



# Biography

Master Sergeant Rick Thorp  
Noncommissioned Officer in Charge,  
Shades of Blue Jazz Ensemble

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Master Sergeant Rick Thorp, a native of Lombard, Illinois, is the Noncommissioned Officer in Charge of the United States Air Force Band of Mid-America's Ceremonial Band and the Shades of Blue Jazz Ensemble. He also plays in the Concert Band and the the Ceremonial Band's Drum Major.

In 1989, Sergeant Thorp graduated from Glenbard East High School in Lombard, Illinois, and continued his education at the University of Illinois in Champaign/Urbana. In 1993, he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Applied Mathematics and Mathematics Education. While earning his mathematics degree, Sergeant Thorp studied trombone with Dr. Thomas Birkner, University of Illinois Jazz Ensemble Director, and performed with the University Jazz Ensembles, Symphonic Band, and Brass Band.

Prior to enlisting in the United States Air Force, Sergeant Thorp taught Algebra, Geometry, and Calculus at Danville High School in Danville, Illinois. His professional musical credits include appearances with Natalie Cole, Toni Tenille, Sammy Nestico, Jeff Jarvis, Frank Mantooth, Mannheim Steamroller, Steve Smith, the Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra, and actors Jamie Farr, Wilford Brimley, and Bob Newhart. Additionally, he has performed for Presidents George W. Bush, William Clinton, George Bush Senior, and Jimmy Carter. Sergeant Thorp enlisted in the Air Force in 1994 and was assigned to the Band of Mid-America, Scott Air Force Base, Illinois.

Sergeant Thorp is a member of the National Education Association. His military decorations include the Air Force Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters and the Air Force Achievement Medal. In 2004, he was selected as the Air Force Band of Mid-America's Noncommissioned Officer of the Year.