THE OFFICE OF AIR FORCE & SPACE FORCE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT: ANNUAL REPORT



U.S. AIR FORCE.



SPACE FORCE

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ABOUT US

The Office of Air Force & Space Force Intellectual Property Management (AFPAA/IP)

The Office of Air Force & Space Force Intellectual Property Management is a directorate within the Air Force Public Affairs Agency (AFPAA) located at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas.

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The office includes three sections: Branding, Band Support and Music Copyright Licensing (MCL), and Trademark Licensing (TML).

On behalf of the Secretary of the Air Force, this office manages, enforces, and protects the intellectual property (IP) rights of Department of the Air Force (DAF), including trademarks and music copyrights. It also protects against DAF personnel infringing on the IP rights of third parties, including non-federal entities, such as artists, songwriters, producers, and music labels.





SPACE FORCE





music.af.mil

TML MISSION

The Air Force and Space Force Trademark Licensing (TML) Division (AFPAA/IPT) resides in the Intellectual Property Management Directorate at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph. The civilian team works to create awareness of the Air Force and Space Force's trademark portfolio, promote public goodwill, and enhance the positive image of the DAF through various activities, including brand marketing, licensing, and promotion activities.

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TML VISION

Be a self-sustaining and charitable program known for extensive brand management knowledge and exemplary customer service to internal and external clients.

TML OBJECTIVES

- 1. Enhance the name, reputation, and public goodwill of the DAF by ensuring the brands are recognizable and used in a consistent, responsible, and lawful manner by both internal and external users.
- 2. Manage the use of DAF marks to maintain the integrity of the Air Force and Space Force brands, which includes appropriate trademark licensing activities that associate the brands with affordable, quality products and are consistent with Air Force and Space Force standards.
- 3. Generate licensing revenues to cover the operating costs for the program while also supporting the morale, welfare, and recreational activities of the nation's Airmen and Guardians.
- 4. Support Air Force and Space Force recruiting and retention efforts.

LOYAL FANBASE FOR DAF PRODUCTS

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5.9M - With \$334B Buying Power

Active Duty (Air Force) 314,000

Active Duty (Space Force) 10,000

Air National Guard 105,000

Air Force Reserve 65,600

Civilian Employes (APF & NAF) 179,000

Spouses/Children 400,000

Air Force Veterans 4,900,000



Sources: <u>https://dwp.dmdc.osd.mil/dwp/app/dod-data-reports/workforce-reports;</u> <u>https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Infographic/2022-demographics-active-duty-air-force-families.pdf; https://www.va.gov/vetdata/Report.asp</u>

BRAND EXTENSION

The core product or service of the Air Force and Space Force is national defense. The distinctive logos and identifiers of the branches have global recognition and represent hope and security for those who are oppressed or in need.

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Through trademark licensing, the TML team vigorously and creatively extends these popular brands into complimentary merchandise categories to help build public trust, reinforce the core values of the Air Force and Space Force, and establish an international fan base for the world's premier air and space military organizations.

CORE VALUES

USAF Integrity First Service Before Self Excellence In All We Do

> USSF Character Connection Courage Commitment

ESTABLISHED DATE

USAF: Sept. 18, 1947 USSF: Dec. 20, 2019

NOMENCLATURE

USAF: Airmen USSF: Guardians

PUBLIC CONFIDENCE

61% (https://www.statista.com/)

THE POWER OF THE BRAND IS NOT IN THE NAME BUT WHAT HAS BEEN INVESTED IN THAT NAME OVER THE YEARS.

> Bernard Kelvin Clive Author, Personal Branding Trainer

TML PORTFOLIO: License Category

The team may issue legally binding licenses to qualified businesses based on factors that may include, among other things, self-reported data, the staff's internal research, interviews, and the needs of the DAF licensing portfolio. Businesses can range from athome crafters with an employee base of one, to large corporations employing thousands around the globe.

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On Dec. 31, 2024, there were 268 domestic and overseas businesses authorized to manufacture or distribute merchandise with Air Force and/or Space Force trademarks, down from 323 reported at the end of 2023. The 2024 license portfolio was comprised of 211 standard licenses, 38 small business licenses, and 19 crafter licenses.



Source: https://insights.directlicensinghub.com/dlh/hub/stream/

TML PORTFOLIO: Ownership Category

The team is committed to providing a fair and unbiased licensing process for all qualified applicants. This commitment cultivates a rich array of business owners, fostering unique perspectives and innovative potential that drive success across the DAF brand portfolio.

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2024 closed with an increase in licensees that self-reported as Native American and Asian owned. Woman owned and/or veteran owned businesses in 2024 were down as opposed to the increase seen in 2023.



Source: https://insights.directlicensinghub.com/dlh/hub/stream/

Note: Ownership categories are self-reported and can include multiple statuses. Licensees' demographic information is collected and reported only in accordance with applicable law. Such demographic information is not a factor and is not considered in the evaluation of any trademark license request. A business could be woman owned and veteran owned. At the time of this report, the Direct Licensing Hub (DLH) only reflected one category selected. The business status is not independently verified by the staff.

trademark.af.mil

TML PORTFOLIO: Product Category

A varied product portfolio enables brands to reach a broader audience, strengthening support for DAF's global missions and workforce. By developing products tailored to local tastes and preferences, extension initiatives help the Air Force and Space Force brands stay relevant and appealing in specific markets, ultimately broadening their reach and impact.

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Among the 64 categories in the product portfolio, computer accessories and t-shirts continued to generate the highest sales revenue in 2024. However, the rankings for the fifth and sixth positions shifted. In 2023, giftware/memorabilia and toys held the fifth and sixth spots, respectively. By 2024, toys moved into fifth place, surpassing giftware/memorabilia/souvenirs.



Source: https://insights.directlicensinghub.com/dlh/hub/stream/

The team continues to explore business opportunities by attending trade shows and researching consumer trends. In 2024, they had a presence at the Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) General Managers' Meeting, Sports Licensing Show, and the Licensing Expo.

trademark.af.mil

TML PORTFOLIO: Top Properties

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Air Force Symbol & Wordmarks Back to No. 1 in 2024

The Air Force Symbol and the Air Force Emblem maintained their positions at No. 1 and No. 2. However, Air Forcespecific wordmarks (such as base names and the motto) rose to No. 3, pushing the Space Force Delta down to the fourth position. The Roundel moved to the No. 5 spot as one of DAF's most frequently used marks. Meanwhile, the Thunderbirds logo dropped from No. 4 in 2023 to No. 8.



Source: https://insights.directlicensinghub.com/dlh/hub/stream/

TML PORTFOLIO: Distribution Channels

DAF's trademark licensed products reach customers through multiple distribution channels, including wholesalers/distributors, retailers, and an increasing presence on direct-to-consumer online platforms. A continuous review of distribution channels focuses on achieving greater alignment with current consumer buying habits and providing detailed insights into purchasing patterns for DAF-branded merchandise.

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In 2024, the Internet maintained its dominance as the highest-grossing channel, driven by sustained direct-to-consumer engagement. Despite challenges in the broader retail landscape, Military Exchanges reinforced their position as the second largest distribution channel, benefiting from alignment with an established customer base. Meanwhile, wholesalers/distributors enabled targeted market reach, further strengthening multi-channel success. These findings highlight the effectiveness of strategic adaptation to evolving market demands.



Source: https://insights.directlicensinghub.com/dlh/hub/stream/

trademark.af.mil

TML FINANCIAL IMPACT

The authority to collect, retain, and execute licensing fees is codified in 10 U.S.C. 2260, *Licensing of Intellectual Property*, and DODI 5535.12, *DoD Branding and Trademark Licensing Program Implementation*.

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TML funds are three-year, 3801 revenue funds exclusively for the development, improvement, and operation of the trademark licensing program. The licensing fees may be used to offset the program's operating costs, which includes, but is not limited to, team travel expenses, civilian salaries and benefits, service providers, and marketing. Expiring funds are used to support military morale, welfare, and recreation (MWR) programs.

In 2024, the program continued to be self-sustaining under 10 U.S.C. 2260. Sales of branded merchandise exceeded \$24.9 million and generated more than \$2M in royalties and licensing fees.



Source: Defense Enterprise Accounting & Management System and https://insights.directlicensinghub.com/dlh/hub/stream/

The program remains financially strong, with revenues consistently exceeding expenses. This positive financial performance reflects strategic efforts to enhance efficiency and drive sustainable growth. As a result, the program is well positioned to reinvest, foster innovation, support MWR, and deliver long-term value to the DAF, the DoD, the American public, and other stakeholders.

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Source: Defense Enterprise Accounting & Management System

By maintaining low operational expenses, the Office of Intellectual Property Management allocated \$594K in 2024 to support Air Force and Space Force MWR programs. Since 2008, the TML program has contributed more than \$8.4M to MWR, helping the Air Force Services Center (AFSVC) fund its mission of providing high-quality events—including STEAM programs, youth activities, entertainment, and deployment support—for past and present Airmen, Guardians, and their families.

LIFECYCLE MANAGEMENT

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Effective management of the licensing process—from application to archiving requires a comprehensive lifecycle approach that ensures every application and request is handled with the utmost diligence from day one. Poor license management can pose significant risks, including costly litigation, trademark rights loss, and reputational damage to the DAF. Prioritizing robust license management practices enables the team to mitigate these risks and facilitate smooth, compliant, and mutually beneficial agreements.





WARREN BUFFETT

APPLICATIONS & PRODUCT APPROVALS

36	46	49	2	7,134
Approved	Rejected	New	Discarded	Artwork
Application	Application	Application	Application	Decisions

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The DAF brands continue to pull a strong interest by both domestic and international entities. To safeguard the integrity and reputation of the brands, each application undergoes a rigorous evaluation process by the TML staff. Only those applications that demonstrably align with the high standards and values of the Air Force and Space Force are approved.

In 2024, the team processed 130 applications—both new and renewal—and 53 contract addendums. December recorded the highest volume of application submissions, while September, October, and November maintained a steady flow of new applications each month. Overall, application volume increased by 30% compared to 2023.



Source: https://insights.directlicensinghub.com/dlh/hub/stream/

Licensed companies are contractually required to obtain approval from the TML team for all new designs and products prior to release. This rigorous approval process is critical to upholding the integrity and reputation of DAF brands. Each product undergoes a thorough evaluation to ensure it meets stringent quality standards and reflects the proud legacy of the Air Force and Space Force. Only those products that meet these high standards are granted the honor of bearing the iconic insignias.

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In 2024, more than 7,000 submissions were uploaded to the artwork portal for adjudication—approval, resubmission, or rejection. This is more than double the number of submissions received in 2023. The entries fell into two primary categories: mockups of proposed merchandise and marketing materials, and pre-production samples sent to the office for review.

NON-MERCHANDISE REQUESTS

The team recognizes that timely responses are essential to first-rate customer service. Efficient communication is key to addressing customer inquiries, fostering seamless collaboration with clients, and ensuring the swift resolution of issues. For example, by prioritizing

7,059 Emails Answered

email responsiveness, the team reinforces its commitment to exceeding customer expectations, enhancing operational efficiency, and building strong, lasting relationships with all stakeholders.

In 2024, the TML team answered more than 7,000 messages in the organizational inbox - <u>licensing@us.af.mil</u> – received either directly or forwarded through the <u>online</u> form, as well as hundreds of emails addressed to individual work email addresses. A broad cross-section of the public regularly requests permission to use DAF marks in projects such as museum exhibits, veterans' monuments, military appreciation events, building signage, and commemorative books. Leading requestors include civic groups, city planners, representatives from the sports and entertainment industries, and business and community leaders. The team also addressed various licensing inquiries, assisted with sales report uploads, scheduled onboarding interviews, and provided support with the licensing portal. Additionally, they offered direct feedback to the DAF enterprise on display guidelines and the development of program logos.



The U.S. Postal Service requested permission to use the image (left) in a licensed book scheduled to be published in Spring 2026. The book is tentatively titled "Forever Stamps" and is a celebration of the USPS' remarkable stamp history. The Air Force One stamp was originally issued in 2007, and the stamp image was approved for use by the TML team as part of the book's Presidential section.

MUSIC COPYRIGHT LICENSING & BAND SUPPORT

The Band Support and Music Copyright Licensing Division (AFPAA/IPM) resides in the Intellectual Property Management Directorate. The division chief is an Air Force Master Sergeant who also serves as the directorate's superintendent. The division houses the Music Copyright Licensing (MCL) program and supports the ten official Air Force bands and nearly 60 separate performing groups.

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In 2022, "Semper Supra" was approved as the official song of the U.S. Space Force. Its composers, Messrs. Nelson and Teachenor, generously donated all rights and interest in the song to the DAF, marking the first time the DAF has secured the copyright to one of its service songs. (Rights to "The U.S. Air Force," the official song of the Air Force, are owned by Carl Fischer LLC.) To protect and manage the copyright for "Semper Supra," the MCL program was launched the same year. By 2024, the program manager established a streamlined licensing process with a framework in place to generate revenue on behalf of the DAF through the official licensing of "Semper Supra."

The division chief facilitates most music related requests for the band career field, oversees the official use of "The U.S. Air Force," provides training and guidance on securing music copyright licenses for band performances and arrangements, and maintains the public facing website, <u>www.music.af.mil</u>.

MCL & BAND SUPPORT OBJECTIVES

 Protect and manage the copyright of the U.S. Space Force official song, "Semper Supra," by maintaining a streamlined licensing process that ensures compliance, supports intellectual property rights, and enables revenue generation on behalf of the DAF.

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- Support the mission of Air Force bands by facilitating music-related requests, licensing, and distribution efforts in alignment with the guiding principles of Honor, Inspire, and Connect, while serving both Department of Defense and civilian partners.
- 3. Expand public access and usage of "Semper Supra" through proactive collaboration with arrangers and publishers to license and distribute diverse arrangements, meeting growing demand during national holidays, and ensuring the song's inclusion in Armed Services Medleys.

MCL FINANCIAL IMPACT

Royalties collected through the licensing of "Semper Supra" are deposited into a general fund managed by the DAF. The authority to collect the royalties is established under U.S. Copyright Law; in the absence of a specific statute authorizing retention, the MCL program is not permitted to reinvest the funds back into the program.

The division chief works with arrangers and publishing companies to grant arranging and distribution licenses for "Semper Supra," ensuring its available for arrangements of all the service songs and is commercially available to customers. At the end of 2024, there were five active arranging licenses, generating a total of \$1,510 in licensing fees, with several additional licenses in process.

THE MCL PORTFOLIO

At the end of 2024, there were a total of 448 active licensees for "Semper Supra." Most licensees are 501(c)(3) or other non-profit organizations, representing a broad geographic and demographic cross-section of the country—including schools, colleges, churches, veterans' centers, retirement homes, and various community bands, choirs, and orchestras. Requests typically peak around patriotic holidays such as Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Veterans Day, reflecting strong public demand for Armed Services Medleys that feature the official song of the newest military branch.

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Source: https://insights.directlicensinghub.com/dlh/hub/stream/

2024 HIGHLIGHTS

This year marked significant advancements and achievements for all the programs in the Directorate, reflecting growth, innovation, and a strong commitment to supporting the mission. The following highlights key accomplishments and milestones:

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Broadcast License

In 2024, the Music Copyright Licensing program manager negotiated the first synchronization license for use of "Semper Supra" in a television broadcast. On July 4th, 2024, CNN presented "The Fourth in America," a live special featuring 4th of July festivities from dozens of locations across America, marking America's independence and celebrating the rich diversity of those who continue to help build the United States. A patriotic performance by the U.S. Air Force Band at the U.S. Capitol, accompanied by a spectacular fireworks show, included a salute to the Armed Services with a medley of all the branches' songs, which included "Semper Supra."

See the full video here: CNN | 'The Fourth in America | Fireworks in Washington D.C. and New York' -(07/04/2024) <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0joR3hAcLZY</u> Armed Services Medley starts at 17:45 USSF Song at 19:35

Disclaimer: Inclusion of this product in the Office of Air Force & Space Force Intellectual Property Management does not imply DOD or DAF endorsement of the business or licensee who created the product.

Commander's Key Support Program Logo



The rebranding of the Commanders Key Support Program (CKSP) in 2024 saw the crucial involvement of an Integrated Project Team. Working in close collaboration, the team guided the evolution of the program's visual identity, resulting in a new logo designed to reflect the program's growth and its mission to empower commanders. Beyond aesthetics, the IP office played a vital role in safeguarding the program's integrity, ensuring the new design was legally protected and free of any existing intellectual property rights by a third party. This careful consideration guarantees the longterm viability and exclusive use of the logo, symbolizing the expansion of CKSP's volunteer base and the increased opportunities for commanders to bolster support networks within their units and communities.

Space Force Emblem Launched

A major initiative during the year was the development of the official Space Force Emblem and its accompanying usage guidelines. This long-awaited addition established a unified emblem that may be authorized for use on memorials, veterans' recognition walls, and similar ceremonial displays. The emblem has contributed to a more cohesive visual representation across service branches, addressing a gap for organizations seeking to honor Space Force members.



Space Force Whistles a New Tune with a Joint Trademark & Copyright Licensed Product



In 2024, TML and MCL collaborated with Legacy Station (Lionel Trains) on the launch of the third rendition of the Space Force train. This innovation brought to life a limited-edition Space Force-branded locomotive and tankers, showcasing the creativity and potential of the DAF's intellectual property assets. This limited-edition collection not only celebrated the Space Force but also highlighted the

synergy of trademark and copyright assets to create unique, high-value products.

The project featured key elements that enhanced the Space Force brand. Trademark integration played a central role, with the Space Force logo prominently displayed on the locomotive and various unit deltas uniquely designed for each tanker, offering a visual representation of the Space Force's identity and mission. Additionally, the project incorporated copyrighted content by using



"Semper Supra," the official Space Force song, as the train whistle. This auditory element added a distinctive touch, enriching the overall experience and further emphasizing the Space Force brand.

The impact of the project was significant across multiple areas. The trademark and music copyright collaboration demonstrated the potential for innovative licensing agreements to generate revenue while promoting the Space Force mission.

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Expanded USPTO Registrations



In 2024, the US Patent and Trademark Office granted registration status to three prominent DAF marks: U.S. Air Force, USAF, and the Air Force Emblem.

The wordmarks "U.S. Air Force" and "USAF," and the Air Force Emblem are now registered in Class 25. Class 25 is primarily for apparel, such as hats, pants, shirts, shorts, and sweatshirts.

Click <u>here</u> for more registrations.

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Streamlined Copyright and Licensing Processes

The directorate implemented DocuSign to manage the electronic signing of license agreements, significantly enhancing workflow efficiency. This automated solution greatly reduced turnaround times. 2024 saw 173 music copyright license agreements and 59 trademark license agreements successfully processed using this technology. The increased efficiency improved the team's ability to serve customers more effectively while upholding rigorous compliance and quality standards.

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THE FUTURE

The Office of Intellectual Property Management team is committed to strengthening its trademark licensing and music copyright licensing programs by engaging with a broad spectrum of licensees, producing licensed goods across a range of distribution channels and product categories.. The team will continue to monitor consumer trends and preferences through social media, small business forums, and industry publications. This research will enable the licensing programs to stay aligned with current market interests and the Department of the Air Force's values, particularly in areas such as elevating awareness of the Space Force and protecting the IP of new airframes. This approach will help ensure the program remains relevant, competitive, and impactful.

The TML program recognizes the importance of supporting the DAF's recruiting and retention efforts. By ensuring the availability of high-quality, visually appealing merchandise that reflects the values and traditions of both the Air Force and Space Force, we will help foster pride, esprit de corps, and a sense of unity across the ranks.

The MCL program plays a vital role in supporting the DAF's outreach and heritage efforts by protecting and promoting official service music, including "Semper Supra." Through strategic licensing and rights management, we will strive to ensure military bands, educational institutions, and community organizations can access and perform authorized arrangements that honor the legacy of the Air Force and Space Force.

