

ACADEMY SPIRIT

51ST GRADUATING CLASS OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY

VOL. 49 ISSUE 21

MAY 27, 2009



"Our Time"

Class of 2009: No more words — it's time for action

By Lt. Gen. John Regni
Academy superintendent

To the Academy Class of 2009, congratulations on this achievement! You've certainly earned it.

You are the 51st class to graduate and it's a special honor for me and Debby to be part of your graduation. Your time here has been very personal to me. You were four degrees when I arrived and it's been one of the highlights of my career to watch your progress, mature and lead over these past four years.

It's a privilege to be here in the shadows of our great leaders of today, and to celebrate with the leaders who will follow in their footsteps and help shape America's future.

It is by no means an easy future. We are engaged in two wars on the other side of the world - and we are

engaged in a global ideological struggle against some of the most barbaric enemies we have ever faced. There are also many threats on the horizon, both traditional and non-traditional, and as always there are threats that still lie beyond the horizon, threats we can't yet even perceive.

The challenges you face will test both your spirit and your resolve. The same healthy spirit you displayed when your class saw the return of Recognition and our critical Combat Survival Training.

And in the years to come, I hope you will remember the satisfaction and excitement you feel at this moment with family and friends, with classmates and teammates, and with the faculty and staff who supported you.

Thanks also to the sponsor families of these Airmen. Over the past

four years, you have opened your homes to these young men and women, providing a good meal or a respite from Academy life. Or a shoulder to lean on. Your guidance and your caring helped make today possible for your Airmen.

For today, you take on the awesome responsibility of protecting and defending the Constitution of the United States and the American people. Right now, we ask you to make the extraordinary the expected.

In closing, as the end of my career is upon me, it gives me great satisfaction to see "my doolies" join the Long Blue Line. I salute you and wish you all the best as you embark on your careers as an Airmen in the world's most powerful air, space and cyberspace force.

We expect great things from you in the years to come. The safety of



Lt. Gen. John F. Regni

the nation is in your hands - and there is nowhere else the American people would rather it be.

Congratulations, Good Luck. Class of 2009, it's YOUR TIME!

AOG congratulates Class of 2009

By William "T" Thompson, Esq. '73
President & CEO, Association of Graduates

On behalf of the Association of Graduates and its more than 26,000 members, I want to extend my hearty congratulations to the Class of 2009 and welcome you to the Academy graduate community. You have made it through four challenging years and now you will take your place in the most technologically advanced Air Force in the history of the world. You are well prepared to achieve great success.

The graduates who have preceded you have left a proud and distinguished legacy of service to our nation and have done so in a relatively short period of time. In a mere 50 years, the Academy has become one of our country's greatest institutions, and you are about to become a part of that rich heritage.

In 50 classes, we have graduated more than 40,000 officers who have taken positions of leadership throughout our nation. In the Air Force, over 500 have become general officers, including 26 four stars, three of whom have become chief of staff. We have produced a plethora of war heroes including recipients of the Medal of Honor, Distinguished Flying Crosses and Silver Stars. The Academy produced two of the three Air Force Aces in Vietnam, and 36 graduates have been POWs. And too many have made the ultimate sacrifice with 171 graduates who have their names inscribed on the War Memorial.

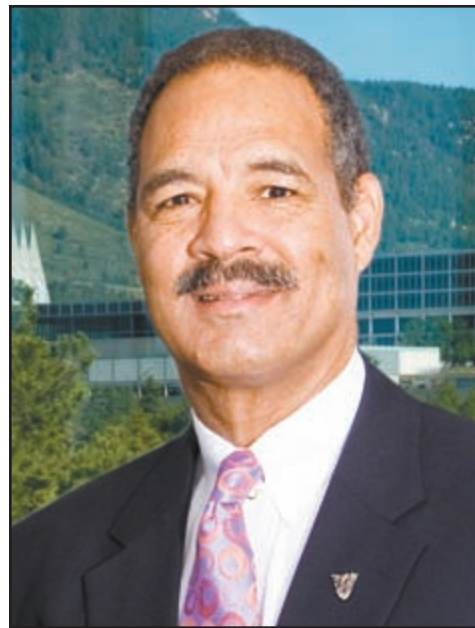
Our graduates have also excelled in many other walks of life. Thirty-eight have become astronauts and one, until

very recently, held the record for the longest walk in space. Thirty-six of our graduates have become Rhodes Scholars. The Academy has produced doctors, attorneys, business leaders, and entrepreneurs, members of the clergy, teachers, college presidents, and airline pilots. Numerous graduates have served as state and local elected officials and, one has been elected to the U.S. Congress. In addition, many have served in appointed positions at the highest levels of national government.

In short, we have placed our graduates throughout society; graduates who subscribe to the core values of Integrity first; Service before self; and Excellence in all they do. And you are about to become a member of this august group.

You are graduating at a time of great challenge and your leadership skills will be tested. The global economy is in crisis; we are fighting two foreign wars; terrorism is a constant threat; and our world faces genuine environmental perils. Yet the values you have adopted, the leadership abilities you have developed and the honor with which you have carried out your assignments for the past four years is exactly what our nation needs to overcome these obstacles. I have the highest confidence and trust in your capabilities and future contributions.

I know it has been a long four years, and you are ready to meet the new challenges that lie ahead. Yet I strongly urge you to stay connected to the institution that has given you such a unique opportunity. Join and become involved with the Association of Graduates. Help to support the many



William "T" Thompson

cadet programs that you have had an opportunity to experience; the leadership and character programs, the conferences and symposiums, intramurals and cadet clubs, and the foreign travel and language immersion programs, to mention just a few. Understand that you have the responsibility to reach back by giving back to the cadets who will follow you. Realize that you have an obligation to insure that they enjoy a better opportunity than you have enjoyed just as prior grads have insured that you have had opportunities that didn't exist when we were cadets.

The AOG is proud to welcome you as members of the *Long Blue Line* and stand ready to assist you in any way we can. Contact us at www.usafa.org when we can ever be of service.

Cover Design: Photos courtesy DenMar,
graphic layout Ken Carter



To responsibly inform and educate the Academy community and the public about the Air Force Academy

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Deadline for all stories is noon Friday, one week prior to the desired publication date. Refer questions to the *Academy Spirit* editor at 333-8823.

The *Academy Spirit* also accepts story submissions by fax at 333-4094 or by e-mail: pa.news.paper@usafa.af.mil.



Vice President Biden honors Class of 2009

In his first visit to the Air Force Academy since being elected as vice president of the United States, the Honorable Joe Biden will offer the commencement speech today recognizing the accomplishments of the Class of 2009.

Vice President Joseph Robinette Biden, Jr., was born Nov. 20, 1942, in Scranton, Pa., the first of four siblings. In 1953, the Biden family moved from Pennsylvania to Claymont, Del. He graduated from the University of Delaware and Syracuse Law School and served on the New Castle County Council. Then, at age 29, he became one of the youngest people ever elected to the U.S. Senate.

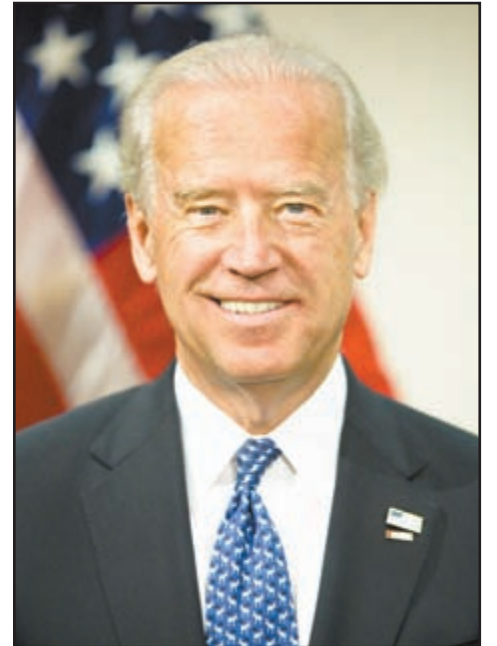
Just weeks after the election, tragedy struck the Biden family, when his wife, Neilia, and their 1-year old

daughter, Naomi, were killed and their two young sons critically injured in an auto accident. Biden was sworn in at his sons' hospital bedside and began commuting to Washington every day by train, a practice he maintained throughout his career in the Senate.

In 1977, Mr. Biden married Jill Jacobs. Jill Biden, who holds a Ph.D. in Education, has been an educator for more than two decades in Delaware's schools. Vice President Biden has three children: Beau, Hunter, and Ashley. Beau serves as Delaware's Attorney General and is currently deployed to Iraq as a Captain in the 261st Signal Brigade of the Delaware National Guard. Ashley is a social worker and Hunter is an attorney. Vice President Biden has five grandchildren: Naomi,

Finnegan, Roberta Mabel ("Maisy"), Natalie, and Robert Hunter.

As a Senator from Delaware for 36 years, Vice President Biden has been a leader on some of our nation's most important domestic and international challenges. As Chairman or Ranking Member of the Senate Judiciary Committee for 17 years, he was widely recognized for his work on criminal justice issues including the landmark 1994 Crime Bill and the Violence Against Women Act. As Chairman or Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee since 1997, he played a pivotal role in shaping U.S. foreign policy. He has been at the forefront of issues and legislation related to terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, post-Cold War Europe, the Middle East, and Southwest Asia.



Vice President Joe Biden



File Photo

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“Cerberus Dogs of War” garner top squadron

Cadet Squadron 3 was selected as the Cadet Wing’s “Outstanding Squadron” for 2008-2009 in a special presentation Thursday at the Academy Falcon Club.

The “Cerberus Dogs of War,” whose mantra is the Three P’s, (professional, proactive and pro-squadron), captured top honors at the 50th Annual Outstanding Squadron of the Year Banquet sponsored by the Air Force Association and the Association of Graduates.

The guest speaker for the event was Maj. Gen. (ret) Harold “Pete” Todd, Class of 1959.

The Air Officer Commanding is Maj. Jacqueline Breedon.

The squadron commanders are



Cadets 1st Class Elijah Culpepper and Kenneth Montague.

The official presentation took place Monday during the Organizational Awards Parade.



File Photo

Academy recognizes more outstanding squadron performances



Outstanding Squadron Academic Achievement



Outstanding Squadron Leadership and Scholarship



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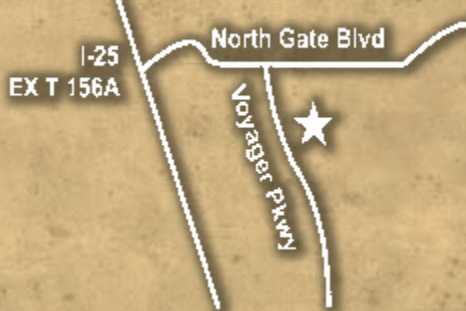
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2009 Class Ring symbolizes pride, tradition

By Academy Spirit staff

The Class of 2009 ring crest is one of the most treasured representations of class unity and class pride.

Until graduation, the Class of 2009 wore their rings with the class crest facing inward, closest to their hearts.

After today, the ring is turned so the Academy Crest is closest to the heart of an officer ready and willing to protect and defend with the training they have received.

This is a unique tradition in which all graduates of the Academy are forever united.

Through the blood and the sweat, the triumphs and the failures, Class of 2009 members have become brothers and sisters for life.

2009 USAFA Ring – The Academy Crest is placed on the left side of the ring. The bezel surrounds a stone or inset plus the words “United States Air Force Academy.” These are encircled by a chain of 59 links to represent the first graduating class and the bond each class shares with the preceding ones. These elements have remained constant throughout the years and serve as yet another bond all classes share together.

The Class of 2009 crest decorates the right side of the ring. It is composed of both compulsory and optional elements that together represent the Academy experience.



File Photo

Not forgotten

More than 800 American Flags were placed at gravesites throughout the Academy Cemetery honoring service members and their families for Memorial Day.

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Top graduates honored for accomplishments

Outstanding Cadet Spring Wing Commander

Jonathan Yates, CS-21

Outstanding Cadet Fall Wing Commander

Jacob Schonig, CS-37

Outstanding Cadet Summer Wing Commander

Anthony Ferrara, CS-27

Outstanding Cadet Group Commander

Bradley Dewees, CS-22

Outstanding Cadet Squadron Commander

Michael Maziarz, CS-23

Outstanding Flight Commander

Tyler Olmstead, CS-2

Outstanding Cadet Element Leader

Andrew VanTimmeren, Class of 2010, CS-12

Outstanding Cadet Who Best Exemplifies the Highest Ideals of Loyalty Integrity and Courage

Ryan Sivertsen, CS-34

Outstanding Former Regular Enlisted Cadet Graduating with Highest Class Honors

Brooks Crane, CS-32

Outstanding Cadet USAFA Prep School Graduate

Gregory Oswald, CS-7

Outstanding Cadet in Airmanship

Jacob Lowrie, CS-19

Outstanding Cadet in Parachuting

Kyle Sellner, CS-29

Outstanding Cadet in Powered Flight

Jeffrey Randolph Jr, CS-19

Outstanding Cadet in Soaring

Benjamin Gardner, CS-33

Outstanding Cadet in Honor Chairperson

Nathaniel Leach, CS-18

Outstanding Cadet in Character

Phil Compton, CS-34

Outstanding Cadet in Citizenship

Lindsey Robinson, CS-12

Outstanding Cadet in Basic Sciences

Ryan Mudry, CS-36

Outstanding Cadet in Engineering

Adam Comer, CS-37

Outstanding Cadet in Humanities

Christopher Conley, CS-7

Outstanding Cadet in Social Sciences

Derrick Hoxie IV, CS-3

Outstanding Cadet in Aeronautical Engineering

Josiah VanderMey, CS-9

Outstanding Cadet in Astronautical Engineering

Roni Yadlin, CS-30

Outstanding Cadet in Behavioral Sciences & Leadership

Abigail Rogers, CS-22

Outstanding Cadet in Biology

Brit Long, CS-22

Outstanding Cadet in Chemistry

Brandon McCutcheon, CS-15

Outstanding Cadet in Civil Engineering

Kathleen Grieshop, CS-36

Outstanding Cadet in Communications

Daniel Castle, CS-19

Outstanding Cadet in Computer Engineering

Eric Kitaif, CS-2

Outstanding Cadet in Computer Science

Douglas Sutton, CS-18

Outstanding Cadet in Eastern Language Minor

Benjamin Otte, CS-20

Outstanding Cadet in Economics

Philip Cho, CS-24

Outstanding Cadet in Electrical Engineering

Matthew McCormack, CS-16

Outstanding Cadet in Engineering Mechanics

Daniel Zheng, CS-20

Outstanding Cadet in English

Keidrick Roy, CS-19

Outstanding Cadet in Environmental Engineering

Anthony Hylko, CS-33

Outstanding Cadet in Foreign Area Studies

Brian Williams, CS-23

Outstanding Cadet in Geospatial Science

William Heitshusen, CS-7

Outstanding Cadet in History

Daniel Jackson, CS-5

Outstanding Cadet in Intercollegiate Speech Comp

Joshua Seefried, CS-29

Outstanding Cadet in Legal Studies

Brady Augustin, CS-32

Outstanding Cadet in Management

Sean Rotbart, CS-12

Outstanding Cadet in Mathematics

Josiah VanderMey, CS-9

Outstanding Cadet in Mechanical Engineering

Adam Comer, CS-37

Outstanding Cadet in Meteorology

Satapat Rattana, CS-1

Outstanding Cadet in Military History

Jeffrey Maciejewski, CS-24

Outstanding Cadet in Military Strategic Studies

Parker Hicks, CS-29

Outstanding Cadet in National Security Studies

Victor DiTommaso III, CS-14

Outstanding Cadet in Operations Research

Philip Cho, CS-24

Outstanding Cadet in Philosophy

Laura Johnson, CS-34

Outstanding Cadet in Physics

Katharine Kalamaroff, CS-39

Outstanding Cadet in Political Science

Jeremy Didier, CS-37

Outstanding Cadet in Space Operations

Jacob Schonig, CS-37

Outstanding Cadet in Systems Engineering

Adam Bergoo, CS-2

Outstanding Cadet in Systems Engineering Management

Bradley Dewees, CS-22

Outstanding Cadet in Western Language Minor

Joseph Dougherty, CS-19

Outstanding Cadet in Athletic Leadership

Griffin Nevitt, CS-4

Outstanding Cadet in Athletic Excellence

Sean Houseworth, CS-24

Outstanding Cadet in Athletic Achievement

Gregory Flynn, CS-30

Outstanding Cadet in Physical Education Average

Benjamin Otte, CS-20

Outstanding Cadet in Physical Education

Brady Augustin, CS-32

Outstanding Cadet in Military Performance

Gregory Oswald, CS-7

Outstanding Cadet in Academic Performance

Bradley Dewees, CS-22

Outstanding Cadet in Scholar-Athlete

Michael Phillipich, CS-7



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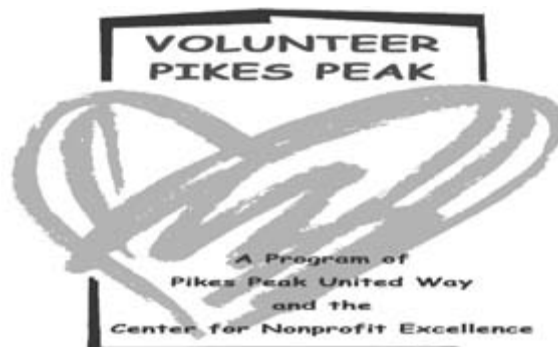
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87 cadets bound for Grad School

Class of 2009 to grace the halls of Harvard, Rice, MIT, Oxford

By Academy Public Affairs

Harvard, MIT, Oxford, Cal Tech and Rice are just a few of the post-graduation destinations for members of the Academy's Class of 2009.

Eighty-seven members of the Air Force Academy's latest graduating class have earned entry into graduate school programs.

Several of the graduating cadets have been tapped for medical school, the latest being Cadet 1st Class Theodore Saitz. He received notification May 19 that he has a slot waiting for him at Tulane Medical School right after graduation, which brought USAFA's medical school total up to 14 for the Class of 2009. The cadets bound for medical school are Cadets 1st Class Andrew Amack, Robert Edmonds, Andrew Groberg, Jane Hwang, Erin Johnson, Brit Long, Brandon McCutcheon, Kyle McIntosh, Joseph Migliuri, Sara Schwartz, William Timberlake, Kara Wilson and Travis Dekker.

Additionally, Cadet 1st Class Jenna Beasock's post-graduation assignment is the Vanderbilt University School of Nursing, while Cadet 1st Class Benjamin Pass is headed to dental school at Columbia University.

Harvard University is the next stop for five graduates, who have earned scholarships to the John F. Kennedy School of Government: Cadets 1st Class Victor DiTommaso III, Elisa Park, Lindsey Robinson, Brian Williams, and Brian McCutcheon.

The Harvard scholarship is Cadet McCutcheon's second post-graduate scholarship, as he is also headed to medical school.

Cadet 1st Class Brian Mueller is bound for King's College in the United Kingdom after winning a Marshall Scholarship. Cadet Mueller is one of only 40 people in the United States to win the scholarship this year.

Through the Acquisition Accession Program, several cadets majoring in everything from physics to behavioral sciences are bound for graduate school. This program sends graduating cadets to the Air Force Institute of Technology in residence and select civilian universities, based on the current needs of the Air Force. It includes a new AFIT in-resi-



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Larry Simmons

Cadet 1st Class Brandon McCutcheon prepares a sample for an experiment using a dye to identify free radicals in hopes of one day treating chemical warfare decontamination and cancer. Cadet McCutcheon earned two post-graduate scholarships: one to the University of California-San Diego medical school, and another to the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He was a biochemistry major and a member of the Wings of Blue.

dence program for cyber operations, which was introduced in 2008. These cadets are: Cadets 1st Class Ainsley Allen, Eric Diss, Luke Ferrel, Byron Fryer, Harmon Gage, Joshua Heffernan, Adam Hillier, Alexander Kaszynski, Charles Keaton, Adam Kruse, Garrett Kurtz, Spenser Lee, Benaiah Lozano, Brooke Lunde, Erin McNeil, Ashley Miller, Crystal Murray, Michael Paul, Emily Purcell, Robin Rogers, Stephanie Schmidt, Nathanael Sladek, Alexander Stevenson, Jared Tuinstra, Ariella Walker, Matthew Williams and Abby Rogers.

Cadet Abby Rogers also earned an NCAA postgraduate scholarship, along

with Cadet 1st Class Roni Yadlin. Cadet Rogers is a gymnast while Cadet Yadlin played soccer.

These scholarships are awarded by the NCAA to graduating student-athletes who have performed with distinction in both athletics and academics. The NCAA awards fewer than 200 scholarships annually to the best of more than 384,000 NCAA athletes. Cadet Yadlin also won an endowed scholarship to Oxford University, United Kingdom.

Several nationally competitive and endowed scholarships are sending graduating firsties off to schools in Europe and around the United States, including:

Cadet 1st Class Daniel Castle to Colorado State University; Cadet 1st Class Brooks Crane to the University of Pittsburgh; Cadet 1st Class David Day to Baylor University; Cadet 1st Class Adam Otten to La Sorbonne, France; Cadet 1st Class Katharine Kalamaroff to The California Institute of Technology; Cadet 1st Class Adam Comer to Cambridge University, United Kingdom; Cadet 1st Class Laura Johnson to St. John's College, and Cadet 1st Class Keidrick Roy to Arizona State University.

The Academy's Center for Space and Defense Studies is sending two cadets to graduate school: Cadet 1st Class Nathan McCaskey to Colorado State University and Cadet 1st Class Steven Tomaszewski to Indiana University.

Four members of the Class of 2009 earned the Superintendent's Rand Ph.D. Scholarship, which sends cadets to the Pardee Rand Graduate School in Santa Monica, Calif., for a doctoral degree in policy analysis. They are: Cadets 1st Class Jeremy Didier, John Langley, Kimberly Hale and Kevin O'Neill.

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology awaits five graduates of the Academy's Class of 2009: Cadets 1st Class Philip Cho, Corey Crowell, Matthew McCormack, Josiah VanderMey, and George Sondecker, IV.

Rice University has 13 engineering and space operations majors slated for grad school there. They are: Cadets 1st Class Tyler Brummer, Tracee Curlett, Wyatt Harris, Brad Jenicke, Timothy Phillips, Timothy Spielman, Bradley Ward, Matthew Wichmann, Joel Halpert, Andrew Kirk, Jackson Mason, Anthony O'Shea, and Jake Schonig.

Cadet 1st Class Monique Ludvick will put her aeronautical engineering and research skills to work at the University of Washington, via that university's engineering fellowship.

Four graduating cadets will attend the University of Maryland Scholarship at University of Maryland's School of Public Policy. An important selection criterion is a continuing interest in public policy and service in the public sector and this program awards a master's in public policy. Those cadets are: Cadets 1st Class Brad Dewees, Josiah Gaffney, John Munson and Benjamin Otte.

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Soaring success paves way for future recruitment

By Maj. Stephen Stumbo

Assistant Director of Operations
94th Flying Training Squadron

Lakeland, Fla.—Sean Tucker stepped out of his custom-built Oracle Challenger II biplane and rushed to catch his flight from Tampa back to his Power Aerobatics School in California. Recently honored as one of only 25 'Living Legends of Flight', he had just wrapped up the last of six mind-boggling aerobatic routines which included maneuvers in excess of 10 positive and six negative G's during Lakeland, Florida's 2009 Sun 'n Fun Fly-In.

Before he left however, he walked over to the show's youngest performer, shook his hand, and wished him luck on his routine. "You're an awesome pilot — now don't screw it up!"

Cadet 1st Class Andy Davis then strapped into his TG-10C and became the first Air Force Academy cadet in history to perform an aerobatic demonstration on the national fly-in stage. His six-minute routine tested the limits of the Academy's aerobatic sailplane and the Sunday afternoon crowd stood in awe of the paces an aircraft without an engine could be put through.

The road to Sun 'n Fun was just that — after C-130 airlift support fell through, Cadet-in-Charge Nic Zimmerman and his crew loaded the Air Force Academy



Courtesy photo

Cadets from the 94th Flying Training Squadron share the in's and out's of gliding during the Sun 'n Fun demonstrations in Lakeland, Fla. The 94th anticipates attending more air shows this summer.

Sailplane Demonstration Team's glider into a trailer and two officers from the 94th Flying Training Squadron and 70th FTS drove it across the country. 1,850 miles and four days later, the aircraft was now a static display at America's second largest fly-in and the 94th's team was busy answering questions and handing out recruiting materials to the estimated 138,000 in attendance at Lakeland's Linder Regional Airport. Cadets 1st Class Justin Ledvina and Shannon Reichert made a

presentation at Lakeland's George Jenkins High School, meeting with students who were in awe of the detail which they gleaned from the cadet's description of life at the Academy. "It was amazing to see how impressed the high school students were with daily life here", said Cadet Reichert.

Majors Steve D'Amico and Jim Stumbo provided officer oversight for the trip and were glad the team was able to make the whole trip happen. "Right

from the beginning of the planning phase, we faced several challenges," said Stumbo. "Funding, airlift, SCA, recruiting resources ... all areas seemed to require a huge team effort on the part of several Academy agencies and in the end, the teamwork paid off." When asked why the 94th would go through such strides to pull an event like this off, it all boiled down to the mission.

According to Major D'Amico, a member of the Reserve component serving at USAFA, "We all exist here to develop leaders of character. That starts with recruiting that outstanding sophomore in high school who is awed by the exploits of an Academy cadet, finishes with the graduation of a cadet possessing the tools required to execute a deployment like this as cadet-in-charge and all the little steps in between that ensure that the job is pulled off with integrity and excellence."

The 94th will attend 8-10 more air shows this summer, performing before audiences in excess of 1.2 million aviation enthusiasts, providing a number of different cadets with leadership opportunities aimed at preparing them to be lieutenant's in today's unpredictable Air Force.

Along the way, they'll also be providing an incredible recruiting tool to ensure USAFA continues to attract and train America's best and brightest for service to their country.

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Cadets claim victory in battles against cancer

By Butch Wehry
Academy Spirit staff

There will be no way of telling the two cadets who have survived cancer at today's graduation ceremony.

Worth our attention

An Army doctor left Cadet 1st Class Gregory Rettler a message the night before telling the cadet not to eat or drink anything after midnight and to come to his office at 7 a.m. the next morning.

The cadet suspected things were serious.

Cancer was confirmed the next morning before the operation.

"I prayed for God's peace and asked Him to reach others with this story ... then I called my parents and commander," said the humanities major with Cadet Squadron 24. "My mom flew out immediately, and my commander was at my bedside before I woke up from the first operation."

Where the cancer came from is unknown.

Cancer survivors are known for appreciating life ... and fate.

"My family and friends supported me—Mom was physically there through all of it—but definitely there was a trust in God's plan no matter what," said the cadet from Green Bay Wis.

As a cancer victim, one is not in control.

"Through it, I gained a sense of urgency to strive to be a better man and live out what I believe in," said Cadet Rettler, who will attend intelligence training at Goodfellow Air Force Base, Texas, soon.

"I try to make sure that I spend my days pursuing what is most important—only the best things should be worth our attention," he said.



Courtesy Photo

Cancer survivor Cadet 1st Class Mark Puffenbarger joins his underclassman sister Haley for a photo.

Struck randomly

In October, Cadet 1st Class Mark Puffenbarger started having sharp chest pain at night due to the tumor growing and pushing other internal organs out of the way.

"It was off and on, and I ignored it and it mostly went away," said the systems engineering management major from Cadet Squadron 17.

"At the very beginning of November, I developed a cough that wouldn't go away. After a little over three weeks I went to the cadet clinic. They figured it was a virus, but decided to do a chest x-ray to see if it was pneumonia, just in case. There was a huge spot on the x-ray, so they asked some more questions."

After hearing he had lost about 20 pounds in the last month, doctors scheduled a CT scan.

"The results came back that day and they called me in to tell me I had a mass in my left chest cavity," said Cadet Rettler. "Due to my age, it was almost certainly some sort of lymphoma."

Doctors couldn't be sure but they said it had a very high cure rate, and most people go on to live long, healthy lives. "Since the doctor answered the 'are you sure' and 'how bad is it' questions, my first question was to ask if this was going to mean I'd lose my physical qualification status," the cadet said.

"My type of cancer was: Primary Mediastinal Diffuse Large B Cell Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma," said the cadet. It was about the size and shape of a football when I started chemotherapy at the beginning of December. I had a chemo dose every three weeks from December until mid-March. Toward the beginning of April, I started the radiation therapy and had a dose every weekday until last Tuesday."

It seemed to strike him randomly. No one really knows why.

"It helped being here with friends to keep my mind off of the treatment and the side effects," Cadet Puffenbarger said. "I kept busy with school and military duties also kept me occupied. I think had I left the Academy for the treatment, I wouldn't have been nearly as active, and I would have dwelled on it more. Staying at the Academy during my treatment was really good for me."

Self-pity does not appear to be one of this cadet's traits.

"For one, I certainly have a lot more medical knowledge now than I could have ever wanted to know from doing lots of research about this, other cancers, and related topics," he said. "I have been optimistic the entire time and I think that's really helped."



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Memorial honors ultimate service before self

Story and photo by Ann Patton
Academy Spirit staff

As our nation paid tribute Monday to America's fallen warriors, the Academy War Memorial stands near the base of Old Glory on the Terrazzo's Air Garden. It serves as a reminder to all, of the Academy graduates who've made the supreme sacrifice in service to their country.

The curved monolith of black starlite granite is inscribed with the names of 171 Academy graduates who died as a result of hostile action during a state of military conflict.

Tragically, the Academy lost another one of its own May 20 when First Lt. Roslyn Schulte, Class of 2006, was killed in action near Kabul, Afghanistan. An intelligence officer, she is the 10th graduate, and first female graduate killed in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

The Association of Graduates determines the names of graduates to be listed. The AOG spearheaded the fundraising efforts for the memorial that was completed in 1970.

Since its dedication, the Class of 1970 oversaw the construction of a smaller replica of the Memorial Wall outside the AOG headquarters. During in-processing doolies receive a briefing on the significance of the service they are about to enter and the sacrifices that may be required of them.

In early 2006, a small team of USAFA graduates took on the substantial and painstaking challenge of creating a database of information pertaining to graduate combat losses.

Former Preparatory School commander and Col. (retired) Jock Schwank, Class of 1960, is a member of the research team. He said the project took three years and was only completed in December last year.

The team culled nearly 20,000 bits of information from



Cadet 4th Class Derek Winkler peers at the names of Academy graduates who lost their lives in war. The War Memorial is an element of the Air Garden on the Terrazzo.

AOG data, from such sources as newspapers, Arlington National Cemetery, hometown obituaries, family members and classmates.

Supported by the The Friends of the Air Force Academy Library, it was a labor of love.

"This is the cadets' heritage from others who went before and gave their all," Mr. Schwank said. "They are all common people who died performing uncommon acts and paid the ultimate price for their sacrifices."

A large number of the names on the wall died in the Vietnam conflict. Many were pilots, but not all, including Lieutenant Schulte and Maj. Rodolfo Rodriguez, a civil engineer, who died in support of Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom.

Every name on the wall has a story.

One tells of the intriguing odyssey and return of a graduate's class ring in 2007, 40 years after his death in Vietnam.

A Chinese family, living in Vietnam at that time, had found it and cared for it through the years. Through a series of sheer coincidences, the ring eventually made its way back to the deceased graduate's brother, former Secretary of the Air Force Michael Wynne. The ring belonged to his older brother, Maj. Patrick Wynne, Class of 1966.

The attacks on Sept. 11, 2001 claimed Academy graduates Col. (retired) Charles Jones, Class of 1974, who was aboard American Airlines Flight 11 when it struck the North Tower of the World Trade Center and LeRoy Homer, Class of 1987, who served as first officer of hijacked United Airlines Flight 93 before it crashed in Western Pennsylvania.

Retired Col. Richard Rauschkolb, Class of 1970, said it is important for cadets to have a full understanding of those who went before them.

"They are part of the Long Blue Line," he said, noting that everyone whose name is on the wall went through the same challenges as today's cadets.

"They experienced the same things. It is a road full of bumps," he said.

Mr. Rauschkolb emphasizes the Air Force is not a job.

"It's a profession, a dangerous profession. They are expected, if called upon, to make the ultimate sacrifice."

Cadet 4th Class Derek Winkler, Cadet Squadron 19, takes the commitment seriously.

"I think of our responsibility to this nation," he said while peering over the names on the Memorial Wall. "If I am able-bodied and able-minded, I should do my part."

Cadet 3rd Class Caleb McConnell, CS-39, also has deep respect for those who have sacrificed.

"It's humbling," he said. "I think about them and their families, and I'm grateful for their service."

To view all the stories behind the War Memorial, visit www.friends.usafalibrary.com and click on "Memorial Wall."

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Thunderbirds set to soar for Class of 2009

From Staff Reports

Mission

The U.S. Air Force Air Demonstration Squadron, the Thunderbirds, performs precision aerial maneuvers demonstrating the capabilities of Air Force high performance aircraft to people throughout the world. The squadron, headquartered at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., exhibits the professional qualities the Air Force develops in the people who fly, maintain and support these aircraft.

Objectives of the squadron are:

- To support Air Force recruiting and retention programs
- To reinforce public confidence in the Air Force and to demonstrate to the public the professional competence of Air Force members
- To strengthen morale and esprit de corps among Air Force members
- To support Air Force community relations and people-to-people programs
- To represent the United States and its armed forces to foreign nations and to project international goodwill

The Team

The Thunderbirds squadron is an Air Combat Command unit composed of eight pilots (including six demonstration pilots), four support officers, three civilians and more than 130 enlisted personnel performing in 25 career fields.

A Thunderbirds air demonstration is a mix of formation flying and solo routines. The four-aircraft diamond formation demonstrates the training and precision of Air Force pilots, while the solo aircraft highlight the maximum capabilities of the F-16.

The pilots perform approximately 30 maneuvers in a demonstration. The entire show, including ground and air, runs about 75 minutes. The season lasts from March to November, with the winter months used to train new members.

Officers serve a two-year assignment with the squadron, while enlisted personnel serve three to four. Replacements must be trained for about half of the team each year, providing a constant mix of experience.

The squadron performs no more than 88 air demonstrations each year and has never canceled a demonstration due to maintenance difficulty. More than 280 million people in all 50 states and 57 foreign countries have seen the red, white and blue jets in more than 3,500 aerial demonstrations.

In addition to their responsibilities as the official U.S. Air Force aerial demonstration team, the Thunderbirds are part of our combat force. If required, the team's personnel and aircraft can be rapidly integrated into a fighter unit at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev. Since the aircraft are only slightly modified, they can be made combat-ready in less than 72 hours.

F-16 Fighting Falcon

The Lockheed Martin (formerly General Dynamics) F-16 Fighting Falcon represents the full range of capa-



Photo by Ken Carter

bilities possessed by the Air Force's tactical fighters. This highly maneuverable multi-role fighter has proven to be one of the world's best precision tactical bombers and air-to-air combat aircraft. The only modifications needed to prepare the aircraft for its air demonstration role are installing a smoke-generating system in the space normally reserved for the 20mm cannon, and the painting of the aircraft in Thunderbird colors.

History

The Thunderbirds were officially activated June 1, 1953, as the 3600th Air Demonstration Team at Luke AFB, Ariz. Their first aircraft was the straight-winged F-84G Thunderjet, a combat fighter-bomber that had seen action in Korea. Early in 1955 the team transitioned to the swept-winged F-84F Thunderstreak.

In June 1956, the team moved to its current home at Nellis. At the same time the Thunderbirds traded the veteran F-84 for the world's first supersonic fighter, the F-100 Super Sabre — an aerial platform that would serve the Thunderbirds for 13 years. More than 1,000 demonstrations were flown in the Super Sabre, thrilling spectators around the world. The team changed briefly to the Republic F-105 Thunderchief. After only six shows, in 1964, due to an extensive modification that became necessary on all Thunderchiefs, the Thunderbirds returned to the F-100.

From 1969 to 1973, the Thunderbirds flew the Air Force's front-line fighter, the F-4E Phantom. In 1974, the Thunderbirds converted to the T-38 Talon, the

world's first supersonic trainer. The T-38 was more fuel-efficient and less costly to maintain than the larger F-4.

Early in 1983, the Thunderbirds reinstated their traditional role of demonstrating the Air Force's front-line fighter capabilities. Transition to the F-16A allowed the team to retain manpower and fuel efficiency while demonstrating to spectators the latest in fighter technology.

The Thunderbirds returned to Europe for the first time in 13 years in 1984. More than 3.2 million people viewed the aerial demonstrations in 11 countries.

In 1986, the Thunderbirds participated in the rededication flyby of the Statue of Liberty and in September, another milestone was attained when the team went over the 200 million mark for total attendance.

The largest crowd, 2.25 million people, to see a performance was at Coney Island, N.Y., July 4, 1987. The 1987 Far East tour marked their debut in Beijing, China — the first American military demonstration performance in a Communist country.

Operation Desert Storm cancelled the 1990 European tour and the season was shortened. The team converted to the F-16C in 1992, bringing the F-16A era to an end.

In 1996, the team traveled again to Europe where crowds from former Warsaw Pact countries enjoyed the "Ambassadors in Blue." In July 1996, the team participated in opening ceremonies of the Centennial Olympics held in Atlanta which were viewed by an estimated 3.5 billion people around the world.

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Class of 2009 Stats

Graduates from the Class of 2009 who enter pilot training incur an active duty service commitment of ten years after earning their wings. For combat systems operators, the service commitment is six years after successful completion of training. All remaining graduates incur a five-year active duty service commitment.

When They Entered in 30 June 2005:

— 1,746 were offered appointments — 1,390 were processed into the Academy

Graduation Class size: 1046 (874 men, 172 women)

Minorities: 197

International students: 6 — (one each from Colombia, Honduras, Oman, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand)

Sets of twins: 1

Third-child graduates: 9

Second-child graduates: 52

Second generation graduates: 36

Attending pilot training: 520

Attending navigators training: 28

Attending air battle manager training: 4

Total graduates since 1959:

Male: 37,927 **Female:** 3,936 **Total:** 41,863

Graduates who have attained the rank of general: 495

(312 active duty, 175 retired, 8 deceased)

Total number of international graduates: 266

Class of '59 honors '09 with gold bars

By Butch Wehry
Academy Spirit staff

Retired Maj. Gen. Harold W. Todd, secretary of the Class of 1959, is the originator and "Class honcho" of the idea to inscribe the back of this year's second lieutenant bars with "1959-2009."

The Class of 1959 purchased the bars by special order from the Academy Clothing Sales store at the end of last year.

"The engraving is on the underside of each bar so they may actually be worn, rather than merely kept as keepsakes," said General Todd.

The job was performed at the Jostens Award Division, Del City, Oklahoma. It included removing each set from its box, engraving each bar, then returning them to the box for return shipment. The Association of Graduates paid for shipping both ways.

The bars mark a tangible link between the two classes, signifying the continuity of heritage across a half century, given on the 50th anniversary of the first graduating Class.

Success, said General Todd, has many fathers.

The AOG has sometimes given graduates their bars at the graduation ceremony, but did not plan to do so this year.

"It occurred to me that this would be a meaningful opportunity for the first

"50-Year Class" to link with the first "50th Anniversary Class" in some tangible manner," the general said. "I cleared the idea with the Academy authorities and with the rest of the class. The Class of 1959 approved and authorized the funds necessary for the purchase and engraving."

Other than the ceremonial presentation made at the class reunion from our 1959's class president, Retired Lt. Col. Joseph DeSantis, to the 2009 Class President to Cadet 1st Class Greg Oswald, cadet commander of cadets, the graduates will probably all receive their bars at the squadron commissioning ceremonies Tuesday evening.

Might this become an every 50 years traditional event?

"That's for others to decide," General Todd said. "Eventually, it may evolve to a 'Legacy Class' event."

Legacy classes are separated by 40 years vice 50 years, a tradition undertaken by the AOG earlier this decade to align class colors between classes 40 years apart. It's working well, but it denied the first few graduating classes the opportunity to serve as a legacy classes.)

"We treat this as a singular event, which succeeding classes may or may not wish to repeat, without any pressure to sustain a 'tradition,'" said the general.

"The Class of 2009 generally doesn't know yet, it is going to be more of a

surprise," said Cadet 1st Class Gregory Oswald in early May. "I would like to tell my class first. But for the few who do know about it including myself, we are humbled and feel it truly shows how the Class of 1959 feels about their alma mater and how important their connection to the Academy can be to future classes."

"The very fortunate part about this inscription is that it's done inside the

bars so we will be able to wear them if we choose. I am sure many of my classmates will use these bars at their commissioning ceremony. I'm very sure that the Class of 2009 will want to repeat this gesture or a similar one 50 years from now," said the cadet wing commander. "The Class of 1959 has set the example of how alumni should be involved with and mentoring the future classes of the Long Blue Line."



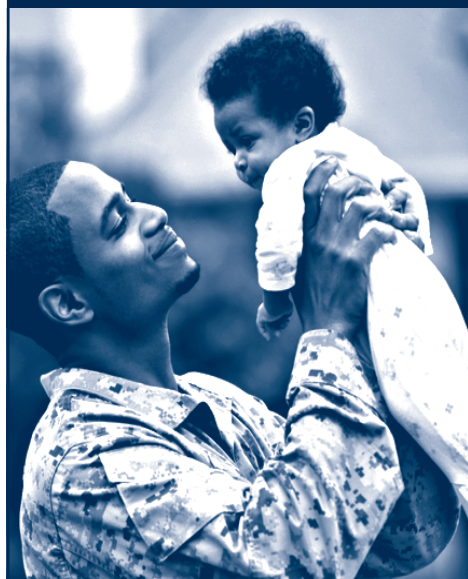
Photo by Ken Carter

Wreath Unveiling

William 'T' Thompson, president and CEO of the Association of Graduates, left, and Lt. Gen. John Regni, Academy superintendent, reveal the Memorial Day wreath during a ceremony on Stillman Parade Field Monday in conjunction with the organizational parade.



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2009 Outstanding Athletes earn Athletic Department recognition

By Athletic Communications

The Air Force Academy athletic department concluded a very successful 2008-2009 sports season recently and several cadet-athletes were recognized by the Academy at the individual awards ceremony. Sophomore hockey player Jacques Lamoureux and senior gymnast Abbey Rogers took home the most valuable male and female athlete award, respectively. Senior cross country and track athlete Sean Houseworth won the athletic excellence award while senior lacrosse player Griffin Nevitt won the athletic leadership award. Senior hockey player Mike Phillipich won the scholar-athlete award while senior teammate Greg Flynn won the athletic achievement award.

Most Valuable Male Athlete: Sophomore Jacques Lamoureux became the second All-American in school history and was one of 10 finalists for the prestigious Hobey Baker Memorial Award, given annually to the nation's top collegiate hockey player. Lamoureux was named the Atlantic Hockey Association Player of the Year and was a first-team all-conference selection. He led the nation in goals (33), power-play goals (15) and game-winners (9). He spent the majority of the season as the nation's leader in points and finished second with 53 points in 41 games. In Air Force's 2-0 win over third-ranked Michigan in the NCAA East Regional, Lamoureux scored the second goal of the game and was named to the all-tournament team. A native of Grand Forks, N.D., Lamoureux was also named the Hockey Commissioners' Association Player of the Month in October and was the AHA Player of the Week three times.

Most Valuable Female Athlete: Senior Abbey Rogers became just the

third member of the program to earn MVP honors in multiple years. Rogers capped an amazing collegiate career with her second straight MPSF Gymnast of the Year award and three conference titles. The senior, who earned an invitation to the NCAA Regional Championships, paced the Falcons with four all-conference selections. She posted the squad's highest total of the year on every event, while collecting three MPSF Gymnast of the Week awards and 16 first-place finishes. The native of Pittsburgh, Pa., who upped her career-best scores in three of the four individual events, as well as the all-around, also received numerous academic awards. Rogers earned academic all-conference honors, a place on the USAG All-Academic Team and a NCAA postgraduate scholarship.

Athletic Excellence Award: Senior Sean Houseworth, the Most Valuable Athlete for both the men's track and field and cross country, had a remarkable senior season. During the cross country season, he paced the Falcons at the Mountain West Conference Championships, while earning all-conference and all-region honors. Houseworth continued to shine during the indoor season, earning two conference titles and the MWC High Point Award (the first-ever Falcon to claim that distinction). He became just the second runner in conference history to win the two longest races (3000- and 5000-meters) of the indoor meet. It was the second straight year he had won the 3000-meter race, clocking the fifth-fastest time in MWC history. His success continued as the team moved outdoors. Houseworth automatically qualified to the NCAA Championships in the 10,000-meter run, setting an Academy-record time at the prestigious Stanford Invitational. He was named the confer-



ence's Athlete of the Week following that performance, which ranked him eighth in the nation. He went on to claim all-conference accolades in the 5000-meter run after an impressive third-place finish.

Athletic Leadership Award: Senior lacrosse player Griffin Nevitt is a two-time preseason All-American, Nevitt earned all-conference honors in all four seasons with the Falcons, including first-team recognition in each of the past three years. He finished his career with 119 points, becoming just the second Air Force player in the past 10 years to reach 100 career points, while his 77 career goals are the most of any Falcon in the last 10 seasons. Air Force's best all-around player, contributing both offensively and defensively, Nevitt led the Falcons to their best season since 1997 to earn MVP honors. Although Air Force started the season with a 3-6 record, Nevitt was able to keep his teammates focused on their goals, as the team won four straight games to claim second place in the conference and a spot in the Great Western Lacrosse League tournament for the first time in program history.

Scholar-Athlete Award: Senior Mike Phillipich graduated with a 3.75 Grade Point Average as a systems engineering management major. He ranked second in his class out of 73 systems engineering management majors with a 3.90 major GPA. A four-time academic all-confer-

ence selection, Phillipich won the Derek Hines Unsung Hero Award as the "nation's consummate team player." A two-year team captain, Phillipich was also one of 10 finalists for the Lowe's Senior CLASS Award, recognizing excellence in academics, athletics, character and leadership. The native of Lansing, Mich., earned the team's Vic Heyliger Award, which is voted on by the team and given to the player whose dedication, character, leadership and work ethic exemplify Falcon hockey. He also earned the team's Jim Bowman Award as the top scholar-athlete.

Athletic Achievement Award: Senior Greg Flynn became the first defenseman in school history to earn All-American honors. Flynn was a first-team all-Atlantic Hockey Association selection and was chosen as the league's best defenseman. He was the top scoring defenseman in the nation, averaging 1.02 points per game with seven goals and 42 points in 41 games. A native of Lino Lakes, Minn., Flynn was named to the all-tournament teams at the Atlantic Hockey Association Final Four and at the NCAA East Regional. He assisted on both goals in the 2-0 win over third-ranked Michigan in the NCAA Tournament. Flynn earned the team's Larry Cronk Award, which is voted on by the team, as the team's most inspirational player and was also named the team's best defenseman.

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MVPs shine under post-season spotlight

By Athletic Communications

Men's Cross Country: Senior Sean Houseworth, cadet squadron 24, posted the Falcons' top times at the Pre-National Meet and the Mountain West Conference Championships. He finished within the top third (64 out of 267) at the Pre-Nationals Meet with an 8K time of 24:35 and earned all-conference first team honors with a seventh-place finish (24:51) at the MWC Championships. His time of 24:35 at the Pre-NCAA meet was the best 8K time by any Air Force runner this season.



File Photo

Katie Lynch

Women's Cross Country: In addition to earning the team's MVP award, junior Katie Lynch, cadet squadron 38, was also selected as the recipient of the women's Most Improved Award. Lynch, who competed in the first cross country meet of her career on Sept. 13, 2008, in San Diego, was the Falcons' top finisher at the Pre-Nationals Meet, MWC Championships and NCAA Regional Championships. Lynch finished 168th at the Pre-Nationals Meet (22:30), 21st at the conference meet (22:29) and 44th at the regional meet (21:42). Her regional meet time of 21:42 is the Falcons' fastest of the season.



File Photo

Chris Thomas

Football Overall MVP: Junior defensive back Chris Thomas established himself as one of the top all-around players in the Mountain West Conference, earning second-team all-conference honors and first-team all-Colorado honors by the National Football Foundation. Thomas recorded his second straight 100-plus tackle season with 107, including a team-best 66 unassisted. He was among the

league leaders with nine tackles for loss for 44 yards, four sacks for 33 yards and a conference-leading four fumble recoveries. He also forced two fumbles and had an interception. Thomas recorded a career-high 17 tackles vs. BYU and set an Armed Forces Bowl single-game record with 16 vs. Houston.

Football Most Valuable Offensive Player: Senior tight end Travis Dekker finished second on the team in receiving with 13 catches for 129 yards and two touchdowns, despite missing the first four games of the season due to a broken ankle. The impact of his return was felt immediately, as he hauled in a team-best three catches for 32 yards in his first game back vs. Navy. Dekker caught at least one pass in each game that he played in and averaged 9.9 yards per catch.



File Photo

Jake Paulson

Football Most Valuable Defensive Player: Senior defensive end Jake Paulson led the Falcons and ranked among the leaders in the Mountain West Conference in tackles for loss with 14.5 for 72 yards and quarterback sacks with nine for 60 yards. He also had two fumble recoveries, returning one for a score to record the first touchdown by an Air Force defensive lineman since Bryce Fisher in 1997. Paulson also forced a fumble, recorded a safety and had two pass breakups. A first-team all-conference selection, Paulson was on the midseason watch list for the Hendrick's Award, which goes annually to the top defensive end in the nation.



File Photo

Ryan Harrison

Football Most Valuable Lineman/Special Teams Player: Senior kicker Ryan Harrison established himself as one of the best kickers in school history. He set

a school record with 24 field goals this season, breaking the mark of 19 he shared with Dave Lawson (1974) and Dave Adams (2000). Harrison, who is second all-time at the Academy with 43 career field goals, was a semifinalist for the Lou Groza National Placekicker Award and was a second-team all-Mountain West Conference selection. He finished second in the conference in scoring with an 8.3 per-game scoring average. Harrison led the league and ranked third in the nation in field goals with a 1.85 average per game.

Men's Soccer: Junior Steven Noller started 17 of 18 games in 2008 and led the team in scoring with nine points on four goals and one assist. Noller, from cadet squadron 25, scored four goals in four consecutive games, becoming the first Air Force player to score a goal in four straight games since Ryan Schaeffer during the 1996 season. He was second on the team in total shots with 32 and led the squad with 16 shots on goal. Two of his four goals were game-winners. Noller earned second-team all-MPSF honors in 2008.

Women's Soccer: Senior goalkeeper Erin Wallace was named team MVP. A four year starter, Wallace played in nine games, recording 24 saves in 517 minutes and posted at 2.36 goals-against average. The senior was the winning goalkeeper in Air Force's wins over Army and Grambling State. She allowed one-or-fewer goals in five matches and had a season-high seven saves against BYU.

Water Polo: Junior goalkeeper David Ostrom, a second-team all-WWPA Tournament selection, ended the year with 243 saves, ranking 16th in the nation in that statistical category. He also helped lead a defense that ranked 10th in the nation in goals allowed per game at 8.19.



File Photo

Jasmine Pettie

Volleyball: Senior Jasmine Pettie served as team captain for the second consecutive season. A member of the all-tournament team at the Air Force Labor Day Invitational, Pettie led the team with 2.23 kills per set and was ranked second with a .166 hitting percentage.

Men's Basketball: Anwar Johnson, a senior guard from St. Gabriel, La., finished second on the team in scoring at 11.9 points per game and led the team with 76

assists. He earned all-tournament honors at the Golden Bear Classic in December when he averaged 12 points and four rebounds in the Falcons' games against Portland and Dartmouth. Johnson scored a career-high 25 points against Stony Brook on Dec. 31 and notched a game-high 24 points in his final collegiate game against BYU at the MWC Championships. He started all 31 games despite playing with a stress reaction in his right foot for the last two months this season.



File Photo

Raimee Beck

Women's Basketball: Sophomore guard Raimee Beck was the team MVP for the women's basketball team in 2008-2009. Beck led the team in scoring, averaging 12.9 points per game. Beck led the Mountain West Conference, averaging 36.6 minutes played per game. Her 72 three-point baskets ranked second in the conference and her 386 points tied a school record for single season points in the Div. I era. Beck hit eight consecutive three-point baskets against North Carolina Central on Dec. 5, 2008, which was one shy of the NCAA record. Over a three-game stretch, Beck hit 12 consecutive threes, which was two shy of the NCAA record.

Men's Fencing: Sophomore Daniel Trapani was the fencing team's leading fencer throughout the 2008-2009 fencing season. At the 2009 NCAA West Regional Championships, Trapani earned all-region honors with his NCAA qualifying third-place finish. The native of Houston, Texas, made his first appearance at the NCAA Division I Fencing Championships, in March, finishing in fifth place to earn second-team All-American honors.



File Photo

Anwar Johnson

MVP

Trapani has a career dual-meet record of 79-15 (.839) at the Academy.

Women's Fencing: Freshman Simone Barrette was the team's top female competitor throughout the year. Barrette, from Louisville, Ky., earned all-region honors at the NCAA West Regionals with an NCAA qualifying finish of third place. She made her first trip to the NCAAs in March, and finished in 23rd place. In her first collegiate season, Barrette amassed an impressive 28-6 dual-meet record (.824). She was the Falcons' top female finisher in the 2008 Nick Toth Open, Falcon Open, New Mexico Open, NCAA Regionals and the Notre Dame dual meet.

Men's Gymnastics: Freshman Jacob Houder had a stellar rookie campaign, en route to his MVP award. In addition to setting an Academy record on the pommel horse, Houder earned a pair of USAG All-America accolades and a selection to the NCAA Championships. He posted the Falcons' highest scores of the season on the pommel horse, parallel bars and high bar, while claiming three event titles on the parallel bars and one on the pommel horse. Even after just one season, Houder's name already dots the Falcons' all-time scoring list. He has at least a share of eight of the nine highest marks in program history on the pommel horse. The native of Pinehurst, Texas, became the first freshman in the 53-year history of the Falcons' program to earn the program's highest honor.



File Photo

Abbey Rogers

Women's Gymnastics: Senior Abbey Rogers became just the third member of the program to earn MVP honors in multiple years. Rogers capped an amazing collegiate career with her second straight MPSF Gymnast of the Year award and three conference titles. The senior, who earned an invitation to the NCAA Regional Championships, paced the Falcons with four all-conference selections. She posted the squad's highest total of the year on every event, while collecting three MPSF Gymnast of the Week awards and 16 first-place finishes. The native of Pittsburgh, Pa., who upped her career-best scores in three of the four individual events, as well as the all-around, also received numerous academic awards. Rogers earned academic all-conference honors, a place on the USAG All-Academic Team and a NCAA postgraduate scholarship.



File Photo

Andrew Volkening

Hockey: Junior Andrew Volkening was selected as the hockey team's most valuable player as voted on by his teammates. Volkening was a first-team all-Atlantic Hockey Association selection and was named to the all-tournament teams at the AHA Final Four and the NCAA East Regional. He finished the season ranked second in the nation in wins with 28, third with six shutouts, sixth in the nation in goals-against average at 1.97 and 19th in saves percentage at .920. Volkening, a Genoa, Ill., native, set school records in all four of those categories. Volkening set a new league record with back-to-back shutout wins over Bentley and Mercyhurst in the AHA Final Four. He then made a season-high 43 saves in a 2-0 shutout win over third-ranked Michigan in the NCAA Tournament. His 262 consecutive shutout minutes set a new school record and nearly doubled the previous mark vs. Division I teams.



File Photo

Tom Chandler

Rifle: Sophomore Tom Chandler earned second-team All-American honors in small bore while qualifying for the NCAA championships. Chandler is the first Falcon to earn an NCAA berth since 2006. He recorded his season-best performance at the Nevada, Reno matches with a 587/600.

Boxing: Senior Boyce Loomis, the Falcons' team captain during the 2008-2009 season, claimed his first National Collegiate Boxing Association title at 185 pounds, while posting an impressive 10-1 overall record. The senior, who posted a perfect 4-0 run through the regional and national championship bouts, was the Academy's Boxer of the Week on three occasions. During his final season, Loomis won four bouts by knockout, including an impressive first-round victory in the Wing

Open Championships. For his career, he compiled a 21-5 overall record, a perfect 10-0 ledger against fellow cadets, three Wing Open titles, two NCBA regional titles and one NCBA national championship belt.

Men's Swimming: Sophomore Benjamin Gunn was named the men's swimming and diving MVP for the 2008-2009 season. Gunn set school records and earned all-conference honors in each of his six events at the Mountain West Conference Championships. Gunn won the first conference title of his career with a win in the 200 IM, shattering the previous Air Force record by more than a second. He also finished fourth in the 200 butterfly and sixth in the 100 butterfly, while swimming on three of the Falcons' four relays which set new school records: the second-place 800 freestyle relay and 400 medley relay and the third-place 400 freestyle relay.



File Photo

Jane Hwang

Women's Swimming: Senior Jane Hwang was named the 2008-2009 MVP for the women's swimming and diving team. An all-conference selection for the third-straight year in both the 100 and 200 freestyle events, Hwang set school records in three individual events at the MWC Championships (100 free, 200 free and 200 IM). The recipient of the MWC's Senior Recognition Award, Hwang also anchored the school record-setting 400 freestyle relay and moved up in the school record books in the 100 breaststroke. Hwang closes out her career with Academy top-10 times in six individual events (also ranking in the top 10 in the 200 butterfly and 200 breaststroke).

Wrestling: Senior captain Stephen Crozier was named the Air Force wrestling MVP for the 2008-2009 season. Crozier, wrestling at both 165 and 174 during the year, closed out the season with a 25-16 overall ledger and 11-5 mark in dual action. He led the Falcons in total wins for the second-straight season, while also leading Air Force in win percentage. Crozier also earned all-conference honors for the third-consecutive year, garnering second-team All-WWC accolades following his runner-up performance at the 2009 NCAA West Regional.

Baseball: Junior designated hitter/first baseman Matt Alexander was the team MVP for the Air Force baseball team in 2009. Alexander led Air Force in nearly



File Photo

Matt Alexander

all hitting categories, batting .383 with 15 homers, 19 doubles, 53 runs, 65 RBIs and 82 hits. Alexander led the Mountain West Conference in homers and RBIs during the regular season. Alexander cracked the Air Force single-season top 10 in home runs (seventh), RBIs (fourth) and hits (third). Alexander picked up several accolades on the season, earning MWC Player of the Week, Collegiate Baseball News Louisville Slugger National Player of the Week and College Baseball Foundation National All-Star Lineup. Alexander's biggest honor was being named one of 16 finalists for the Dick Howser Trophy, given to the top collegiate baseball player in the nation.



File Photo

Griffin Nevitt

Lacrosse: Senior Griffin Nevitt was named the MVP for the 2009 lacrosse team. A four-year starter on both attack and midfield, team captain in 2009 and two-time preseason All-American, Nevitt has earned all-conference honors in all four seasons with the Falcons, including first-team recognition in each of the past three years. He finished his career with 119 points, becoming just the second Air Force player in the past 10 years to reach 100 career points, while his 77 career goals are the most of any Falcon in the last 10 seasons.

Golf: Senior captain Shaun O'Bryant was named the Air Force golf MVP for the 2008-2009 season. One of the Falcons' most consistent golfers, O'Bryant played in every tournament for Air Force this season. His stroke average of 74.8, a career-best, was the second-lowest on the team. O'Bryant's top finish came at the season-opening Falcon Invitational, where he carded a one-over-par 217 to tie for 12th

MVP

From Page 21

in the individual standings, while his three-round total of 214 (-2) at the Desert Shootout in March was a season low.

Men's Tennis: Freshman Cody Hall led the Falcons with 16 overall singles wins in 2008-2009 and was the only Falcon in the regular lineup to post a winning record at 16-12. He also led the squad with 12 dual-match wins, including an 11-9 record at the No. 2 spot. He was the only Falcon to win a dual singles match in conference play, defeating Graeme Kassautzki, 3-6, 7-5, 7-6 (7), in a three-hour match at the Academy for Air Force's first MWC singles victory since the 2005-06 season. Hall had also won the first set and was up in a second-set tiebreaker in the No. 2 match against TCU when the match was suspended due to rain.

Women's Tennis: Senior Christine Abayan played the majority of the season in 2008-2009 at No. 1 singles. She tied for the team lead with two singles victories against MWC opponents, winning the No. 2 match against Utah and 46th-ranked UNLV. She posted 55 career singles wins and 70 career doubles wins in her four years at Air Force.

Men's Track and Field: Sean Houseworth had a stellar senior season year, winning a pair of conference titles and setting another Academy record. Houseworth, who was also the MVP of the cross country team, won conference titles in the two longest distances of the indoor championships (the 3000- and 5000-meter events) and the MWC High Point Award. He is the only Falcon to earn the award as the meet's top-scoring performer. In addition to defending his title in the 3000-

meter run, Houseworth moved into the conference record book with the fifth-fastest time in MWC meet history. His success continued in the outdoor season, as he automatically qualified to the national meet in the 10,000-meter run with an Academy record time. Houseworth, who earned MWC Athlete of the Week honors in March, went on to claim all-conference accolades in the 5000-meter run at the MWC outdoor championships.

Women's Indoor Track and Field: Junior Sara Neubauer, last year's MVP, continues to rewrite the Academy record books. Making her debut in a pair of events, she is now listed in the top-10 of every throwing event. During the indoor season, Neubauer broke her own record in the shot put, while recording the program's second-best weight throw distance in just her first year of throwing the implement. Her success continued in the outdoor season, as she set two more Academy standards. In just her first year of throwing the hammer, she tallied set a



Sean Houseworth

File Photo



Sara Neubauer

File Photo

new program record at the Mountain West Conference Championships. The very next day she upped her own record in the shot put, while moving into eighth in the javelin throw records. Additionally, she bettered her second-place standing on the discus throw's all-time list. Highlighted by all-conference honors in the shot put and discus throw, Neubauer became the first athlete to score in all four throwing events at the conference meet.

Men's Track and Field Outstanding Competitor: Senior Kellen Curry picked up the first conference title of his career, winning the 200-meter dash at the MWC indoor championships. He also earned indoor all-conference accolades with a runner-up finish in the 60-meter hurdles at that meet. Once the outdoor season began, Curry qualified for the NCAA Regional Championships in the 200-meter dash and 110-



Kellen Curry

File Photo

meter hurdles. He moved into third on the Academy's all-time list in the 200-meter dash, while finishing fifth in that event at the MWC Outdoor Championships. He was the runner-up in the 110-meter hurdles and ran the final leg of the all-conference 4x100-meter relay team that finished third.

Women's Track and Field Outstanding Competitor: Junior Ally Romanko has become a leader on the track, earning all-conference accolades in the outdoor 800-meter run for the second straight season. Romanko improved her Academy record time in the 800-meter race during the indoor season, besting the second-fastest time by nearly a second. Once the outdoor season commenced, Romanko improved her time in a pair of events. She clocked the second-fastest 800-meter time in program history, while remaining in the top-10 in the 1500-meter run. She finished third in the 800 at the conference championships, qualified to the regional championships in that event and ran a leg of the 4x400-meter relay that clocked the third-best time in program history.



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