

“The only proper defense is offense.”–Air Vice-Marshal
James Edgar Johnson,
RAF**News in
Brief****Congratulations**

Congratulations go out to Col. Kenneth Smith Jr., 47th Flying Training Wing vice wing commander. He has been selected to serve as deputy director of personnel at Headquarters Air Education and Training Command, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas.

Graduation

Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training Class 03-05 graduates at 10 a.m. today in the Anderson Hall auditorium. See pilot photos on page 7.

Heritage banquet

The Annual Black Heritage Banquet is set for 6 p.m. Feb. 22 at Club XL. The dinner will include fried chicken, ribs, cat fish, collard greens, candied yams and more. The cost is \$15 for club members and \$18 for nonmembers.

For more information, call Master Sgt. Prince Smith at 298-5332.

**Mission
status**

(As of Feb. 7)

Days ahead or behind with
mission capable rate

T-37	3.06	87.0%
T-1	0.60	80.4%
T-38	0.73	77.6%
T-6	N/A	90.3%

Laughlin welcomes Army

Photo by Jim Teet

Master Sgt. Timothy Adkins, 47th Mission Support Squadron superintendent of personnel customer support, helps Army National Guard Corporal David Hewitt prepare his DoD Form 93, “Notification of Next of Kin.”

By Jim Teet*Public Affairs*

Army National Guardsmen arrived here this week from Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio and other units across Texas. For members of the 47th Security Forces Squadron, this event could signal the return to an eight-hour workday – something Air Force security forces units haven’t seen since the tragic events of 9-11.

The Guardsmen include 32 troops from different military specialties. The two senior members will provide administrative support for the Guardsmen. They will augment Laughlin force protection teams to provide perimeter patrols, vehicle inspections and gate security. Air Force members will continue to provide all police and law

enforcement services, stressed Senior Master Sgt. Rolland H. Roth Jr., 47th SFS manager and project officer for the ANG augmentation.

“The biggest plus for us is that we will be able to get our people into eight-hour shifts for the first time since 9-11, as is the case across the Air Force,” noted Sergeant Roth. “An additional benefit is that we will be able to deploy more personnel to support OEF (Operation Enduring Freedom) and any other operations worldwide,” he continued. “So it’s a win-win, because we can relieve the stress on our forward-deployed troops and relieve the stress on our home-based troops at the same time.”

Dec. 16, the Army

See ‘Army,’ page 4**Laughlin IPs learn from ‘the best’****By Capt. Paula Kurtz***Public Affairs*

What does it take to be the best at what you do?

A group of Laughlin instructor pilots went searching for an answer to this question recently and their quest took them to the “Home of the Fighter Pilot,” Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.

Led by Lt. Col. Mark Mattison, 87th Flying Training Squadron commander, a contingent of 34 instructor pilots from the 87th, 84th and 85th Flying Training Squadrons visited

Nellis Feb. 5-9. Their objective: to attend an airpower demonstration and visit the legendary Fighter Weapons School, where the instructors are literally the “best of the best” fighter pilots in the Air Force.

“I want our instructor pilots to strive to be the absolute best at what they do,” said Colonel Mattison. “They need to see the level of work and commitment and the kind of attitude it takes to make that happen.”

Of the 34 who “deployed,” 27 are first assignment instructor pilots, or FAIPs, who graduated Specialized

Undergraduate Pilot Training and received assignments as instructors.

“These are our youngest, most inexperienced pilots,” Colonel Mattison said. “This was a great opportunity for them to see the operational mission and the level of skill they can develop.”

The idea for the trip began with Capt. Mark Barrera, 87th FTS check flight commander and project officer for the deployment. Captain Barrera had attended a similar airpower

See ‘Nellis,’ page 5



Commanders' Corner

Lt. Col. Kenneth A. Mattison
96th Flying Training Squadron commander

Proud to be an American

I am proud and thankful to be an American citizen for many reasons. Our nation has been a symbol of freedom to the world ever since some exceptional individuals established a government "for the people, by the people." Over the years, many have paid a very heavy price for that freedom. They make me proud to be an American, and I feel very blessed for the freedom I enjoy because of their sacrifices. An experience I had a few years ago with a great American family reinforced those feelings of pride and thankfulness.

I was a staff officer at Langley Air Force Base, Va., when a tasking came down for someone with fighter experience to take part in a special assignment. I was the only rated officer with fighter experience in our directorate, so I volunteered. There had been a tragic mishap over the skies in Northern Iraq. Two Army Blackhawk helicopters carrying Americans and some foreign nationals were misidentified and shot down. Everyone on board was killed.

In an effort to help the families of those lost in the helicopter, the Army and the Air Force were putting teams together to brief the results of the investigation and answer any questions the families may have. As you might imagine, I didn't believe this was going to be an uplifting experience at all. I couldn't have been more wrong.

The teams were sent to the Pentagon to receive briefings on the mishap and training on how to go about getting the information to the families. I had a set briefing I was to give and even had to pass it off to an

Army colonel before I could leave. We were also supplied with a long list of likely questions and answers to those questions.

Since I had flown over Northern Iraq a couple of years earlier while participating in Provide Comfort, I was also familiar with the Rules of Engagement and how operations were conducted there. I felt prepared to meet with this family and fully expected to be received with coldness and perhaps even a tremendous amount of anger. I couldn't have blamed them. They lost a husband, father, and son. He was a co-pilot on

one of the helicopters shot down in a senseless mistake.

Upon arrival, we were welcomed into his home and

introduced to his wife, his parents, her parents and a set of grandparents. The Army officer that was with me gave his quick introduction and then turned the rest over to me for my briefing. Although I had prepared and memorized my briefing, all I said was the first sentence when the questions came. How did this happen? Why didn't they know the helicopters were there? What went wrong? How could our country let this happen to my husband, my son? The questions were heart felt inquiries. They simply wanted to understand how something so tragic, could have happened to someone they loved so much. As I tried to answer their questions the best I could, I sensed how much they truly loved our country and how torn and confused they were that this had happened. Unfortunately, there is never a good answer when mistakes are made, and people die but to explain

the events and tell them how the mistakes were made.

As I was talking with them, my feelings for the family, and my appreciation for the heroic and dignified way in which they carried themselves made it an easy task to stay as long as it would take. However, they did not require me to stay. A little while later a UPS truck showed up with a package containing the Heads Up Display camera film from the aircraft that shot the helicopters down. We had not been told that this video was going to arrive during our visit, so I was not really prepared for this. We went into their family room and put the video in as I narrated. I showed them when the fighter's radar locked on. When the diamond enlarged, the missile was tracking the helicopter. That's the missile leaving the fighter; there is its smoke trail. That is your husband's helicopter bursting into flames and crashing. If anything untoward was going to happen, I was certain it would be right then. Nothing did.

We returned to the living room and I finished answering any remaining questions they had. Before we left, they even offered us lunch. I was, to say the least, in awe. I had seen the pain in their eyes, heard the sorrow in their voices but also felt how proud they were of the loved one they lost. How proud they were of him and his service to our country, a country I felt they still loved and respected. They had treated me with the utmost honor and respect. I will always remember their great example.

Despite the how of his death, he gave his life for our country. He is a hero in my book, and they are a great American family. They make me proud to be an American and I am very thankful to serve a nation full of great people, just like them.



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News for the Border Eagle should be submitted to the 47th Flying Training Wing Public Affairs Office, Bldg. 338, Laughlin AFB, TX, 298-5262. **Copy deadline is close of business each Thursday the week prior to publication.**

Advertising should be submitted to the Del Rio News-Herald, 2205 Bedell, Del Rio, TX, 774-4611. Advertising should be submitted by 4 p.m. each Friday.

Submissions can be e-mailed to: timothy.stein@laughlin.af.mil or yvonne.conde@laughlin.af.mil.

Actionline 298-5351

This column is one way to work through problems that haven't been solved through normal channels. By leaving your name and



Col. Dan Woodward
47th Flying Training
Wing commander

phone number, you are assured of a timely personal reply. It's also very useful in case more information is needed in order to pursue your inquiry. If you give your name, we will make every attempt to ensure confidentiality when appropriate.

If your question relates to the general interest of the people of Laughlin, the question and answer may also be printed in the Border Eagle.

Before you call the Actionline, please try to work the problem out through the normal chain of command or directly with the base agency involved.

Thanks for your cooperation, and I look forward to reading some quality ideas and suggestions.

AAFES	298-3176
Accounting and Finance	298-5204
Civil Engineer	298-5252
Civilian Personnel	298-5299
Commissary	298-5815
Dormitory manager	298-5213
EEO	298-5879
FWA hotline	298-4170
Hospital	298-6311
Housing	298-5904
Information line	298-5201
Legal	298-5172
MEO	298-5400
Military Personnel	298-5073
Public Affairs	298-5988
Security Forces	298-5900
Services	298-5810

“Training the world’s best pilots”

– 47th FTW mission

Standards: Air Force way or highway?

By Maj. William Cannon

71st Security Forces Squadron commander

VANCE AIR FORCE BASE, Okla. – A few weeks ago, I was involved in a rather candid conversation with a senior NCO regarding standards, performance expectations and ratings, and the effects and aftermath of non-judicial punishment, among other things.

During our discussion, I was told that I was, with all due respect, perhaps a bit too narrow-minded and maybe too much “my way or the highway” regarding these issues.

Since he said it as if it were a bad thing, I assumed he meant it as constructive criticism and have subsequently given his words a great deal of thought regarding my perspective on these issues, including the first time I heard the phrase “my way or the highway.”

That first time was in December 1981, during my first assignment as a young airman at Minot Air Force Base, N.D., in the Strategic Air Command, when a technical sergeant, now a

retired chief master sergeant, informed me, “There is the Air Force way, the SAC way and my way” and “It’s my way or the highway.”

He was also fond of the phrase “outstanding or outprocessing.” At that time, we didn’t have mandatory performance feedback sessions and computerized forms on which to document feedback, but I received all I needed: “These are the standards and noncompliance is unacceptable.”

Twenty-one years later, my response to people who ask me how I’m doing is usually “outstanding” because of my early military socialization under the supervision of this NCO where outprocessing was the only other option. Based on that, I guess it is possible I may occasionally exhibit a “my way or the highway” attitude with regard to these issues.

However, I’ll caveat my concession by saying that understanding and complying with the standards should be everyone’s way, and we should live our core values “24/7.” Some disagree with my view since I’ve had at least one person tell me what he did and whom he did it with off duty was a private matter and none of the Air Force’s business.

However, in this case, I’m fairly confident that my narrow-minded, “my way or the highway” opinion is aligned with the Air Force standard. If you turn to page 91 in the Promotion Fitness Examination Study Guide, you’ll read, “A Way of Life. Air Force members are subject to duty 24 hours a day, including weekends and holidays. If so directed by a competent authority, they must report for duty at any hour, at any location, and remain as long as necessary to get the job done.

The Air Force mission necessitates more restrictive rules and standards than are normally found in civilian

life. Individuals not living up to the high standards will not be retained in the Air Force.”

Even our newest airmen understand this and, upon completion of a special first-term airman’s transition program, pledge to conduct themselves at all times so as to bring credit upon the Air Force, to fulfill their responsibilities and display professionalism at all times, and to set an example for all to follow. I find it very uplifting to watch these young men and women as they proudly repeat The Airman’s Creed, and find myself even more passionate about the Air Force way of life – my way of life, a great way of life.

Our conduct then, fulfilling our responsibilities and displaying professionalism at all times, is integrally connected to the success of our mission and should remain above reproach. We can tolerate mistakes and even learn valuable lessons from them as long as we conduct ourselves at all times so as to bring credit upon the Air Force.

Misconduct and criminal acts are intolerable for military members and counterproductive to accomplishing our mission. Driving under the influence, failure to obey a lawful order, indecent language, indecent exposure, indecent acts, assault, dereliction of duty, failure to go, incapacitation for the performance of duty, underage drinking, public intoxication, contributing to the delinquency of a minor and aggravated assault have no place in our way of life. These must be dealt with appropriately.

Just in case you’re wondering, I didn’t just pick these crimes out of the Uniform Code of Military Justice; these were the incidents that led to 27 Article 15 actions within our wing last year, an extremely troublesome statistic, especially considering the number of additional incidents of misconduct that didn’t rise to the level of non-judicial punishment.

Unfortunately, we have a tendency to focus on the negative aspects due to the number of incidents, the time spent on corrective and administrative actions, and the time spent searching for prevention rather than cure.

But we must accentuate the positive and remain focused on the mission and the people who accomplish it. Despite these incidents and the issues that led to the discussion I had with that senior NCO regarding my narrow-mindedness and my “my way or the highway” attitude, our Air Force is composed of warriors who exhibit integrity in their actions and control over their lives.

Our efforts play a significant role in ensuring national security, and that is why President Bush could tell the world that, “Once again, we are called upon to defend the safety of our people, and the hopes of all mankind, and we accept this responsibility.” That is why the Air Force is indeed a great way of life.

“Understanding and complying with the standards should be everyone’s way, and we should live our core values ‘24/7.’”



Photo by Airman 1st Class Timothy Stein

New washers...

Chuck Giamalvo, project manager washer/dryer contract, unloads a washing machine bound for the enlisted dormitories Monday. The enlisted dormitories, unaccompanied student dormitories, temporary living facilities, billeting and the fitness center all received new washers and dryers. In total 53 washers and 59 dryers were delivered.

Newslines

Club member scholarships

Air Force Services is conducting the 7th Annual Club Membership Scholarship Program. Current club members and their family members who have been accepted by or enrolled in an accredited college or university for entry during the fall of 2003 term as a part-time or full-time student are eligible to apply for scholarships.

Entrants must provide a 500 word or less essay on the subject of "Air Force Clubs – Help us make members first." All entries must be submitted to the 47th Services Division chief by July 15.

For more information, call 298-5374 or visit Club XL or Club Amistad.

Drug warning

The Laughlin pharmacy has received several calls about Phenylpropanolamine.

PPA is a decongestant that previously was found in diet aids, over-the-counter cold preparations and some prescription decongestants.

In November 2000, the Federal Drug Administration advised all manufacturers to remove products containing the PPA from the market because of reported adverse reactions to the drug. Products were recalled and reformulated, so there should be no products containing PPA available in the United States.

To confirm ingredients in over-the-counter products, the Laughlin pharmacy staff encourages consumers to verify active ingredients. If any product does contain PPA it will be listed. For over-the-counter medications that were recalled in 2000, the labels will now specify "new formulation," which alerts consumers that PPA was removed from this product.

SGLI cuts

Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance premium will fall by 19 percent in July, lowering payroll deductions for 98 percent of active duty members and 96 percent of eligible reservists. The cost of family coverage, available to spouses and children of service members holding SGLI policies, also will fall.

For more information on VA-run life insurance, call 1-800-419-1473 or visit the website www.insurance.va.gov.

New shoppette hours

The shoppette will have new hours effective Saturday. It will be open from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

'Army,' from page 1

signed a memorandum of agreement with the Air Force to mobilize 9,000 ANG soldiers to help with security at 163 Air Force stateside installations, including Laughlin. The agreement provides soldiers for up to two years while the Air Force relieves its short-handed security forces and finds permanent solutions to the problem.

The initial cadre of 32 enlisted members will remain here 12 months, said Sergeant Roth; then they will swap out with 32 other Guardsmen. The newest members of Team XL went through initial processing and a welcome reception Tuesday. "We are providing them a week of training, then we will begin to conduct quality-control evaluations, just as we do for any new security forces member," he explained. "Once they show the capability to perform, we will assign them to teams. We expect a week of on-the-job training after this before individuals will be able to work with little supervision.

"There is the potential that we eventually will

use them without Air Force personnel, but that is still to be decided," added Sergeant Roth. "Initially, they will augment our personnel, so you will have an Air Force member at the gate and one or two ANG members working with them."

Sergeant Roth stressed that the overall impact should be relatively transparent to the base. "Other than a different uniform and beret, there should be no difference in the force protection services we provide."

The SFS manager noted that he expects the biggest impact on Laughlin will be the large number of people wearing berets on base. At the same time, he expects the biggest impact on the ANG members will be how well we take care of our people.

"I've spent some time on Army posts and they just don't have the creature comforts – the quality of life – that we have here. Our goal is to integrate them – they will be part of our team as soon as they arrive here. We will treat them as we do our Air Force members – we don't want them to feel any different from the rest of Laughlin!"

Army ranks:



E-2 Private



E-3 Private 1st Class



E-4 Specialist



E-4 Corporal



E-5 Sergeant



E-6 Staff Sergeant



E-7 Sergeant 1st Class

'Nellis,' from page 1

demonstration in May of 2000 and thought about taking a few members of his flight out to see it. When he took the idea to his squadron commander, the response was, "let's take the whole squadron."

"The idea was to get the FAIPs out there to see some airpower – weapons systems dropping bombs and shooting stuff," Captain Barrera said. "To actually see what they will be doing when they leave Laughlin."

Prior to this deployment, the 87th FTS had arranged for several of its FAIPs to visit Luke Air Force Base, Ariz., and Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., where they received back-seat familiarization rides in the F-16 and F-15 respectively. In addition, the squadron has an on-going arrangement with Moody Air Force Base, Ga., where FAIPs are exposed to a week-long Introduction to Fighter Fundamentals

course.

"We really try to focus on providing some professional development opportunities for our young lieutenants," Colonel Mattison explained. "It's very motivating for them and will definitely enhance their credibility with their students."

The bulk of the team arrived at Nellis Feb. 6.

Friday morning the crew visited the famed Fighter Weapons School, where instructors and students shared advice and swapped experiences. Graduates of the elite program are commonly called "patch wearers" in reference to the special Fighter Weapons School patch worn on the left shoulder. On returning to his or her unit, a graduate is likely to be the unit's tactical expert and fill the squadron weapons officer position, according to Capt. Larry Card, an A-10 instructor at the school.

"If the unit goes to war, the Weapons Officer is the

first guy the commander is going to look to," Captain Card said, adding, "If you're going to fly fighters, you should have your sights set on coming here one day," – a goal that many of the FAIPs have already started thinking about.

Competition for the program is tough, as squadron commanders can generally select only one candidate for the program.

"We send only the best pilots to this school," said Colonel Mattison. "That means you have to be the guy – number one in the squadron – to even have a chance."

Captain Card also warned of the hang-ups that some former instructor pilots face when they become students at the school.

"Some FAIPs don't come in with an open mind. They may see former students of theirs who now have more experience than they do and they don't want to admit they can learn anything from a former student," Captain Card explained. "To be successful here, you need to have an open mind and learn from everyone what you can."

Maj. Shane Riza, an F-16 instructor pilot, also noted that those with weapons school aspirations should pay careful attention to their administrative career.

"Your [officer performance reports] should say, 'Send to Weapons School at earliest opportunity,'" Major Riza said. "When you apply [for weapons school], you'll need three letters of recommendation which will go with your records to the board. Those records need to say and show that you're the best."

So what does "being the best" really mean?

Capt. John Sapp, a student currently attending the F-15 course, noted that it

usually comes down to attitude.

"Most guys who show up here have the skills and won't washout for that," he said. "The washouts don't have the right attitude and that's what will separate you from your peers. You need to be receptive to new techniques, and be honest with yourself about your abilities and willing to admit your mistakes. Hold yourself to that higher standard and be a good wingman."

After talking with the weapons school cadre, the Laughlin crew sat in on the final airpower demonstration briefing before heading north to the site where they would witness first-hand the capabilities of various Air Force weapons systems. The live-fire demonstration was planned as part of the CAPSTONE course, which prepares newly selected brigadier generals for planning and employing US forces in a joint and combined operation. The demonstrations are generally attended by 500 or so invited guests in addition to the generals. On this particular day, however, there are about 3,000 guests attending, including Secretary of the Air Force James Roche, Air Force Chief of Staff General John Jumper, as well as the Prime Minister of Poland and his 60-person entourage.

The demonstration kicked off with an aerial display between F-15 Eagles and F-16 Fighting Falcons. For the next hour, the skies were filled with aircraft as fighters, bombers, command and control AWACS and even combat search and rescue helicopters performed for the captivated audience. As ordnance detonated at the target site, a Predator circling overhead captured

the footage and relayed it to a giant jumbotron screen on the left side of the viewing area.

"An aerial event of this magnitude, incorporating many types of weapons systems, doesn't just happen; it takes hard work and commitment," Colonel Mattison said. "This was a very unique opportunity for the FAIPs to see the fruit of that labor. I want them to shoot for that flawless execution that comes from amazing instruction in the air. Hopefully they'll go home and remember what they saw here."

For 1st Lt. Rich Jones, the newest FAIP to join the 87th FTS, the trip helped to build on his skills as a pilot and instructor.

"It really helped to show me what I should be teaching guys who are going out to the combat air force," Lieutenant Jones said. "They want motivated guys who can take criticism and who are willing to learn. I'll definitely spend more time talking about attitude when I'm instructing now."

In addition, the aerial demonstration convinced Lieutenant Jones to seek an F-16 follow-on assignment when he leaves Laughlin and to start preparing now for Fighter Weapons School.

"That's the closest I've been to a live-fire demo," Lieutenant Jones said.

"When the F-16 came over and dropped those cluster bombs, then made the afterburner pass, it reaffirmed that I want to fly the F-16."

"It was a great learning experience," he added. "We got to see how the pace differs and learned what kind of attitude you need to do well. Talking to the Weapons School instructors and students really helped to clarify what it means to 'be the best.'"

Laughlin families enjoy food, entertainment while dining-out

By Airman 1st Class
Yvonne Conde

Staff writer

Tradition was carried out as Laughlin families enjoyed an evening of dining-out fun at Club XL Feb. 7.

In honor of military families, guest speaker Dan Clark, New York Times best selling author, was invited to share his words and take part in the semi-formal feast rooted deep in the past from pre-Christian Roman legions to King Arthur's sixth-century knights.

After the invocation and introductions, initial toasts were made to the important leaders and followers of the country. Following the toasts, Laughlin honor guard performed a Prisoner of War and Missing in Action presentation dedicating a small round table, near the head table, to POWs.

During the event, guests were advised to follow the rules of the mess or endure the punishment of drinking from the grog bowl, a toilet bowl stationed at the head table filled with a concoction of strange juices.

"It was fun," said 17-year-old Tiffany Smith, daughter of Col. Ken Smith, 47th Flying Training Wing vice commander. "It let me see my dad get all dressed up and drink out of a toilet. I liked having the power of sending my parents to drink out of

the grog bowl."

Those sent to the grog bowl were directed to proceed directly to the bowl and station themselves in front of the grog bowl facing the head table. Then, the individual pours a full cup of grog and toasts, "to the mess" drinking the contents of the cup in one gulp, proving it is empty by turning it upside down over his head.

"I learned that in the military, you have to follow the rules or get a trip to the grog," said 13-year-old Zachary Poteat, son of retired Tech. Sgt. Rob Poteat, 47th Flying Training Wing historian and Heidi Poteat, 47th Communications Squadron budget technician. "It wasn't really something I would expect of military tradition. I thought everything was strict on an Air Force Base, so I didn't really expect people in uniform to be joking around. It was the guest speaker that really [inspired] me because [as an Air Force dependent] I could really relate to always moving around. I thought it was a cool experience."

Mr. Clark, also at the head table, watched numerous guests make their way to the grog bowl before Maj. James Payne, 47th Flying Training Wing director of staff, gave him an opportunity to experience it first hand by sending him to the grog bowl as a Laughlin guest.



Photo by Dave Niebergall

Col. Ken Smith, 47th Flying Training Wing vice commander, and family toast to the mess after being sent to the grog bowl together.

After joining in with military tradition, Mr. Clark spoke to the 230-person audience about the meaning behind each Air Force core value: integrity first, service before self and excellence in all we do. He spoke about the reason for constant relocation and explained deployment is a sacrifice for a good reason. He also shared a personal story about dealing with the loss of his father and realiz-

ing he had to keep living, even after his father's death.

"I'm glad Laughlin families were given the opportunity to see another side of military tradition and enjoy the great food and fantastic speaker with their loved ones," said Col. Woodward. "It's important to involve family members wherever possible while accomplishing the mission."



Laughlin Salutes

Airman Leadership School graduates:

Class 03-02

Academic award:

■ Senior Airman Nicholas Carpenter, 47th Security Forces Squadron

Distinguished graduate:

■ Senior Airman Lawrence Snyder, 47th Communications Squadron

Leadership award:

■ Senior Airman Brock Kerzmann, 47th CS

Levitow award:

■ Senior Airman Timothy Daigle, 47th Operations Support Squadron

■ Senior Airman Tracy Breitenkamp, 47th OSS

■ Senior Airman Debra Chaves, 47th OSS

■ Senior Airman Michael Copeland, 47th CS

■ Senior Airman Geoffrey Gemundt, 47th CS

■ Senior Airman Rusty Gurule, 47th OSS

■ Senior Airman Alfonso

Luna-Ruiz, 47th SFS

■ Senior Airman Irene Schwaninger, 47th Aero-medical Dental Squadron

■ Senior Airman Alicia Simmons, 47th Medical Support Squadron

■ Senior Airman Benjamin Smith, 47th Comptroller Flight

■ Senior Airman Jerod Williams, 47th SFS

■ Senior Airman Amanada White, 47th CS



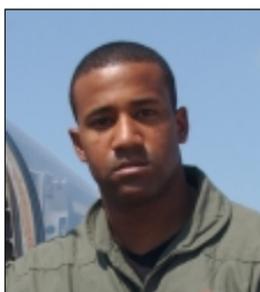
Graduation



SUPT Class 03-05 graduates



Capt. Trent Tripple
F-15E , Seymour-Johnson AFB, N.C.



1st Lt. Andre Hall
B-52, Barksdale AFB, La.



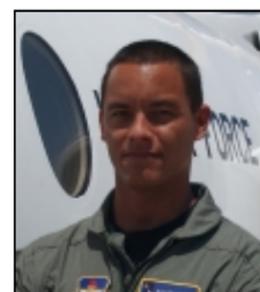
1st Lt. Nicholas Hamilton
F-16, Luke AFB, Ariz.



2nd Lt. Jason Barton
KC-135, Selfridge ANGB, Mich., (USAFR)



2nd Lt. Kevin Caldwell
C-130, Puerto Rico (ANG)



2nd Lt. Ralen Chang
KC-135, Hawaii (ANG)



2nd Lt. Jeffrey Gritter
T-6, Moody AFB, Ga.



2nd Lt. Angela Hauck
KC-135, Spokane, Wash. (ANG)



2nd Lt. Matt Hepp
T-6, Moody AFB, Ga.



2nd Lt. Gregory Keller
F-16, Luke AFB, Ariz.



2nd Lt. Aaron Lane
KC-135, Robins AFB, Ga.



2nd Lt. Brandon Leifer
KC-135, Kadena AB, Japan



2nd Lt. Dennis Lewis
E-3, Elmendorf AFB, Ala.



2nd Lt. Ryan Lucero
T-38, Laughlin AFB



2nd Lt. Gregory McCann
C-5, Travis AFB, Calif.



2nd Lt. Sean Neylon
KC-10, McGuire AFB, N.J.



2nd Lauren Palagi
C-17, McChord AFB, Wash.



2nd Lt. Clinton Palmer
C-21, Randolph AFB, Texas



2nd Lt. Andrew Schwaderer
C-17, McChord AFB, Wash.



2nd Lt. Adam Serafin
KC-135, McConnell AFB, Kan.



2nd Lt. Mark Smith
F-16, Ellington Field, Texas (ANG)



2nd Lt. Joseph Watson
KC-10, Travis AFB, Calif.

Chaplain of the Year earns gold medal in honor of 4 chaplains

**By Airman 1st Class
Yvonne Conde**

Staff writer

Laughlin recognized Chap. (Lt. Col.) Jeff Swanson, 47th Flying Training Wing chaplain, as the U.S. Air Force Chaplain of the Year with a solid-gold medal during Monday's National Prayer Luncheon at Club XL.

Chaplain Swanson along with retired Chap. (Lt. Col.) Perry Irby of Hurlburt Field, Fla., Chap. (Master Sgt.) Ivory Baker of Offutt Air Force Base, Neb., and Fran Daily, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, chapel receptionist and volunteer, were initially presented in Washington with the U.S. Air Force Chaplain of the Year award in honor of four World War II chaplains who gave away their lifejackets when the *USS Dorchester* was torpedoed by a German submarine, killing 672

Americans.

Every year, the Air Force recognizes four chaplains who have been nominated by their peers for exemplifying service before self. "Some of my peers wrote into the panel that makes the decision," said Chaplain Swanson. "That makes it even more special to me that my peers think my virtues are reflective of the four chaplains on the *Dorchester*."

Joining the Marines at the age of 17, Chaplain Swanson said he knows what young enlisted and officers go through. "It's a basic sense of compassion for other people and especially the young people," he said. "I just go about the business of taking care of people, and I don't say no to human needs. I look at leadership primarily by being a servant, so I go about my business and somehow I did a few

things that got some people's attention and they wrote up the nominations for me out of sincere gratitude."

In honor of the month the four chaplains gave their lives, members of the wing here decided to wait until February to present Chaplain Swanson with the Laughlin gold medal.

Feb. 3, 1943, the ship carrying 902 people including the crewmembers, Army soldiers and four Army chaplains: Protestant Chap. (Lt.) George Fox, Jewish Rabbi (Lt.) David Goode, Protestant Chap. (Lt.) Clark Poling and Catholic Priest (Lt.) John Washington were headed for Greenland on the top-secret mission "Thunderbolt," which was a World War II effort to build a secret base in Greenland called Bluewest I.

After the *Dorchester* left New Finland, German submariners began to track the zigzagging ship as she trav-

eled along the North Atlantic toward Greenland. Unaware of the ship's destination, the German commander followed the ship until it began to slow down from the ice storm. At the *Dorchester's* attempt to make a left turn, the German submarine launched a single torpedo hitting the refrigeration system flooding the deck of the ship with ammonia.

The four chaplains on board rallied the people on the ship and organized teams to break through the four to eight inches of ice blocking the launch mechanisms of the portable lifeboats. Of the 902 people aboard the *U.S.S. Dorchester*, the chaplains were able to save 230 people including the four soldiers they gave their own lifejackets to.

One of the men who had been given one of the only lifejackets left, watched as the four chaplains, still aboard the *Dorchester*, sang

spiritual hymns arm-in-arm until they sunk below the surface with their hands still clasped above the water until he could no longer see them, said Chaplain Swanson.

Once the survivors of the *Dorchester* arrived in Greenland, they were asked what they saw. "I saw the finest thing I can imagine, this side of heaven," responded the man who had been given one of the only lifejackets the chaplains had.

"That's the chaplain service mission," said Chaplain Swanson. "We exemplify service above self. Service above self isn't something that happened a long time ago. It's required of us every day. I think these four chaplains teach us that we all need to be prepared to do whatever we can, at any moment, to defend this great nation. Their efforts go down in our nation's history as one of the most heroic shining deeds."

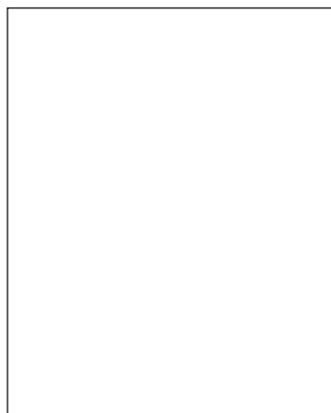
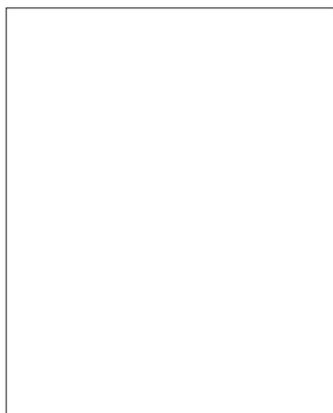
United States Air Force

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ONLINE news



U.S. AIR FORCE



Teets: space access vital to warfighting efforts

By Master Sgt. Scott Elliot
Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON – America needs to redouble its efforts to make sure the nation has a vigorous and successful national security space program, the Defense Department's executive agent for space said.

According to Peter B. Teets, undersecretary of the Air Force and director of the National Reconnaissance Office, access to space is better than ever before, but increased reliance on space-based assets means the nation must look to the next generation of evolved expendable launch vehicles.

Currently, the nation uses two families of EELVs: the Delta IV and Atlas V rockets.

"Both of these vehicles are more operationally responsive than any of their predecessors," Teets said. "The fact that we have two vehicles gives

us assurance that, in the event of a failure in one, we'll be able to fly the other."

The drawback to these EELVs, though, is the amount of time it takes to prepare them for launch. According to Teets, it can take weeks, even months, to erect a launch vehicle, mate the spacecraft to the vehicle, fuel it and check the systems.

"With the importance of our space systems to warfighting, we need to minimize that timeline," he said.

To achieve that goal, the undersecretary said the nation must do two things: develop new, smaller, EELVs and work with NASA on shared technology.

"We're looking at bringing online some very operationally responsive, small EELVs that will be much lower-cost vehicles," he said. "They would be the kind of vehicle you

could erect in a day, bolt on the spacecraft and load with fuel (from a truck ... then launch in a matter of

days, rather than weeks or months.

The global positioning system satellites, space-based radar, the advanced extremely high frequency program and the space-based infrared systems are among the space-based systems that are integral to national security, Teets said.

GPS is a satellite constellation that orbits the Earth. The satellites

emit signals that, when gathered and triangulated by receivers, provide near-exact location information.

The space-based radar will provide military commanders with surface moving-target indications and high-resolution terrain information.

The advanced extremely high frequency program provides protected satellite communications. The system provides up to 4,000 simultaneous networks and up to 6,000 users per satellite.

The space-based infrared system is a satellite constellation that will provide missile warning, technical intelligence and battle-space characterization.

"We do have assured access to space," Teets said, "but ... it's not assured access in a timeframe we'd like to have. We need to get ourselves on a path to have even more operationally responsive EELVs."

"We're looking at bringing online some very operationally responsive, small EELVs"

– Peter B. Teets

Air Force undersecretary

The XLER

Hometown: Del Rio, Texas
Family: Children: Frankie 19, Kathy 18, Rena 16, Robert Jr. 14
Time at Laughlin: 19 years
Time in service: 19 years
Greatest accomplishments: Lasting almost 20 years at lodging
Hobbies: Fixing up old cars
Bad habits: None
Favorite musician or band: Any Tejano band
Favorite movie: Don't really have one.
If you could spend one hour with any person, who would it be and why? My brother who died recently. I have a lot of unanswered questions to ask him.



Photo by Airman 1st Class Yvonne Conde

Roberto Santellanes
47th Services Division

Security forces say good-bye to loyal, dedicated friend

By Airman 1st Class
Timothy Stein
Editor

Robby was one of Laughlin's finest. He helped protect two presidents, deployed five times to Saudi Arabia and earned an impressive assortment of medals in his 10 years of service to his country.

Robby, a Belgian Malinois born in 1992, served at Laughlin for most of his life. He specialized in sniffing out explosives.

Shortly after Sept. 11, 2001, Robby was declared unfit for military duty due to cataracts in his eyes. He worked for several more months, finally retiring in March of 2002.

There are several options for a military working dog once it is deemed unfit for service.

"First, we see if any military training facility would want the dog," said Staff Sgt. Frank Munderback, 47th Security Forces Squadron military working dog trainer who handled Robby from 1998 to 2000. "If they all pass on the dog, we see if any law enforcement agency wants the dog. If there are no takers there, we find out if we can adopt the dog out."

Under a law passed in 2000, military working dogs can be adopted out to people if they can show they are no longer aggressive. A disposition board reviews a video of the dog reacting to different stimuli and the dog's history. In March 2001, Racky, a drug detection dog, became the first Laughlin dog to be



Photo by Airman 1st Class Timothy Stein

Staff Sgt. Frank Munderback, 47th Security Forces Squadron military working dog trainer, plays with Robby, a Belgian Malinois, Feb. 7. Robby was put to sleep at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Monday.

adopted out.

Unfortunately, Robby proved too aggressive to be adopted and suffered from ailing health.

The 47th SFS kept Robby for as long as they could before filling out the paper work for euthanasia.

"He was eating almost three times the food as the other dogs and he was still losing weight," said Sergeant Munderback. "He was sick and going blind. It was time for him to go."

This is the first time a dog Sergeant Munderback has worked with has been

put to sleep.

"It is sad," said Sergeant Munderback. "You don't really know how to feel."

Staff Sgt. Thomas Cooper, 47th SFS flight chief who was Robby's handler from 1996 to 1998, has been through this once before. "It is like losing one of your family," he said. "This is your partner, someone you worked with everyday."

Both security forces members agree Robby was a special dog. "He was very loyal, very protective of his handlers," said Sergeant Cooper.

Chapel Schedule

Catholic

- Saturday ● 5 p.m., Mass
- Sunday ● 9:30 a.m., Mass
- Thursday ● 6 p.m., Choir
- Reconciliation ● By appointment
- Religious Education

- 11 a.m. Sunday

Jewish

- Call Max Stool at 775-4519

Muslim

- Call Mostafa Salama at 768-9200

Nondenominational

- Sunday ● 6:30 p.m. Officer Christian Fellowship, call 298-2238
- Friday ● 7 p.m., Unity in Community Fellowship (activities for children)
- Monthly ● Women's fellowship (call 298-1351 for details)

Protestant

- Saturday ● 9 a.m., Singles Bible study at the Chaparral Dining facility
- Sunday ● 9:30 to 10:30 a.m., Sunday school
- 11 a.m., General worship (blend of contemporary and traditional worship, nursery provided)
- Wednesday ● 10 a.m., Women's Bible study
- 7 p.m., Choir at chapel

For more information on chapel events and services, call 298-5111.

Interested in the Air Force? Call Del Rio's Air Force recruiter at 774-0911.

Med Group clobbers Comptrollers, 50-27

By Airman 1st Class
Timothy Stein
Editor

The Med Group gained a easy win, 50-27, over a sluggish Comptroller team Wednesday night at the Fitness Center.

The Med Group looked sharp and poised throughout the game executing their game plan flawlessly. The Comptrollers never seemed to know what they wanted to do on offense.

Both teams started off slowly. The Med Group got on the board first with a shot by Chris Morlandt. The Comptrollers would be see-

ing a lot more of Morlandt before the night was over.

The Med Group amassed a 13-6 lead midway through the first half. They had outplayed the Comptrollers throughout and it seemed if the Comptrollers didn't do something soon the game would be out of reach. They tried but the Med Group proved too much for them and continued to expand their lead. By halftime the score was 28-12 in favor of the Med Group.

The Comptrollers came out in the second half with a sense of urgency. They knew they needed points and fast. The Med Group led by

Morlandt, had other ideas. At the mid point of the second half, the Med Group had extended its lead by 24 points. They ended up winning 50 to 27.

The defense of the Med Group was just too strong for the Comptroller offense to score on.

Morlandt lead all players with 32 points. Robert Lingley also had eight for the Med Group. Travis Logsdon was the high scorer for the Comptrollers with 16 points.

Next up for the Comptroller is the CCS squad Tuesday. The Med Group takes on CES Thursday.

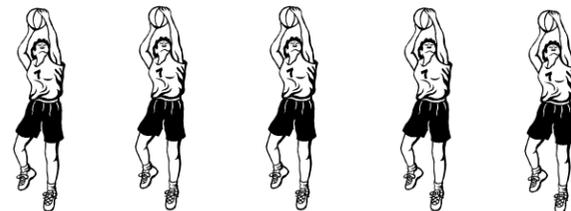
Basketball standings

Eastern Conference

Team	W-L	PF	PA
87th	7-0	349	224
OSS#1	6-2	332	243
86th	5-2	283	242
LCSAM	4-4	264	254
84/85th	1-7	282	352
OSS#2	0-8	179	317

Western Conference

Team	W-L	PF	PA
SFS	6-1	299	216
MED GP	5-2	311	264
CES	6-1	405	289
Compt.	2-5	238	354
CCS	1-5	195	273
LSI	1-7	307	390



Airman to play for Diamondbacks' farm team

By Airman 1st Class
Kara Philp

56th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

LUKE AIR FORCE BASE, Ariz. – Firemen, athletes and superheroes are some of the things children dream of becoming and reaching those goals is the hard part. For one airman here the difficulty was deciding which dream to follow.

While playing baseball at the Air Force Academy in 2001, 2nd Lt. Michael Thiessen, 56th Maintenance Operations Squadron section commander, was a 42nd-round draft pick for the Arizona Diamondbacks.

He also had a pilot slot assigned to him upon graduation and had spent eight months in the 62nd Fighter Squadron scheduling office taking familiarization flights when the opportunity to play for the El Paso Diablos, a AA team in the Diamondbacks' Texas League farm system, opened up to him.

"It came to a point where I had to choose between baseball and pilot training," he said. "I chose baseball

for now. It was a really big decision for me to try and play professional baseball."

Thiessen has been playing baseball since age 5 and recently switched from shortstop to outfield.

He played high school baseball in California, four years at the academy and one season of rookie ball with the Yakima Bears, an A team in the Diamondbacks' Northwest League farm system in Yakima, Wash.

He holds four single-season and six career records at the academy, including the only player in academy history to rank in the top six in career home runs, stolen bases and doubles.

"I hit .309 my freshman year, .424 my sophomore year, .419 my junior year and .359 my senior year," he said. "My most current average came when I led the team in hitting with a .309 average during my first season with the (Bears) in Yakima during rookie ball."

"The Diamondbacks have never

had an active-duty player in our history," said Tommy Jones, Arizona Diamondbacks player development director.

Thiessen is also the first person to be drafted out of the academy.

"I never thought I would have a chance to play professional baseball, especially out of the academy because nobody has ever done it before," he said. "I think it is every little boy's dream to be a professional athlete."

According to Thiessen, baseball was not the highlight of his years at the academy.

"It's kind of ironic. I went to the academy as a football player, knowing that I would be able to play baseball there as well," he said. "I played both sports all four years and got most of my recognition as the quarterback of the football team."

Winning a bowl game and playing at Notre Dame were some of his senior-year highlights.

"All the while, I was quietly playing well in baseball," he said.

"Now, it is baseball that is taking me places, even though football is still my first love."

Thiessen is playing baseball under the World-Class Athlete Program that allows active-duty airmen to train and compete in the Olympics.

According to the lieutenant, when players are selected for the program, the intent is they will train and try out for the Olympic team, which draws players from minor league ball.

"Because I already had a contract with the Diamondbacks, that made me a prime candidate," he said. "I also had to obtain a letter from the (U.S.) team that labeled me as a person to watch for the next year and consider for selection."

Thiessen's goal is to play well enough in the minor league that he is a selectee for the 2004 Olympic team.

He will remain on active duty and serve his commitment to the Air Force while this program becomes his full-time Air Force duty.