

Weather

Friday  Thunderstorms High 94°F Low 74°F	Saturday  Partly Cloudy High 97°F Low 73°F	Sunday  Sunny High 98°F Low 73°F
Monday  Partly Cloudy High 98°F Low 74°F	Tuesday  Partly Cloudy High 98°F Low 74°F	Wednesday  Partly Cloudy High 97°F Low 73°F

Forecast provided by the 14th OSS Weather Flight

News Briefs

Quarterly Awards Ceremony

The 2nd Quarterly Awards Ceremony is scheduled for 3:30 p.m. July 28 in the Kaye Auditorium.

14th MDG Change of Command

The 14th Medical Group is hosting a Change of Command ceremony at 9:14 a.m. July 31 in the Fitness Center.

Enlisted Promotion Ceremony

The next Columbus Air Force Base Enlisted Promotions ceremony is at 3 p.m. July 31 in the Kaye Auditorium.

Inside



Feature 8

SUPT Class 15-12 graduates today at 10 a.m. at the Kaye Auditorium.



U.S. Air Force photo by Johnny Saldivar

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-RANDOLPH, Texas — Lt. Gen Darryl Roberson, commander of Air Education and Training Command, speaks during the AETC change of command ceremony at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas, July 21, 2015. Roberson is a command pilot who has more than 5,000 flight hours including 865 combat hours. Roberson will oversee the operation of 10 major installations in five states. The mission of AETC is to recruit, train and educate Airmen to deliver Air Power for America. Roberson was previously the 3rd Air Force and 17th Expeditionary Air Force commander at Ramstein Air Base, Germany.

Roberson takes command of AETC

Tech. Sgt. Beth Anschutz

Air Education and Training Command Public Affairs

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-RANDOLPH, Texas — Lt. Gen. Darryl Roberson took command of the Air Education and Training Command in a ceremony at Joint Base San Anto-

nio-Randolph July 21.

Outgoing commander, Gen. Robin Rand, handed Roberson the reigns before heading to his new assignment as the Commander of Air Force Global Strike Command at Barksdale Air

See **ROBERSON**, Page 2

COLUMBUS AFB TRAINING TIMELINE

PHASE II				PHASE III				IFF				WING SORTIE BOARD			
Squadron	Senior Class	Squadron Overall	Track Select	Squadron	Senior Class	Squadron Overall	Graduation	Squadron	Senior Class	Squadron Overall	Graduation	Aircraft	Required	Flown	Annual
37th (16-05)	-4.75 days	0.18 days	July 22	48th (15-12)	0.00 days	0.94 days	July 24	49th (15-JBC)	-1.57 days	0.01 days	July 27	T-6	1,527	1,725	23,089
41st (16-06)	1.12 days	3.74 days	Aug. 12	50th (15-12)	-0.80 days	0.78 days	July 24					T-1	692	635	9,358
												T-38	553	586	7,077
												IFF	298	280	3,325

The graduation speaker is Brig. Gen. Scott L. Pleus, Commander, 56th Fighter Wing, Luke Air Force Base, Arizona

ROBERSON

(Continued from page 1)

Force Base, Louisiana.

The ceremony was officiated by Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III.

“To the 62,000 men and women of the First Command, who recruit, train and educate the more than 660,000 Airmen of our Total Force, thank you for inspiring me,” Welsh said. “Your efforts uphold all of our people programs. It blues and re-blues everyone in this unstoppable force. Despite political uncertainty and waning budgets, you infallibly develop our most valuable asset: the Airmen you educate and train. You build Airmen and there is no more sacred task in our Air Force.”

Welsh highlighted some of the accomplishments of Rand during his tenure, to include the stand-up of the Profession of Arms Center of Excellence, or PACE, the addition of Airmen’s Week to Basic Military Training, and other changes to the way the Air Force recruits, trains and educates through its First Command.

“Our Air Force simply can’t fly fight and win without you,” Welsh said to the men and women in attendance.

Rand took the floor and passed the praise to the Airmen of AETC.

“These great Airmen did all the hard work and I’m so darn proud of them,” Rand said. “Thank you, Chief, for the opportunity to command them.”

Rand used his time at the podium to thank the numerous distinguished visitors, commanders, civic and Air Force leaders in the audience. He encouraged the Airmen of AETC to keep up the hard work.

“You do something no other major command does: you pro-

“These great Airmen did all the hard work and I’m so darn proud of them,” Rand said. “Thank you, Chief, for the opportunity to command them.”

duce, educate and train the future leaders of our Air Force. The next Air Force Chief of Staff, Command Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force and all other leaders and commanders start in AETC,” Rand said.

Rand passed the command flag to Roberson and the newest AETC Commander took a moment to speak to the Airmen of AETC for the first time.

“There are a few words to express how I’m feeling today: humbled, honored and extremely excited. I’m excited because of what AETC does for our Air Force and to be able to continue to serve among such stellar teammates and warriors who have pledged their lives to the defense of our great country,” Roberson said. “The mission of our command is vital to the success of our Air Force and the American way of war, since Air Power is such a core piece of how we fight. Air Power starts here.”

Roberson ended the ceremony with a call to action for the command.

“To Air Education and Training Command members, I am excited to serve alongside you and I promise to give you my best effort every day. I will focus on motivational mission accomplishment, compassionate care of our Airmen and families, innovation and leadership,” Roberson said. “What I would ask of you is a commitment to excellence each day as we forge innovative Airmen to power our Air Force.”

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat/Sun	Long Range Events
27	28 Quarterly Awards Ceremony, 3:30 p.m. @Kaye Auditorium	29	30	31 14th MDG Change of Command, 9:14 a.m. @ Fitness Center Enlisted Promotions, 3 p.m. @Kaye Auditorium	1/2	Aug. 14: SUPT Class 15-13 graduation Aug. 21: Senior NCO Induction Dinner Aug. 31: Enlisted Promotions Sept. 1: Wing Newcomers Orientation Sept. 3: ALS graduation Sept. 4: AETC Family Day Sept. 7: Labor Day Sept. 11: SUPT Class 15-14 graduation Sept. 18: Air Force Birthday Ball Sept. 22: Wing Newcomers Orientation Sept. 26: Retiree Appreciation Day Sept. 28-29: 14th FTW dissimilar photo Sept. 30: Enlisted Promotions Oct. 2: SUPT Class 15-15 Graduation Oct. 12: Columbus Day Holiday Oct. 20: Newcomers Orientation Brief Oct. 23: SUPT Class 16-01 graduation
3	4 Wing Newcomers Orientation, 8 a.m. @ Kaye Auditorium	5	6	7	8/9	

Silver Wings

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Submission Deadline

The deadline for submitting copy for next week’s SILVER WINGS is noon Monday. Articles may be dropped off at the public affairs office or e-mailed.

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Editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the 14th Flying Training Wing Public Affairs Office of Columbus AFB, Miss.

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VIEWPOINT
(Continued from page 7)

asked me what I had learned on my trip. Each time, I had a different answer. I felt they were good answers, but none really felt like the definitive lesson of the experience.

Earlier, a man named John Maluda introduced himself to me. He was very interested to hear what I had learned and all about my experiences in the Air Force thus far. It wasn't until the end of the dinner I found out he's a retired major general and also Brig. Gen. Higby's mentor.

It's difficult to say what ranks or positions these people held, but that wasn't the meaning of the night. This was a gathering of friends. These weren't bosses and subordinates. These were the people behind the uniforms, shiny brass and stacks of stripes.

From coin-checking someone using their own coin, to Chief giving Brig. Gen. Higby a hard time for wearing a pink shirt (it's salmon, c'mon), everyone was chatting, reconnect-

ing with old friends and generally causing a small ruckus.

An Airman's takeaway

For those who are expecting some worldview-changing knowledge to be dropped, I think it's more subtle than that. What I learned is at the end of the day we're all just people.

Maluda didn't introduce himself as retired Maj. Gen. John Maluda to me because that's not what defines him. How he treats other people defines him, he explained.

As Chief emphasizes, a chief master sergeant is what he is, but not who he is. He's Harry Hutchinson. Ranks, positions and statuses are secondary facts about someone past how they act and what they can do to enrich those around them.

Maluda explained to me that I have two choices in my military career - become a chief master sergeant or commission and become a general officer. I don't have to make this decision today or tomorrow, but during my journey to either of those positions I can define who I am and those around me

by leaving an everyday legacy.

Chief has spoken about this idea during some of our chats, and I think I'm finally starting to understand it.

He and Brig. Gen. Higby had an opportunity to bring me along and help me grow as an individual and Airman . . . so they did.

And while I may not be able to give that same experience to my fellow Airmen, I can certainly help in other ways.

My personal success, I think, can be easily measured not only by my accomplishments, but by those of the people around me. By helping others succeed, I can lay the groundwork of a lasting impression.

And it can all start with a simple handshake and introduction.

So now it's my turn to pay this opportunity forward — my name is Duncan and I'm looking forward to learning what I can do for you.

BARGAIN LINE

The deadline for submitting ads is noon Monday before the desired publication date. Ads turned in after the deadline will run the following week. Ads can be mailed to or dropped off at the public affairs office in the 14th Flying Training Wing Headquarters building, e-mailed to silverwings@columbus.af.mil or faxed to 434-7009. Calling Ext. 7068 by noon Monday can extend the run date of ads already submitted. Silver Wings reserves the right to limit ads based on content, space and frequency of requests. Advertisements for private businesses or services providing a continuous source of income may not appear in the Bargain Line. They may, however, be purchased through The Commercial Dispatch, 328-2424.

Miscellaneous

For Sale: Washer and Dryer in good condition, asking \$150 for the set. For more information call 574-2970.

NEWS AROUND TOWN

Aug. 15

The Possum Town Triathlon is an annual endurance event held in Columbus at 7 a.m. located near Stennis Lock and Dam. Go to racesonline.com/events/possum-town-triathlon to register online before Aug. 13 at 10 p.m. There will be no race day registration.

Sept. 3

Columbus Main Street and the Columbus Arts Council partner to bring Art Walk Downtown where local artists are paired with downtown merchants for an evening of shopping fun from 5:30 – 8 p.m. Stroll the streets of downtown Columbus, shop in participating stores, purchase unique art and enjoy local entertainment.

Visit us online!
www.columbus.af.mil



**An eye doctor
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One in three adults over 40 has a vision problem — and many don't even know it. That's because many vision problems have no warning signs. An eye doctor can identify serious vision and health conditions before you can. For the latest information on vision health, visit **checkyearly.com**. A public service message from the Vision Council of America and AARP.



F-35A arrives at Columbus AFB



U.S. Air Force photo/Airman 1st Class Daniel Lile

Columbus Air Force Base senior leadership greets Brig. Gen. Scott Pleus, 56th Fighter Wing Commander, upon his arrival in an F-35A Lightning II July 23 on the Columbus Air Force Base, Mississippi flight line. The fifth-generation fighter provided the instructor and student pilots of Columbus AFB the opportunity to see the F-35 up close and learn about its capabilities.

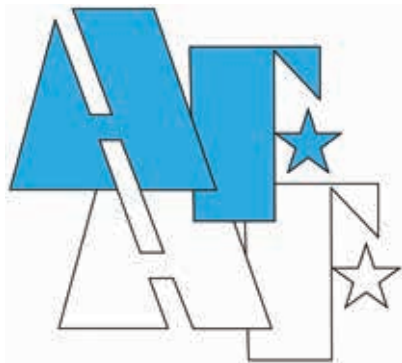
Lunch and Learn to cover PME changes

The Top 3 will host the next Lunch and Learn event at 11:30 a.m. July 31. The course is focused on the changes made to PME over the last year or so, and should help cover confusion over which PME members must complete. This opportunity is available to all Team BLAZE members. For more information or to register, go online to <https://cs3.eis.af.mil/sites/OO-ED-AE-31/default.aspx>. Click "Course Registration" to register.

Columbus AFB AFAF final results

Columbus Air Force Base raised \$45,561.62 for the Air Force Assistance Fund, which was 149.9 percent of our goal.

- We rank fifth out of 78 for goal percentage; the average was 98.1 percent.
- Within Air Education and Training Command, Columbus AFB was the third highest of 12 bases.
- Within AETC, Columbus AFB ranked as third highest active-duty participation rate.
- The active-duty participation rate was 23.5 percent, which meets the SeCAF goal for overall Air Force of 23 percent.
- Columbus AFB ranked 10 out of 78 other bases, and well above the average of 15.2 percent.




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Mississippi Sales Tax Holiday

The annual Sales Tax Holiday begins at 12:01 a.m. central standard time July 31, and ends midnight Aug. 1. The items exempt from sales tax during the Sales Tax Holiday are identical to those items exempt in prior years. Clothing and footwear items, meant to be worn next to the body and cost less than \$100 per item, are exempt from sales tax during this period. Accessories such as jewelry, handbags, wallets, watches, backpacks, and similar items do not qualify for the Sales Tax Holiday. Cleats and items worn in conjunction with an athletic or recreational activity are other sample items not eligible. School supplies and computers are not included. For more information go to <https://www.dor.ms.gov/secondsalestaxholiday.html>.

Alabama Sales Tax Holiday

Beginning at 12:01 a.m. central standard time on Aug. 7, and ending at midnight on Aug. 9, Alabama will hold its 10th annual sales tax holiday giving shoppers the opportunity to purchase certain school supplies, computers, and clothing free of state sales or use tax. Retailers are required to participate and may not charge tax on items that are legally tax-exempt during the Sales Tax Holiday. For more information go to revenue.alabama.gov/salestax/SalesTaxHol.cfm.



Courtesy photo

A maintenance Airman inspects an MQ-9 Reaper in Afghanistan. Capable of striking enemy targets with on-board weapons, the Reaper has conducted close air support and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions.



U.S. Air Force photo / Lt. Col. Leslie Pratt

An MQ-9 Reaper, armed with GBU-12 Paveway II laser guided munitions and AGM-114 Hellfire missiles, piloted by Col. Lex Turner, flies a combat mission over southern Afghanistan.

BLAZE Hangar Tails: MQ-9 Reaper

Mission

The MQ-9 Reaper is an armed, multi-mission, medium-altitude, long-endurance remotely piloted aircraft that is employed primarily as an intelligence-collection asset and secondarily against dynamic execution targets. Given its significant loiter time, wide-range sensors, multi-mode communications suite, and precision weapons, it provides a unique capability to perform strike, coordination, and reconnaissance against high-value, fleeting, and time-sensitive targets.

Reapers can also perform the following missions and tasks:

Intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, close air support, combat search and rescue, precision strike, buddy-laser, convoy/raid overwatch, route clearance, target development, and terminal air guidance. The MQ-9's capabilities make it

uniquely qualified to conduct irregular warfare operations in support of combatant commander objectives.

General Characteristics

Primary Function: Intelligence collection in support of strike, coordination, and reconnaissance missions

Contractor: General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc.

Power Plant: Honeywell TPE331-10GD turboprop engine

Thrust: 900 shaft horsepower maximum

Wingspan: 66 feet (20.1 meters)

Length: 36 feet (11 meters)

Height: 12.5 feet (3.8 meters)

Weight: 4,900 pounds (2,223 kilograms) empty

Maximum takeoff weight: 10,500 pounds (4,760 kilograms)

Fuel Capacity: 4,000 pounds (602 gallons)

Payload: 3,750 pounds (1,701 kilograms)

Speed: Cruise speed around 230 miles per hour (200 knots)

Range: 1,150 miles (1,000 nautical miles)

Ceiling: Up to 50,000 feet (15,240 meters)

Armament: Combination of AGM-114 Hellfire missiles, GBU-12 Paveway II and GBU-38 Joint Direct Attack Munitions

Crew (remote): Two (pilot and sensor operator)

Unit Cost: \$56.5 million (includes four aircraft with sensors, ground control station and Predator Primary satellite link) (fiscal 2011 dollars)

Initial operating capability: October 2007

Air Force unmanned aerial vehicle pilots go to training at Randolph and Holloman Air Force Base. The Air Force drones can be flown by pilots stationed at Creech, Holloman, Cannon, Ellsworth and Whiteman Air Force Base.

BROTHERS

(Continued from page 12)

space. I was about an inch from his face not letting him focus on anything but what I was saying to him."

Vasquez said he listened to every word out of Aaron's mouth and nothing else could get to him. When Aaron told him he was going to be just fine he thought, "Damn, I hope so."

Once he was stabilized, the UCC staff rushed him into surgery.

"We get into the surgery room and I looked up and there was stainless steel everywhere and tools all over the place," Vasquez said. "I thought I was in a horror movie."

Vasquez said that was the last thing he remembered at the UCC. The doctors had determined that he needed more advanced surgery to ensure his artery would heal. They made the call and a helicopter landed outside the hospital.

He awoke five hours later nearly 60 miles away at St. Alphonsus Medical Center in Nampa, Idaho.

More than 15 stitches laced his arm back together. The surgeons at St. Alphonsus had to create several incisions to access his battered arteries but had no trouble handling the situation.

"I opened my eyes and a big window was in front of me. I remember seeing mountains really close to the building and I thought, 'I'm not in Mountain Home anymore.'" Vasquez said. "I looked at my hand as I realized what happened to me. I started trying to move my fingers, making sure they all still worked. When they started moving I was like, 'Okay I'm good.'"

Filled with relief, Vasquez said he realized he had dodged a bullet; coming within minutes of losing his life. He said without the quick and confident actions of his wingmen, he might not be alive today.

Aaron and Young said there's a lot to take away from what had happened. They now see military self-aid and buddy care training in a different light.

"You won't know how important SABC is until you have to use it," Aaron said. "Learn it, pay attention and treat it as seriously as you can because it can be the difference in someone's life."

SABC revolves around resourcefulness, but there isn't always time to improvise medical tools from everyday materials.

"People say they won't need a trauma kit because they work in an office," Aaron said. "Got a paper cutter? Got a shredder? Is there a window that was manufactured wrong 20 years ago and suddenly decides to slam apart the next time a 50-mph wind hits? We just don't know when these things will happen and we need to be prepared."

Aaron said he won't rest until he sees a trauma kit in every workplace at every assignment he goes to. He doesn't want to think about what might have happened if he hadn't paid attention during his medical training. His quick response with an improvised tourniquet may have played the biggest role in keeping Vasquez alive.

Young said he's still surprised by how such a small bolt can cause so much damage. It just goes to show life-threatening situations aren't exclusive to gunfire and explosions.

Vasquez has tried to thank the two for being there for him when he needed them most, but every time he tries, he's met with a laugh and a crude joke in the true crew chief fashion.

"I've never thought about it as being a hero, I just told him, 'Hey, you bled on me, so now we're blood brothers,'" Young said. "It doesn't matter that I was one of the people who saved him, my brother is still here, that's all that matters."

AF releases first-term Airman retraining quotas

Debbie Gildea

Air Force Personnel Center Public Affairs

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-RANDOLPH, Texas — Eligible first-term enlisted Airmen interested in retraining opportunities can review the fiscal year 2016 online retraining advisory on myPers. Air Force officials approved 1,599 fiscal 2016 first-term Airman retraining quotas in 45 Air Force specialty codes.

Airmen can retrain into a variety of AFSCs, including cyber, intelligence, pararescue, flight engineer, missile and space facilities, and more. Most are open to all eligible Airmen, but some — such as the aerospace medical service, and flight and operational medical technician AFSCs — require prior qualifications, so interested Airmen need to review the requirements on the myPers retraining page.

"The FTA retraining program allows first-term Airmen, including staff sergeants who are in their first enlistment, to retrain in conjunction with a re-enlistment into skills where a shortage exists," said Chief Master Sgt. Bernadette Gregory, the Enlisted Skills Management Branch chief. "This is a great opportunity for first-term Airmen to pursue a different career field while enabling the Air Force to maintain a healthy balance in all enlisted career fields."

When an Airman can apply for retraining depends on the length of enlistment, four or six years, and stateside or overseas location. Airmen should refer to instructions on the myPers retraining page for details.

The online retraining advisory is located on the myPers enlisted retraining home page under the "Tools" section. In addition to the advisory, the section includes an application link with information, application process instructions and links to documents necessary to submit an application.

Once Airmen submit their retraining request, they will get an email within 20 duty days establishing their eligibility for the requested AFSC. Retraining applicants who have not received that message by the 20th duty day can contact the Total Force Service Center via the "contact us" link on myPers. Applicants can also track their training requests on myPers under the "My Account" link.

For more information about Air Force personnel programs go to the myPers website. Individuals who do not have a myPers account can request one by following the instructions on the Air Force Retirees Services website.

Dwell time, PT exemptions for new AF mothers increase to 1 year

Secretary of the Air Force
Public Affairs

WASHINGTON — The six-month deferment for female Airmen to accomplish their fitness assessments following childbirth will be increased to 12 months to align with recent changes to the deployment deferments, Air Force officials announced July 14.

The deployment deferment policy, as part of the Air Force's 2015 Diversity and Inclusion initiatives, increases the deferment from deployment, short tour or dependent-restricted assignment, and temporary duty to one year, unless waived by the service member.

"The goal is to alleviate the strain on some of our talented Airmen who choose to leave the Air Force as they struggle to balance deployments and family issues, and this is especially true soon after childbirth," said Secretary

of the Air Force Deborah Lee James.

The one-year deferment applies to female Airmen who gave birth on or after the effective date of March 6, 2015, to provide predictability with minimal disruption to Airmen and the deployment process.

As dwell times for deployment, permanent change of station and TDY increase, so too will the exemption from the current fitness assessment for female Airmen following pregnancies lasting 20 weeks or more (delivery, miscarriage, etc.). The service does not anticipate significant mission or readiness impacts associated with extending this action.

"Like many other programs announced earlier this year, such as the Career Intermission Program, we recognize the potential retention benefits associated with providing our female Airmen options that allow them to serve and support their family without

having to choose one over the other," James said.

Air Force Guidance Memorandums will be available detailing the changes to both policies in the coming weeks.

The Air Force continues to research opportunities, in conjunction with the Department of Defense, to extend the maternity and convalescent leave period, similar to the recent changes announced by the Secretary of the Navy.

Airmen currently receive six weeks (42 days) of maternity leave, in line with the Department of Defense policy. By direction of the president, federal agencies can advance up to six weeks of paid sick leave to federal employees with a new child.

"We want to make sure we develop an equitable policy that supports all of our Airmen and also maintains the ability to execute our mission," James said.

14TH FLYING TRAINING WING DEPLOYED

As of press time, 37 TEAM BLAZE members are deployed worldwide. Remember to support the Airmen and their families while they are away.



Security and policy review

Did you know that as a military member you must coordinate all information relating to speeches, presentations, academic papers, multimedia visual information materials and information proposed for release to a publicly accessible Worldwide Website, with exception of Air Force publications, through the 14th Flying Training Wing Public Affairs Office? For more information contact the 14th FTW/PA at 434-7068.

Blood brothers

Airman Connor J. Marth
366th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

MOUNTAIN HOME AIR FORCE BASE, Idaho — (*This feature is part of the “Through Airmen’s Eyes” series. These stories focus on individual Airmen, highlighting their Air Force story.*)

When it comes to aircraft maintenance, everything must be exact. A simple miscalculation can create threats in the sky and on the ground, but sometimes, those threats aren’t always apparent. Even missing a step by a few inches can create a life-threatening situation. This was the case for Airman 1st Class Saul Vasquez, a 366th Equipment Maintenance Squadron crew chief.

“I was changing the nose landing gear actuator in the wheel well (of an F-15E Strike Eagle) when it happened,” said Vasquez about his experience on April 2.

As Vasquez stepped down, he slipped off his stand causing a small bolt to puncture his skin just below his elbow. He said he dangled by the sharp piece of metal while blood dripped onto his face before he lifted himself to the ground.

“When I looked down at my arm and I saw the blood shoot out and hit my coveralls, I knew just how bad this was,” Vasquez said. “I grabbed it and just started to run for the hangar door.”

He had torn his radial artery -- one of two primary channels crucial to supplying blood to his arm. A tear like this can cause death in a matter of minutes.

As he ran across the bay, his fellow Airmen rushed to his side.

“I heard him fall and when I turned around, I saw him crawl out of the hole with blood all over his face,” said Staff Sgt. Stephen Young, a 414th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chief. “He started beelining across the floor. My first thought was to stop the bleeding.”

Young grabbed the first thing he could find to absorb the blood: some clean soak-up pads normally used to collect oil from leaking aircraft.

Master Sgt. Jason Aaron, the 366th EMS phase section chief, was sitting in his office when he heard the commotion.

“As I rounded my desk to see what was going on, I see this guy walking in front of me, blood gushing out of his forearm,” Aaron said. “I cleared the door and squeezed his arm as tight as I could.”

Aaron started barking out orders, trying to take control of the frantic situation.

“I had (Staff Sgt. Frankie Hearn II) grab a first-aid kit and I told someone to call 911,” he said. “But I knew there wasn’t enough time for that.”

Young and Aaron ran outside still clutching Vasquez’s arm as it spurted out blood. They needed a vehicle and fast, something Staff Sgt. Joshua Pearson and Senior Airman Violette Zeimet from the 366th EMS were able to help with.

“We saw sergeant Pearson and airman Zeimet pull up in a (pickup truck),” Aaron said. “We lifted him into the bed of the truck and we took off.”

They were far from an urgent care center and time was running out.

“We realized we couldn’t contain the bleeding with just



U.S. Air Force photo/Airman Connor J. Marth
Airmen from the 366th Equipment Maintenance Squadron at Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho, stand behind Airman 1st Class Saul Vasquez (center) May 14, 2015. On April 2, 2015, Vasquez tore his radial artery inside the belly of an F-15E Strike Eagle. Without the quick response and self-aid and buddy care training of his fellow Airmen, he may not be alive today.

direct pressure. I beat on the top of the truck and yelled ‘go faster!’” Aaron said. “(Young) and I switched positions in the cramped truck bed and I told Vasquez ‘This is going to hurt.’ I wrapped my belt around his arm and cranked it as tight as I possibly could.”

Aaron said that despite the overwhelming pain Vasquez endured, he sat still and let them apply the tourniquet.

“At this point we could see the color leaving him and we were doing everything we could to keep him awake,” Aaron said.

Aaron said they started asking Vasquez questions, like what was his name and what did he eat for breakfast. It helped keep Vasquez’s mind alert and conscious.

The truck rocked them back and forth as it roared down Gunfighter Avenue, heading toward the urgent care center. In the middle of the turmoil, Vasquez said all he could think about was getting to the hospital.

“I had just gone through some pretty extensive training at the Air Advisor Academy and they always warned you about shock,” Aaron said. “He demonstrated all of the signs of it.”

As he shifted around in the truck bed, Vasquez said he began to fade in and out of consciousness. He said time seemed to stand still as everything slowed down, but just as the world became stagnant, the truck slammed on its brakes.

They made it.

“As soon as the truck stopped in front of the UCC we were yelling ‘Get him out of this truck now!’” Aaron said.

“(Vasquez) was trying to help us but airman Zeimet grabbed both of his feet and ripped him out of that bed by herself. By the time somebody had a hand in to help her, she already had him out of the truck.”

Vasquez said he could see the UCC staff run at him as he stumbled toward the entrance. They knew this was going to be serious.

“They laid me on the bed and I’m scared as hell, I’m not going to lie,” Vasquez said. “People were holding me down while sergeant Aaron was next to me telling me I’m going to be alright. I wasn’t so sure.”

As the situation grew increasingly overwhelming, Vasquez said he started to listen to what the doctors were saying around him.

“I remember hearing, ‘I don’t think we can perform that procedure here,’ and that scared the hell out of me,” Vasquez said. “I thought, ‘Well who’s going to do it?’”

Aaron said he noticed just how terrifying everything was becoming for Vasquez.

“He was going into shock, his heart rate was crazy, and his blood pressure was dropping. There was only one thing I could do,” Aaron said. “I very much invaded his personal

See **BROTHERS**, Page 13

How to save the planet, one puddle at a time

Mike Jago
14th Civil Engineer Squadron

What do you call a “wet spot” in the back yard?

Moreover, what do you do about it? Here at Columbus Air Force Base, we protect it, feed it and make it wetter ... sort of.

Mississippi, geologically, is a big filled-in delta. Most of the state owes its existence to ancient mountains higher than the Alps that wore away centuries ago. Turn back the clock and the Appalachian Mountains were a much bigger deal and the Rocky Mountains were still under water.

Historically, people have changed the environment. Filling in swamps probably predates the pyramid building by a big margin. Swamps and swampy spots have been filled in, drained for fields, made into ponds, used as dumps and mined for peat. It seems we just can’t leave them alone. The single largest change to the environment we each are responsible for is how wet places were changed to build our homes, highways, fields and work places.

We have essentially been doing what beavers do in reverse for a long time. Sounds like a break-even proposition, so what is the big deal?

It appears there is a federal law prohibiting the filling in of wet spots. One of them goes back to 1899, the Safe Harbors Act. Our not-so-smart sail boat-unloading ancestors thought it was a perfectly fine idea to unpack and uncrate goods aboard a ship and toss the packing over the side. It got so bad in New York, Charlestown and Philadelphia harbors that congress had no problem passing what was the first environmental law. Of course it was to protect commercial shipping, but by stopping all the trash from being thrown over the side, the waters in the bays and harbors was made much cleaner.

A little science here: deep water is lower in oxygen than shallow water. Streams are naturally wide and shallow. Fish tanks are deep and narrow. To make fish survive in a fish tank we have to pump in oxygen, because not only the fish, but the microbes supporting the fish, use oxygen.

In a natural setting, the large surface area of the water allows plenty of gas exchange. Now let’s apply this to a swamp, a puddle or other boggy area. These areas are almost all surface and no depth. They allow for maximum gas exchange in the water. This means microbes, not necessarily fish, are the beneficiaries.

Frogs and amphibians need these protected, shallow still waters to breed and hunt in. Mosquito larva is a big portion



of the food source for young amphibians. All that activity means waste, so microbes actively transform it back into carbon dioxide (CO2), water, methane, ammonia and other gases.

Different microbes eat different things, so it goes something like this. The fish and frogs’ waste is high in ammonia. The first set of microbes eat it and make nitrate, the next set eats the nitrate and makes CO2 and water. The plants absorb the CO2, release the oxygen (O2) and use the carbon to make sugars to feed the plant. It is the cycle of life.

Even in deep water, the most active part is near the surface where all the exchanges are happening. The puddle in a back yard is a miniature science laboratory where waste from grass clippings, worm casts and bird droppings are transformed to natural plant fertilizers and oxygen. The shallow water is essential to “cook” the material long enough to cleanse it. The microbes go dormant when the area dries out, waiting for another storm.

Swamps and swampy areas are super water cleaners. Trillions of microbes are working all the time. They are not trying to clean the water for our benefit, but that is the result. So, by filling in or draining all the swamps, puddles and wet spots or making them fast streams and deep pools, we are actually making it very hard for the microbes to clean lots of water slowly.

This doesn’t include the millions of birds that need shallow waters to breed near for the easy food sources, grassy hiding places to protect their chicks, and all the animals that need pools of clean drinking water. Dozens of species of frog, lizard, bugs, beetles, bats, raptors, badgers and beavers all need frequent wet areas to forage, hunt, drink and breed near or in.

Columbus AFB and every other federal installation has

recognized the need to balance mission with maintaining the natural balance of the environment. Years before any building project is started, one of the foundational questions in picking a location is, “Is the location a wetland or near a wetland?”

Here, we just updated and validated our map of wetland areas. This will guide future projects to include parking lots, pavilions, buildings, sidewalks, recreation areas, and permanent or temporary use of any portion of U.S. Federal property under our control.

If we feel we must reduce a wetland, we will replace it by making 2.5 times more somewhere else. If we will increase the flow into a wetland, we will build a “dry pond” to slow the flow back to a more natural rate. These are now common in big road projects and large parking lots. It will be an area that floods after a rain but will dry out after a day or two, just long enough to do the job of reducing erosion and allowing the microbes a chance to wake up and start working.

The clever part is as an airfield, we really don’t want to encourage water birds to hang around. Birds, especially ducks, don’t get along well with aircraft. What should we do?

The wetlands in the base forest are perennial swamps. That means they are wet in the spring and summer, but not during migration time so birds never think to move in. That is not to say we don’t have ducks, but the numbers are greatly reduced from what it could be.

We also make sure that if we have to build a flood control area, it will drain slowly but completely in two to three days after the storm. This will nourish the ground, slow the downstream flooding, and allow the water to absorb locally where we need it. SAC lake is engineered to have steep sides, no nearby tall grass and is bird unfriendly, but fun to camp near or fish in. Clever if you ask me.



To advertise in Silver Wings, call 328-2424

Weekend Singles Retreat

A Spiritual Resiliency Event Hosted by the Chapel

Rifle Range
Canoeing
Trail Ride
Archery
Ropes Course
Swimming

July 31 - August 2

434-2500
to reserve your spot

FREE!

Commander's Action Line

434-1414

The Commander's Action Line is your direct line to the commander for comments and suggestions on how to make Columbus AFB a better place. Although the Commander's Action Line is always available, the best way to resolve problems is through the chain-of-command.

The Commander's Action Line phone number is 434-1414. Callers should leave their name and phone number to receive an answer. All names will be kept confidential. Message may be answered in the Silver Wings without names.

Written questions may also be brought to the PA office in the Wing Headquarters building, BLDG. 724, suite 210. Questions and answers may be edited for brevity and style.



Hunters Safety Course

August 11, 2015
at 1800
Phillips Auditorium

Course required to
obtain a hunting license

For more information and
to register contact

Email Lt Col Brent Green
or Mr. Frank Lockhart

RSVP Required

Be safe on the water, wear a life preserver

Air Force Readiness Programs

(Editor's note: All activities are offered at the Airman & Family Readiness Center unless otherwise specified. For more information about any of the activities listed, call 434-2790.)

Hearts Apart Social

The Hearts Apart Social program is a monthly event to provide community bonding, fun and appreciation for the families of active duty personnel who are deployed, remote, or on an extended TDY. Food and activities are provided. This month the social is 5-7 p.m. July 30 at Independence Pool. For more information call 434-2790.

Wing Newcomers Orientation

This brief will be 8 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Aug. 4, and is mandatory for newly arrived active-duty and civilian personnel. Spouses are encouraged to attend. The orientation is held at the Kaye Auditorium, for more information call 434-2839.

Military Life Cycle

The Military Life Cycle, 1-2 p.m. Aug. 4, workshop allows the VA contractors to explain to service members; whether first term, separating, retiring or a veteran, what services the VA offers and what they are able to provide throughout the member's military career and how to apply for benefits. For more information or to register, please call 434-2790.

Resume and Cover Letter

This workshop, from 9 – 10:30 a.m. Aug. 5, gives you preparation for writing effective civilian resumes and Cover Letters. To sign up, call 434-2790.

Heart Link For Spouses

This event is 8:30 a.m. - noon Aug. 5 for dependents new to Columbus Air Force Base or the military lifestyle. The event is held at the Golf Course. It is a fun-filled spouse orientation program with info on protocol, finance, benefits, helping agencies, local conditions and prizes. It is a great way to meet others new to Columbus AFB. For more information or to register, please call 434-2790.

Smooth Move

This class, 10-11:30 a.m. Aug. 12, provides relocating members/families with valuable information about moving. Learn what to expect from TMO, Housing, Military Pay, Legal, Billeting, Tri-Care, Medical Records, and A&FRC. Please call 434-2790 to register.

Troops To Teachers

This workshop is 10:30 a.m. - noon Aug. 12. It is an informational workshop for members pursuing or interested in a teaching career after the military. For more information or to register call 434-2790.

Team BLAZE members enjoy night of fun at drawdown

U.S. Air Force photo/2nd Lt. Lauren Woods

Team BLAZE members attending the Air Force Ball Committee Drawdown enjoy free Buffalo Wild Wings and pizza, games of cornhole and more while waiting to win one of many prizes including a grand prize of \$5,000 July 17 on Columbus Air Force Base, Mississippi. The Air Force Ball committee sold more than 360 tickets for the base community to participate in funding the upcoming Air Force Birthday Ball at Columbus AFB.

First Term Officer's PFR

The First Term Officers' Personal Financial Readiness Workshop is required by AFI for all newly assignment personnel to their first station. The event is held 9-10 a.m. Aug. 18. For more information or to register, call 434-2790.

Capstone

This class is scheduled for 8 a.m. – noon Aug. 20. The Capstone is required for all separating/retiring personnel and should occur no later than 90 days prior to anticipated separation/retirement; however, if a member has less than 90 days left in the military, the member should attend as soon as possible within their remaining period of service. It verifies if service members have/have not met their Career Readiness Standards/Individual Transition Plan Checklist, DD Form 2958. The checklist, in conjunction with the ITP, will be used by the A&FRC to verify status of CRS completion. Call 434-2790 for more information.

Bundles of Joy

This workshop is 1 - 3:30 p.m. Aug. 25 for active-duty families assigned to Columbus Air Force Base who are expecting or have a child up to four months of age. This is an Air Force Aid Society program with informational presentations about topics such as Tri-Care, Child Care, Breastfeeding, Car Seat Safety, and Nutrition & Fitness during and after pregnancy, Labor, and Delivery. To register, please call 434-2790.

Pre-separation Counseling

This counseling is a mandatory briefing for

personnel separating or retiring, to be completed at least 90 days prior to separation. It may be completed up to 12 months prior to separation or retirement. The counseling is held daily at 8:30 a.m. It takes approximately 60 minutes. Please contact A&FRC, 434-2839/434-2790 for more information.

Pre, Post Deployment Tour Brief

These briefings are mandatory briefings for active-duty personnel who are either deploying or returning from deployment or a remote tour. The briefings are held daily at the A&FRC. Pre-deployment is at 9:30 a.m., and post-deployment is at 1:30 p.m. Please contact A&FRC, 434-2839/434-2790 for more information.

Survivor-Benefit Plan

Are you nearing military retirement? The one decision you will need to make before you retire involves participation in the Survivor Benefit Plan. As with all good decision-making, you need to know the facts before you can make a sound decision, and be wary of anyone telling you they can offer you a better deal. Always get the true facts about the SBP before making up your mind. Additional details are available by calling your SBP Counselor Jamey Coleman at (662) 434-2720.

Military and Family Life Consultant Program

The MFLC counselors provide non-medical counseling to help Airmen (both single and married), their spouses and other family members to cope with stressful situations created by deploy-

ments, reintegration, and life challenges such as martial issues, parenting, career stress and anger. All consultants are licensed mental health providers. Counselors can meet either on or off base. There is no charge for services and appointments can usually be made within one to two days. To contact the MFLC, call 662-364-0504.

Volunteer Opportunities

If you are interested in volunteering please contact the Airman & Family Readiness Center. We have volunteer opportunities located throughout the base for a one-time event, special events, or on a continual basis. Volunteers are needed on base at the Youth Center, Child Development Center, Library, Golf Course, Medical Clinic, the Chapel, Airman Attic, Thrift Store, the Retiree Activities office and many others. For more information please call A&FRC at 434-2790.

Air Force Recovery Coordination Program

The Recovery Coordination Program streamlines and improves the way care and support are delivered to wounded, ill, and injured Airmen and their families. The RCP provides the support of a Recovery Care Coordinator who guides the Airman and family along their road to recovery. Those eligible include wounded, ill and injured Airmen who: (1) have a serious illness or injury (2) are unlikely to return to duty within a specified amount of time (3) may be medically separated from the military. Additional details are available by contacting the Columbus AFB RCC at DSN: 493-3399, Office: 334-953-3399 or tim.griggs.1.ctr@us.af.mil.

Chapel Schedule

Whether you are new to Columbus Air Force Base or have been around for a while, our parish communities welcome you to join us as we worship, fellowship, and encourage one another. For more information, please call 434-2500.

Catholic Community

Sunday:
3:15 p.m. – Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (Chapel Annex)
3:45 p.m. – Religious Education, grades K-9 (Chapel Annex)
4 p.m. – Choir Practice (Chapel Sanctuary)
4 p.m. – Confession (or by appointment)
5 p.m. – Mass w/Children's Church
Tuesday:
11:30 a.m. – Daily Mass

Protestant Community

Sunday:
9 a.m. – Adult Sunday School (Chapel Library)
10:45 a.m. – Traditional Worship Service
Tuesday:
5 p.m. – Student Pilot Bible Study (Chapel Library)
Wednesday:
4 p.m. - Music Rehearsal

Columbus Air Force Base Information and Events
Join our Facebook page at Columbus AFB Living, Twitter at @columbusafbliving, MyAirForceLife App on any smart phone or visit our website at columbusafbliving.com to keep up to date with all the great events happening around base. Check out the calendar on the website for important Airman and Family Readiness Center events. For more information, contact 434-2337.

Free Movie at the Pool
Independence Pool is offering a free movie “San Andreas” (PG-13) July 24. Doors open at 8 p.m.; movie 8:30 p.m. No outside food or drinks allowed. The snack bar will offer adult beverages for purchase. For more information, contact 434-2310.

Free Movie Night
Free movie night at the Kaye Auditorium July 30. Watch the family friendly movie “Tomorrowland” (PG) at 5:30 p.m. and “Avengers: Age of Ultron” (PG-13) at 8 p.m. Concessions will be available; no outside food and beverages allowed. For more information, contact 434-2314.

Youth Flag Football Registration
The Youth Center is offering youth flag football for ages 3 – 18. Register July 6 – 31. The cost is \$40 per youth. Volunteer coaches needed. For more information, contact 434-2504.

Fight Night Frenzy
The Columbus Club presents Fight Night Frenzy Aug. 1. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Pre-fight at 7 p.m. and featured fight Rousey vs. Correia at 9 p.m. Club members receive free admission, preferred seating, and food discounts; non-members admission \$5 per person. This adult themed entertainment is being held at the Bowling Center on the big screens; bowling will not be available. For more information, contact 434-2310.

Play Paintball
Book your next paintball event at Outdoor Recreation. The cost is \$15 per person for a party of 10 or more; \$20 per person for party of 9 or less. You must purchase paint at Outdoor Recreation for \$45 per case of 2,000. For more information, contact 434-2505.

Belgium Beer Pairing
Whispering Pines Golf Course is offering a Belgium Beer Pairing at 6 p.m. Aug. 20. The cost is only \$30 per person. The menu includes chargrilled peaches with Honey-Glazed Chicken paired with Ranger, Leafy Green Salad with goat cheese, orange wedges, and beer vinaigrette paired with Snap-shot, Flank Steak served with stir fried peppers and onions on a bed of fragrant rice paired with Fat Tire, and Salted Cara-

FREE

MOVIE NIGHT

at Kaye Auditorium

Thursday, July 30

Concessions available

No outside food/beverages allowed

Family Friendly

Tomorrowland

(PG)

5:30 p.m.

Older Audience

Avengers: Age of Ultron

(PG-13)

8:00 p.m.

For More Information 434-2314



mel Apple Pie paired with 1554 Black Lager. Space limited to 40 participants. For more information, contact 434-7932.

Dog Days of Summer Fitness Run
The Fitness Center is offering a 5K run/walk at 7 a.m. Aug. 21. Bikes and strollers welcome. Commander’s trophy points awarded. For more information, contact 434-2772.

Free Pool Passes and FootGolf
Independence Pool Passes and FootGolf is included with Whispering Pines Golf Membership. . If you have an individual golf membership, you receive an individual pool pass and FootGolf membership and if you have a family golf membership, you receive a family pool pass and FootGolf membership. Visit Outdoor Recreation for your free pool pass today. For more information, contact 434-2505.

Story Time
The Base Library is offering Story Time each Friday at 10:30 a.m. for all ages. For more information, contact 434-2934.

Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Class
Free classes are scheduled every Monday, Wednesday, and

Friday at 6 p.m. The benefits include huge gains in confidence, functional strength, flexibility, discipline, and overall physical conditioning. Mandatory equipment: BJJ Kimono (Gi); for ages 13 and up. For more information, contact 434-2772.

Wood Shop Self Help
Do you need to complete a wood project? The base wood shop is open Saturdays from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. for only \$4 per hour. For more information, contact 434-7836.

RV Storage Lot
Don’t clutter your home space, park with us. Outdoor Recreation offers a great place to store your RV year around. You will have 24-hour access and can pay monthly or yearly. For more information, call 434-2505.

Green Plate Special
The Pro Shop at Whispering Pines Golf Course offers a special for lunch Tuesday through Friday. For more information, call 434-7932 or check us out on Facebook at Columbus AFB Living or Twitter @CAFBLiving!

Instructional Classes at Youth Center
Youth Programs is offering piano lessons, guitar lessons, tumbling classes, dance classes, and martial arts instruction. Times and ages vary for all classes. Call 434-2504 or stop by the Youth Center for more information.

Fitness on Request
Columbus AFB Fitness and Sports offers a truly comprehensive group fitness platform that is available all day and completely customizable to meet your needs with over 30 different classes on the Fitness on Request system. For more information, call 434-2772.

Space A Lodging
The Magnolia Inn usually has openings for Space A family and single units. Contact the lodging desk at 434-2548.

Ride in Style
If you don’t want to leave your car at the airport over a vacation, we can help you out. Outdoor Recreation offers a shuttle service to the airport of your choice. Transportation one way is \$175 for Birmingham and \$50 for Columbus. Call 434-2505 for more information.

Hot and Easy to Use
Force Support Squadron gift cards are available in increments of \$5 to fit any budget. They can be used at most Force Support Squadron facilities at Air Force installations worldwide and they never go out of style.

The Capitol, crabcakes, and cultivating character

Airman 1st Class Duncan McElroy
81st Training Wing Public Affairs

KEESLER AIR FORCE BASE, Miss. — So there I was - watching my wing commander dragging the Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh’s area rug around his humongous office in order to catch the iconic Hap Arnold Wings emblem on the rug in our photos. A few minutes later, I was sitting behind Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James Cody’s desk, eating the chocolate-covered peanuts on his conference table.

Something I couldn’t imagine happening to me with only a year and a half in the Air Force.

Later that afternoon, I was riding in a rail-car underneath Capitol Hill with Brig. Gen. Patrick Higby, 81st Training Wing commander and Chief Master Sgt. Harry Hutchinson, 81st TRW command chief, as we spent the latter half of the day visiting with Mississippi and Florida state representatives.

Every year, wing and numbered Air Force commanders and command chiefs visit Capitol Hill to meet with their state senators and congressmen, and I was chosen to accompany our leaders on the trip May 13-15.

The objective of the Capitol Hill visit program is to help wing commanders and state representatives forge partnerships to ensure a positive economic impact on bases and surrounding communities. This ensures that state and base leaders share a common interest of growth and development.

And it was my job to watch, interact, learn and absorb.

The first day

I rolled out of bed at 4 a.m., and made sure I had all my stuff together. Chief was picking me up soon; I had to make sure I was squared away.

It’s not every day a command chief picks an Airman up at the dorms to go to the airport.

Despite the early hour, conversation came easily. Chief’s the kind of senior NCO that loves to be ‘in the trenches’ with Airmen; he relishes getting to know those around him.

Once we made it to D.C., and checked into our hotel, we were on to the first order of business: Find and eat some Maryland-style crab cakes. Nothing else would be accomplished until our hunger had been satisfied.

Chief continually raved about just how good our crab cakes were throughout the trip. As a former east coast resident, sharing the Maryland staple with Chief proved to be one of my highlights of the trip.



Courtesy photo

Airman 1st Class Duncan McElroy, 81st Training Wing Public Affairs photojournalist, sits behind Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James Cody’s desk during a Capitol Hill visit, May 14, 2015, at the Pentagon. McElroy was selected to accompany base leadership on the trip, which was meant to foster partnerships between Air Force and state congressional representatives.

After we had our fill, it was time to see the sights . . . from Chief’s point of view.

That got me thinking. Where do chiefs come from? We see them around base and on the leadership boards, but how often do we get to see where they started? I was able to learn where my chief came from.

He came from working late nights and extra jobs as security on the side as a staff sergeant and from frequenting the same dives and watering holes that have sat outside Andrews Air Force Base for the last 30-plus years. He comes from lifelong friendships with past coworkers.

He’s a diehard Washington Redskins fan, too.

I got the inside scoop on Chief in his up-and-coming days; it was as much a chance for him to reminisce as it was for me to start realizing what the lesson of this trip would be.

But more on that later.

The second day

Talk about sensory overload.

Up and at ‘em early in the morning, I got into my service dress, made sure my camera was charged and headed down-

stairs to meet Chief.

We took the metro to The Pentagon. There were people everywhere. On closer inspection though, many were military members in civilian clothes; they keep their uniforms at the office and commute in their regular attire. They were low-profile, the exact opposite of us in our ribbons, stripes and shiny shoes on full display. I thought it would be more difficult to get to the Pentagon than it was, but it has its own metro stop!

Never in my life did I think I’d go to The Pentagon.

It was time to see how the big boys play.

Welcome to the nerve center of the military. Where majors get coffee; where no one bats an eye when colonels and generals walk into the room; where senior NCOs are office assistants; where two-strippers like me don’t normally exist. In a sea of brass and stripes from all branches, I stood out like a sore thumb.

Whatever uneasiness I felt quickly dissipated though. It’s unusual for someone of my rank to be strolling around the Pentagon, so there must be a good reason for me to be

there. Hearty handshakes, introductions and honest interest filled my morning.

This was the first big hint that behind all the stars, bars and command positions, there’s something more there.

But what was it?

After our initial brief, it was time to explore.

Brig. Gen. Higby has been previously stationed at the Pentagon, so Chief and I got the insider’s tour, and it was spectacular. With 17 ½ miles of corridors, the building is equal parts museum and office space.

Each corridor, hallway or area has a different theme: A memorial chapel and quilt displays from 9/11 are displayed where the plane struck; murals, artifacts and flags adorn the POW/MIA-themed corridor; maps, facts and photos line the walls as tribute to the War on Terror in another area. Themes ranging from the origin of the Defense Department to women’s roles in the military to a room honoring every single Medal of Honor recipient show true care and pride in our heritage. The building is a living, breathing monument. It was amazing.

Once we had seen the sights and got our fill of the aforementioned candy-eating and rug-moving, it was time to head out.

That afternoon at Capitol Hill was the real reason for our visit; to meet with Mississippi representatives and discuss the state of the base and the future of Keesler on the Gulf Coast. Senator Thad Cochran, Congressman Steven Palazzo and Florida Congressman Curtis Clawson exchanged handshakes, ideas and stories with us.

While I assumed I’d be a fly on the wall, I was actually encouraged to speak and provide input. This trip was full of firsts for me; 18 months ago I never thought I’d be sitting in a senator’s office sharing my story.

But there I was.

That night

Capitol Hill wasn’t our last stop for the day. Brig. Gen. Higby had one more stop for us to make that evening - a local restaurant at the National Harbor, where we’d be meeting up with the who’s-who of Air Force cyber operations.

Our get-together with the “cyber tribe” proved to be a few things for me: a crash course in networking, an introduction to the cyber community, and where the rest of my overarching lesson was formed.

Throughout the evening several people

Visit www.columbus.af.mil to learn about Columbus AFB agencies and other important information.



T-1A Jayhawk

SUPT Class 15-12 earns silver wings



T-38C Talon



Maj. Tye Dodson
Jasper, Mo.
C-146, Duke Field, Fla.



1st Lt. Matthew Fisk
Davenport, Wash.
KC-135, Fairchild AFB, Wash.



1st Lt. Ryan Hartz
St. Louis, Mo.
KC-135, Mildenhall AB, England

Seventeen officers have prevailed during a year of training, earning the right to become Air Force pilots.

Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training Class 15-12 graduates at 10 a.m. today during a ceremony at the Kaye Auditorium. Brig. Gen. Scott Pleus, 56th Fighter Wing Commander, Luke Air Force Base, Arizona, is the graduation guest speaker.

Students will receive their silver pilot's wings at the ceremony, and students who excelled in their respective training tracks are recognized.

Second Lt. Christopher Verhulst, T-38, and 2nd Lt. Joseph Maner, T-1, received the Air Education and Training Command Commander's Trophy for being the most outstanding students overall in their classes.

The Air Force Association Award was presented to 2nd Lt. Joel McKenzie, T-38, and 2nd Lt. Jason Jones, T-1. The award is presented to a graduate in each flight who excelled in training and typified the tenets of the association; promoting aerospace power and a strong national defense.

Second Lt. Christopher Verhulst, T-38, 2nd Lt. Joseph Maner, T-1, and 2nd Lt. Mercedes Rosado, T-1, were named the distinguished graduates of SUPT Class 15-12.

The 52-week pilot training program begins with a six-week preflight phase of academics and physiological training to prepare students for flight. The second phase, primary training, is conducted in the single-engine, turboprop T-6A Texan II at Columbus AFB, Miss. Students learn aircraft flight characteristics, emergency procedures, takeoff and landing procedures, aerobatics and formation flying. Students also

practice night, instrument and cross country navigation flying.

Primary training takes approximately 23 weeks and includes 254.4 hours of ground training, 27.3 hours in the flight simulator and 89 hours in the T-6A aircraft.

After primary training, students select, by order of merit, advanced training in the fighter-bomber or airlift-tanker track.

Both tracks are designed to best train pilots for successful transition to their follow-on aircraft and mission.

Advanced training for the fighter track is done in the T-38C Talon, a tandem-seat, twin-engine supersonic jet. T-38 training emphasizes formation, advanced aerobatics and navigation. Training takes approximately 26 weeks and includes 381 hours of ground training, 31.6 hours in the flight simulator and 118.7 hours in the T-38C aircraft.

The airlift-tanker track uses the T-1A Jayhawk, the military version of a multi-place Beech Jet 400 business jet. Instruction centers on crew coordination and management, instrument training, cross-country flying and simulated refueling and airdrop missions. Training takes about 26 weeks and includes 185 hours of ground training, 53.6 hours in the flight simulator and 76.4 hours in the T-1A.

Each class is partnered with business or civic organizations during their year of training.

This program is designed to foster closer ties between the community and Columbus AFB. Today, each student will be given a set of pilot wings with their names engraved on the back as a token of good luck from their partners. SUPT Class 15-12 pilot partners are Hughes Management.



1st Lt. Masato Otsuka
Chitose, Japan
C-130H, Japan



2nd Lt. Jeff Asper
Camden, N.C.
T-1, Columbus AFB, Miss.



2nd Lt. Andrew Cliff
Johns Creek, Ga.
KC-135, Fairchild AFB, Wash.



2nd Lt. Paul Harrington
Providence, R.I.
C-130J, Dyess AFB, Texas



2nd Lt. Justin Hill
West Memphis, Ark.
C-17, Thompson Field ANG, Miss.



2nd Lt. Timothy Jaronik
Palmer, Alaska
T-6, Columbus AFB, Miss.



2nd Lt. Cato McKenzie
Wilmore, Ky.
T-6, Columbus AFB, Miss.



2nd Lt. Zachary Morley
Brighton, Colo.
EC-130H, Davis-Monthan, Ariz.



2nd Lt. Michael Mothena
Greenwood, S.C.
C-17, Charleston, S.C.



2nd Lt. Mercedes Rosado
Marquette, Mich.
MC-130J, Cannon AFB, N.M.



2nd Lt. Christopher Verhulst
Grand Rapids, Mich.
B-1, Dyess AFB, Texas



2nd Lt. Jason Jones
Lumberton, Miss.
C-17, Thompson Field ANG, Miss.



2nd Lt. Zachary Koehler
Cincinnati, Ohio
C-130, Charleston ANG, W.Va.



2nd Lt. Joseph Maner
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