen the trophy; many didn't even know what it looked like in person. This is especially great for the seniors; for them to have fought through this and have the chance to go to the White House and meet the President, that is very special. It's like anything in life really; we tend to take certain things for granted sometimes. When things are gone, you tend to appreciate them more, and that was certainly the case with the trophy. We had it for so many years, and then Navy got a lot better and all of sudden we're scrambling to get the thing back."

With the trophy back at the Academy, people can rest assured that no one will be

**Senior offensive lineman Tyler Schonsheck celebrates as Air Force defeated Army 42-22. (U.S. Army photo/Tommy Gilligan)**

taking it for granted any time soon. Mueh concludes, "We're very proud of our football team. They fought hard! Navy is a very good team, and beating them gave us the momentum to go into West Point with a mission. Today, we're glad to protect it for as long as we can." Coach Calhoun could not agree more. "It's another fine accomplishment by our cadets here at the Academy."

Captain Hicks leaves us with a unique perspective: that of a former player and a young alumni. He passes along a piece of wisdom that he and his fellow team members experienced during their time at the Academy, before going on to join the Long Blue Line. "My advice to the Falcon football players is this: Falcon football is about more than just the players on the team. You represent all players, past and present, all Academy grads, and the United States Air Force. When you get tired and start feeling the grind of Academy life, draw strength from all of your brothers (past players) and know that we are cheering our hearts out for you each week because you are building on the legacy all of us have left behind. The last piece of advice is for the seniors. Enjoy the White House trip. It is long overdue and you guys earned it. Congratulations." ▀