



Space Observer

"Best in Air Force Space Command - 2002"

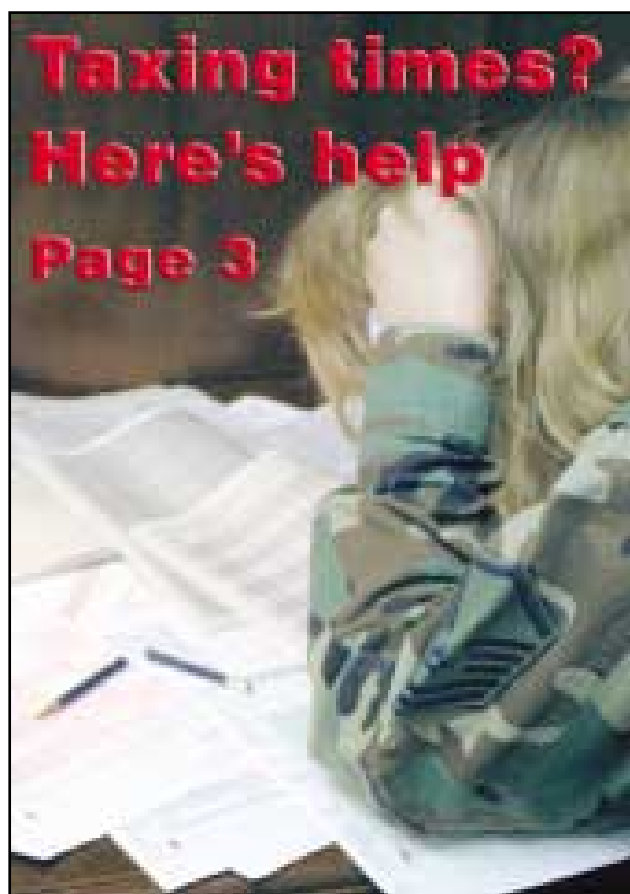
Thursday, Jan. 29, 2004

Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado

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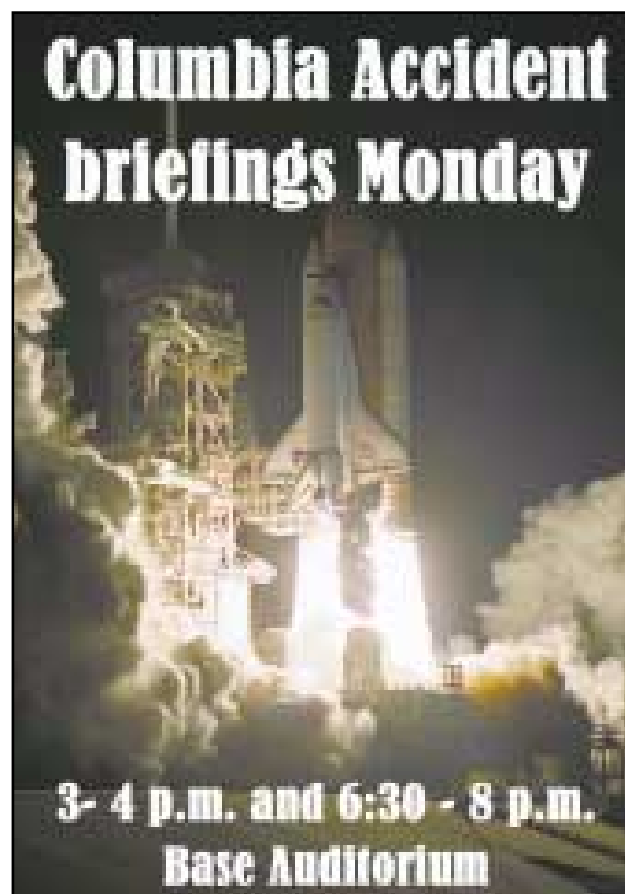
Looking for a little atmosphere

Pages 8-9



**Taxing times?
Here's help
Page 3**

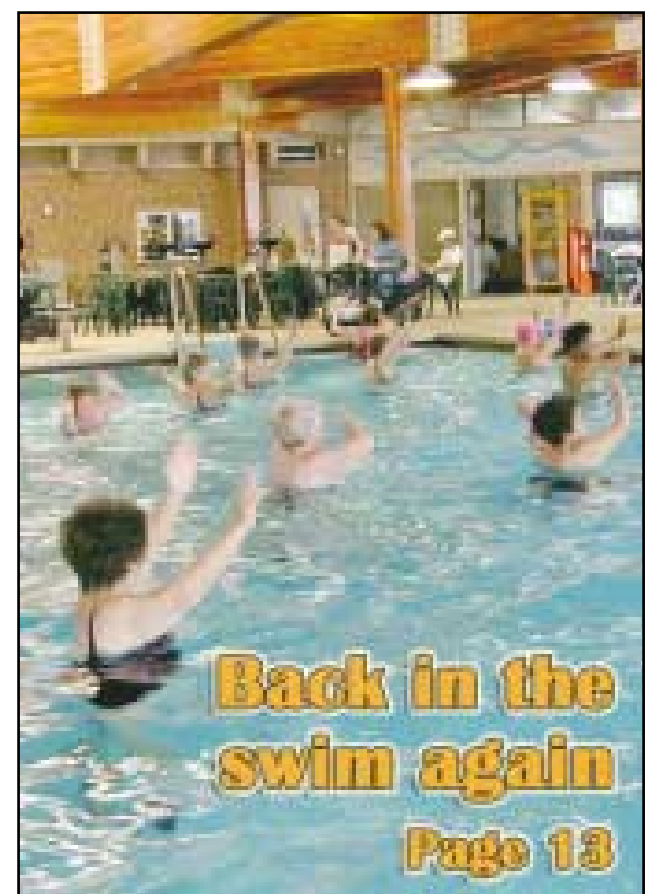
Photo by Staff Sgt. Melanie Epperson



**Columbia Accident
briefings Monday**

**3- 4 p.m. and 6:30 - 8 p.m.
Base Auditorium**

Courtesy photo



**Back in the
swim again
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Courtesy photo

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Snow Call 556-SNOW



Columbia's calling, Part V: 'Going beyond the widget'

By Brig. Gen. Duane Deal
21st Space Wing Commander

Editor's Note: This is the fifth and final in a series of five articles by Brig Gen Deal regarding his experiences as a member of the Columbia Accident Investigation Board.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration is a federal agency with an awesome past. Included in its long list of achievements, it's launched men and women safely into space for more than four decades, sent men to land on the moon – and brought them home, sent satellites on interplanetary expeditions, explored the heavens with space-borne telescopes, and advanced the realm of flight through extensive flight testing programs. Yet despite these impressive accomplishments, the Columbia tragedy reflected that even the most exalted of organizations can be lulled into complacency. In this case, complacency proceeded to kill seven astronauts and two helicopter search members, and set this organization on its ear with a long road toward recovery.

How does a pre-eminent organization lapse into such a state? Even as it

was investigating the technical cause of the shuttle's breakup over Texas last February, the Columbia Accident Investigation Board was also examining the institutional contributors to the accident. Many such investigations become satisfied when they determine which "widget" broke; this one sought to determine what factors within the organization allowed that widget to slip through seemingly stringent engineering processes to cause the tragedy.

While the full report detailing the accident and its causes is in five detailed volumes (a copy of the full report is available online at www.nasa.gov), the root cause could be attributed to individual and organizational complacency. In the next few paragraphs, we'll examine four aspects of that complacency.

The piece of the shuttle external tank foam that separated and hit Columbia's wing leading edge was not unprecedented – the investigation revealed such a loss had occurred one in every 10 flights, but previously with only minor damage. This allowed NASA's shuttle program to digress into what is termed the "normalization of deviance" – where the *unexpected* (the

foam loss) became the *expected* (it happens, but hadn't hurt the shuttle) that became the *accepted*. This acceptance then became a way of life, and caused only a few to voice any concern. The ignoring of those voices of concern leads to the second aspect – organizations must keep an open ear to all voices, and allow dissenters or questioners to have a voice, especially when major decisions are being made.

A third aspect in avoiding complacency is to "educate past hiccups" – ensure members of your organization are fully aware of, and trained in, past mistakes, with a focus on lessons learned – especially when the organizational structure is found at fault. Large, high-risk organizations cannot act as if they are in denial of or could not repeat past mishaps as NASA did following the Challenger accident. The goal must be to remain a "learning organization" – to learn from mistakes big and small, and move onward toward continuous improvement.

As mentioned earlier, a fourth lesson would be to go "beyond the widget." Rarely is there a single event or broken widget that causes a mishap. After major mishaps (such as aviation or naval accidents), senior leaders must take that opportunity to look at the "whole" organization. Even if a part breaks or pilot makes an obvious mistake that causes a flight accident, there

are usually several other contributing reasons, from design or manufacturing processes to crew training deficiencies. For Columbia, the CAIB did not simply say, "the foam did it." The CAIB examined NASA's entire organizational and safety structure, and found that to be as much at fault as the foam shedding event. By going beyond the widget, the CAIB in effect said, "The foam did it ... the institution allowed it."

In the Columbia tragedy, nine people perished from the failure of NASA to go "beyond the widget." If NASA will absorb the hard lessons from this tragedy, it can remove conditions ripe for another disaster. Likewise, any organization may be creating its own recipe for disaster if it's not abiding by the same lessons, for such cancerous conditions may be present in any organization.

These findings affirmed by Columbia's loss present lessons all organizations should periodically consider to prevent complacency, and to forego the potential calamities complacency can facilitate.

As you contemplate such lessons, you might consider that "The foam did it ... the institution allowed it." The question to ask yourself is, "What foam do you have ... and what are you allowing?" Above all, don't allow the *unexpected* to become the *expected* that becomes the *accepted*.

Columbia presentation

All members of the Peterson community and their families are invited to attend one of two sessions where Brig. Gen. Deal will present a Columbia Accident briefing on the accident's causes and lessons learned. The sessions are on Monday, from 3- 4:30 p.m., and 6:30-8 p.m.

Log on to myPay

Airman 1st Class Nishant Patel, a finance technician with the 21st Comptroller Squadron, demonstrates the use of myPay online to Brig. Gen. Duane Deal, 21st Space Wing Commander, and Col. Diann Latham, 21st Space Wing Vice Commander. MyPay will be mandatory for all 21st SW military members starting March 1. Hard copies of Leave and Earning Statements will no longer be sent out, but will be available at www.dfas.mil/mypay. A PIN to access the site can be acquired at the finance office on base, or by scheduling an appointment for a finance representative to come to your unit. For additional information, or to set up an appointment, contact Capt. Christine Millard at 556-7576.



Photo by 1st Lt. Julie Tucker



Space Observer

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21st Space Wing Commander

Brig. Gen. Duane Deal
Chief of Public Affairs
1st Lt. Michael Andrews

Editorial Staff

Chief Internal Information
2nd Lt. Jennifer Whitaker

NCOIC Internal Information

and Editor

Tech. Sgt. Michael Phillips

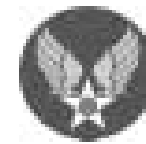
Staff Writer

Staff Sgt. Sue Mrowiec

Layout and Design

Kara Magana

A Moment in Time



■ **Jan. 30, 1992** – U.S. Air Force Space Command assumes control of Defense Department satellites and the operation and management of the Air Force Satellite Control Network.

■ **Jan. 31, 1958** – Explorer I, the first U.S. satellite to go into orbit, is launched by a Jupiter C rocket from Cape Canaveral, Fla.

■ **Feb. 3, 1961** – Strategic Air Command initiates the "Looking Glass" airborne command post.

■ **Feb. 3, 1995** – Air Force Lt. Col. Eileen Collins becomes the first woman space shuttle pilot.

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance available

The 2003 tax season will soon be in full swing, and the Peterson Air Force Base Tax Center will be operational starting Monday, and looking forward to a record-breaking year with the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program.

The tax office provides high-quality tax-return preparation services to Team Pete, with a focus on our junior airmen as our target audience.

More than 30 individuals will assist in the preparation of taxes throughout the Peterson Complex, to include Cheyenne Mountain. Most of these volunteers attended a weeklong training course taught by IRS personnel. All VITA representatives have passed a comprehensive IRS test and are qualified to assist you within the scope of the VITA program. VITA volunteers are qualified

to file forms 1040, 1040A, 1040EZ, Schedules A, B, and C-EZ.

Each VITA representative is provided tax software to e-file your returns. Throughout the program, the Base Legal Office maintains contact with unit representatives via e-mail, providing additional information, tax tips and updates as they arise. Unit representatives can call with specific questions about individual returns.

Last year, 53 VITA volunteers filed nearly 1,000 federal returns electronically, including returns from military members at Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station and Thule Air Base, Greenland, and prepared a total number of 142 paper returns. In addition, the center filed 427 state income tax returns electronically, and prepared 408 state paper returns.

Tax preparation savings equaled approximately \$211 per client, for a total of \$229,359 for the entire Peterson Complex last year.

Customer feedback has been consistently positive. Widely accepted and appreciated are the concepts of electronic filing and direct deposit, both representing "speed," and emphasized greatly by the IRS.

Those eligible to take advantage of the VITA program include: active duty and retired military and their dependents, retired military widow(ers), National Guard members activated on Title 10 Orders, activated Reservists on orders and ex-spouses of active duty and retired military (20/20 rule and must hold ID Card). The Tax Center also has a complete list of tax preparation referral agencies in the local area for those not eligible for the VITA program.

The VITA program is not designed to assist those taxpayers with complicated Schedules C, D, or E. If you fall into one of these categories, or if your tax situation is complex in some other way, call the Tax Center and explain your circumstance prior to making an appointment. They may need to refer you to a paid tax professional.

Contact your unit VITA representative to schedule your tax preparation appointment. For units without a representative, contact the Peterson Tax Center at 556-4871 to be matched up with another unit's VITA representative, or schedule an appointment at the tax center.

Before scheduling an

appointment, obtain a tax preparation checklist and taxpayer information sheet. Both documents are on the 21st Space Wing Judge Advocate Web site, located at <https://halfway.peterson.af.mil/21sw/JA/tax.html> on Pete Central. For further information about the VITA program or for general tax-related questions, call the Tax Center during duty hours at 556-5213. To schedule a tax preparation appointment in the Tax Center call 556-4871.

Appointments in the Tax Center will be from 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. On Wednesdays, appointments will be available from 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Appointments are from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. on Fridays. The Tax Center will also have some Saturday appointments available. For single active duty members living in the base dormitories, walk-in and appointment tax preparation service is offered during the week at Building 590, and some Saturdays throughout the tax season. Please ensure all tax source documents are in order for scheduled appointments.

(Information courtesy of 21st Space Wing Legal Office)



Photo by Joe Fischer

Colonel Diann Latham, 21st Space Wing Vice Commander, accepts a check from Lt. Col. Albert Klein, 21st Space Wing Legal Office, at the end of last year's tax season. The amount represents the total amount for returns filed by Tax Center's Volunteer Income Tax Representatives. The Tax Center opens Monday to once again help Team Pete members file their returns.

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance representatives

The following is the current list of Volunteer Income Tax Assistance representatives:

Air Force Space Command

Senior Master Sgt. Michael Forge't 556-3745
Master Sgt. Ronald Lowry 554-3316
Master Sgt. Michael Thomas 556-8932
Janet McCollum 554-2815

Dormitory VITA Representative

Staff Sgt. Mike Hulverson 491-4466

21st Mission Support Squadron

Faith Hannah 556-9264

10th Dental Squadron

Master Sgt. Wesley Schlauch 556-1612
Staff Sgt. Shanna Carlson 556-1600

21st Comptroller Squadron

1st Lt. Tim Fast 556-7850
Staff Sgt. Rachel Blount 556-5268

21st Operations Support Squadron

Tech. Sgt. Timothy Bishop 556-3477
Tech. Sgt. Jose Macias-Islas 556-7106

21st Logistics Readiness Squadron

Master Sgt. Ronald Lacy 556-2454

21st Medical Support Squadron

Hilda Guardado 556-5588

21st Space Communications Squadron

Master Sgt. Greg Bell 556-1781

21st Space Wing

Master Sgt. Crispino Santos 556-4502

21st Civil Engineer Squadron

Lynetta Johnson 556-5533
1st Lt. Jeffrey Barber 556-5533
1st Lt. Scott Sinclair 556-5533

76th Space Control Squadron

Staff Sgt. Zachary Schmitt 554-1750

84th Airlift Flight

Staff Sgt. Brandi Washington 556-4651

Electronic Systems Command

1st Lt. Stanley Yucha 556-5213

Joint Personal Property Shipping Office

Staff Sgt. Paul Ciciora 554-9237

North American Aerospace Defense Command

Dennis Johnston 554-7438
Staff Sgt. Joel Wilcox 552-3061
1st Lt. Wilbur Thompson 554-6933
Maj. Dean Boerrigter 556-5213

1st Space Control Squadron

Staff Sgt. Jason Carroll 552-4407
Capt. Michael Creighton 552-4409

More VITA representatives are expected to be added throughout the tax season.

If you do not see your unit representative, please visit the Judge Advocate Web site at <https://halfway.peterson.af.mil/21sw/JA/tax.html> for a comprehensive and up-to-date listing of our volunteers.

Call the Peterson Tax Center at 556-4871 to be matched up with another unit's VITA representative, or to schedule an appointment at the tax center.

Wing, Team Pete quarterly award winners named

The following members were recognized at the 21st Space Wing Quarterly Awards luncheon:

The 21 SW winners were:

Airman: Airman 1st Class Shantae T. Shinholster, 21st Security Forces Squadron

Noncommissioned Officer: Staff Sgt. Jason L. Colwell, 7th Space Warning Squadron

Senior NCO: Master Sgt. Charles H. McLaurin, 821st Support Squadron

Company Grade Officer: Capt. Heidi A. Paulson, 1st Space Control Squadron

Civilian Category I: Cary D. Ulman, 21st Civil Engineer Squadron

Civilian Category II: Cynthia P. White, 21st Medical Group

Civilian Category III: Ernest F. Champigny, 721st Communications Squadron

The Team Pete winners were:

Airman: Airman 1st Class Shantae T. Shinholster, 21st SFS

Noncommissioned Officer: Staff Sgt. Jesse L. Brosig, Detachment 4, Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center

Senior NCO: Master Sgt. Shirley Lamontagne, Peterson NCO Academy

Company Grade Officer: Capt. Heidi A. Paulson, 1st SPCS

Civilian Category I: Cary D. Ulman, 21st CES

Civilian Category II: Cynthia P. White, 21st MDG

Civilian Category III: Ernest F. Champigny, 721st CS



AF wife takes deep breath after transplant

By Claire Dattilo
43rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

POPE AIR FORCE BASE., N.C. – Theresa Merkal was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis at age 2. Like 30,000 other Americans with the disease, she struggles with severe respiratory and digestive problems.

Cystic fibrosis is the result of a defective gene that causes the body to produce an abnormally thick, sticky mucus that obstructs the lungs and other organs and, according to the American Lung Association, it's the most common fatal disease among Caucasians. Two defective genes, one from each parent, are required to have cystic fibrosis and more than 10 million Americans who are carriers of the gene have no symptoms.

There is no known cure for the disease and, according to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, only half of those with it live to see 31. Mrs. Merkal is 27.

Her husband, 2nd Lt. Brian Merkal, a Security Forces officer, is her unwavering supporter, Mrs. Merkal said. He reels off facts from memory and has a detailed mental catalog of his wife's progress.

They have known each other since high school, and after he served four years with the Marines, they married. He was stationed at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., when her lungs were at their worst.

She was living in Charleston, S.C., under the care of Dr. Patrick Flume of the Medical University of South Carolina, when her situation became severe enough for him to place her on a lung transplant waiting list. Dr. Flume referred Mrs. Merkal to Duke Hospital in Durham for a double lung transplant operation.

To be closer to the hospital, Lieutenant Merkal received humanitarian orders here in December.

As time passed, the Merkals were forced to face the possibility of losing her ongoing battle. When the situation became dire, a new set of lungs were finally found and Mrs. Merkal received the greatest Christmas gift she could imagine – a chance to breathe again.

The realities are not pretty. Patients deal with severe lung infections, digestive problems and malnutrition at an early age, according to the foundation.

"I never heard her complain that she has CF," Dr. Flume said. "She might have complained about the symptoms, like any of us do, but never did she ask why she had CF. She is an absolute joy, and it is because of people like her that I enjoy going to work every day.

"She has always had a smile on her face, even when supremely uncomfortable," he said. "She is a straight-shooter, she likes it honest and without fluff."

Lieutenant Merkal knew, shortly after enlisting in the Marines, he was going to marry her. He hesitated because he did not think the military health-care system would be capable of helping her.

Lieutenant Merkal's apprehension was soon quelled by a commander, who introduced him to several special-need family programs.

"Theresa was doing fairly well then, so I looked into the (Air Force) ROTC program. It was my ROTC commander who told me about the humanitarian moves," he said.

The Humanitarian Reassignment Program allows members to apply for reassignment consideration to resolve severe short-term problems involving a family member.

"Theresa had very severe lung disease prior to the transplant," Dr. Flume said. "We only consider lung transplantation for someone who is going to die of their lung disease in a relatively short period of time."

With time against her, she waited for a suitable donor. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Web site notes there are more than 83,000 people on the organ transplant list and half of those will die while waiting.

"I've known someday I would be sick enough to need one, and have felt I wanted one," Mrs. Merkal said despite the odds in finding a donor.

On Dec. 15, she got the call that two lungs were available. She reported to the Duke Transplant Center that morning, and after an eight-hour surgery, she was ready to begin a life with new lungs.

Only six days later, Mrs. Merkal was released from the hospital. The average stay for a bilateral transplant patient is 12 days, said Dr. Scott Palmer, Duke lung transplant program director.

"She was doing so well they did not want to keep her. It was incredible," Lieutenant Merkal said.

"Before the transplant she could not walk 10 feet without stopping to rest," Lieutenant Merkal said. "Her lung function was horrible. Now she has no respirator and (was) walking just two weeks after [the] transplant. It has been just remarkable."

Dr. Palmer said she has a very good chance of living an excellent life that would not have been possible without a transplant.

"What an incredible gift it was for someone to check off that box on an organ donor card," he said. She is now able to look forward to new ambitions and plans to walk the 4.5 mile Cooper River Bridge Walk in Charleston, S.C., in April.

The Merkals also hope to attend their upcoming 10-year high-school reunion.

"We have not had a vacation since I have been in (the Air Force)," Lieutenant Merkal said. The trip to see friends and family instead of a hospital will be a breath of fresh air for them both.

Tactical controllers stand strong

By Tech. Sgt. Brian Davidson

455th Expeditionary Operations Group Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan – For Air Force tactical air control party airmen, “The strong will stand, the weak will fall by the wayside,” is more than just a motto; it’s a battle cry.

Wherever American military forces are found, TACP airmen are usually nearby. Unofficially nicknamed the “Air Force infantry” because they spend most of their career assigned to Army units, tactical controllers can most often be found embedded with special operations forces.

Although many people have never heard of TACP airmen, they are serving in operations worldwide.

“Our primary role is to direct combat strike aircraft against enemy targets,” said Staff Sgt. Alan Lesko, TACP Noncommissioned Officer in Charge with the Army’s 10th Mountain Division supporting Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. “We also coordinate artillery fire with air strikes.”

To accomplish their mission, tactical controllers serve on the front line, often in advance of any other military units.

In Afghanistan, they control the battlefield by coordinating strikes of the A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft. Whether involved in a low-intensity conflict or full-scale conventional warfare, TACP airmen guide the full fury of American military might.

Known by Army special forces soldiers as enlisted terminal attack controllers, TACP airmen provide close-air support aircraft guidance control to increase the capability of ground combat forces.

They are also experts in artillery and in Naval combat and attack helicopter capabilities; they use all combat assets to rain destruction on the enemy. “Some people think we are air traffic controllers, but that’s inaccurate,” said Airman 1st Class James Blair.

“Our mission is terminal control. That means bombs on target, and a very bad day for the enemy.”

These airmen must be thoroughly proficient in ground combat techniques, and their training goes well beyond that of the Army infantry. Tactical control airmen serve as advisers to ground component commanders in planning and using combat assets, and are the link between joint and combined forces.

In Afghanistan, TACP airmen coordinate ground and air assaults on terrorist positions, provide convoy security for coalition forces, and even assist with presidential security for the fledgling Afghan government.

Regardless of the mission assigned, Sergeant Lesko said that their primary responsibility is to “hunt bad guys.”

“Our job here is to fight for freedom from terrorism,” he said. “To fight against the enemies of Afghanistan, and to bring that fight to those who threaten peace.”

In the field, tactical controllers wear a battle uniform that is unremarkable, without name or Air Force insignia, rank or unit markings. Instead, their uniforms are adorned with small patches that make them visible to American pilots using special night-vision equipment. Clearly marked on the sleeves and boots is the airman’s blood type.

Tactical controllers are ranger- and airborne-qualified, and are proficient in static line and high altitude-low open parachute tactics, plus air assault and scuba.

Their training begins with basic radio maintenance and operation, then continues with land navigation and combat-air support basics, followed by survival school where they learn resistance, escape and evasion tactics.

The fight for peace and freedom takes the tactical controllers into some of the roughest terrain and most inhospitable conditions in the world. Whether they are braving the freezing temperatures and thin air in the mountains of Afghanistan, or in the desolate,



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Brian Davidson

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan – Airman 1st Class James Blair coordinates air cover for Army 10th Mountain Division light-infantry soldiers during recent operations in the Sroghar Mountains. Airman Blair and other tactical air control party airmen are serving with special operations forces in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

searing deserts of Iraq, wherever special forces are needed, TACP goes. Often they are the first in and last out.



PHONE BOOK RECYCLING

Peterson AFB personnel can drop off phone books for recycling. Drop-off containers are located in the parking lot next to McDonald's and the Recycling Yard south of Building 1324, until Saturday. For more information, call the Environmental Flight at 556-0963 or 556-8059.

FAMILY DAY HOURS

The Military Personnel Flight is closed Friday for the wing family day. The 21st Medical Group will have family practice acute appointments from 7:30 – 11:30 a.m. The pharmacy will not fill civilian prescriptions and the refill pharmacy at the Commissary is open normal hours. For clinic appointments and sick call, call 556-CARE.

IN-RESIDENCE PME RESTRICTIONS

Air Force enlisted members with temporary medical conditions restricting active and full participation in physical performance requirements are ineligible to attend resident Enlisted Professional Military Professional schools. Resident EPME school activities include: physical fitness, drill and ceremonies, uniform inspection formations, and other student performance duties as specified in the course requirements.

EXERCISE COMING IN FEBRUARY

Due a base-wide exercise Feb. 9-13, there will be limited customer service functions across base. For more information, contact the 21st Space Wing Inspector General's office at 556-6485.

CLOTHING SALES ITEM BACKLOG

Due to increased demand for military clothing items to support ongoing operations, Military

Clothing Sales Stores are experiencing a backlog of some clothing items. Medium temperate (winter weight) Battle Dress Uniform trousers, in medium/regular size, are currently out of stock. The Military Service Store Manager recommends customers needing these items immediately consider purchasing summer weight trousers instead.

COMMISSARY ASKS FOR PATIENCE

Frustration by low stock levels at all Front Range commissaries is at an all-time-high due to a major change in distributors. Manufacturers have given the Commissary a six-week window before all products are expected to be available on Commissary shelves. For more information, contact Randi Robinson by phone at 556-7765 or via e-mail at randi.robinson@deca.mil.

PASSPORT REQUIREMENTS

Applications for official passports are processed through the Military Personnel Flight for official travel only. The minimum processing time is six to eight weeks. If a visa is required, an additional 7-10 days processing time will be needed. Tourist passports are processed at the downtown Colorado Springs Post Office. The Military Personnel Flight has walk-in hours from 10 a.m.- 4 p.m. Monday-Friday, but it is recommended to call for an appointment for passport requirements. For more information regarding passports, contact Master Sgt. Dave Barrett at 556-7500.

HELP DESK RESETS CAC PINS

The capability to reset the Personal Identification Number on the Common Access Card is now available at the Peterson Communication Help Desk in Building 1038, Monday-Friday from 6 a.m.- 6 p.m. Only CAC

owners can reset their own cards. Customers whose cards cannot be reset due to card problems will be referred to the Military Personnel Flight. The system equipment in Building 1038 cannot issue or post certifications to CAC cards. That capability is only provided at the MPF.

TEAM PETE NCO INDUCTION CEREMONY

The monthly Team Pete NCO Induction and Recognition Ceremony will be 3 p.m. Feb. 6 in the Enlisted Club. Come out and congratulate our newest NCO promotees.

GIRL SCOUT RECRUITING

There will be a parents' meeting to learn more about how to enroll your child in the Girl Scouts Monday from 6-8 p.m. at the Base Chapel. For more information, contact Sandra Evans at 597-8603, extension 26.

MOMS IN MOTION

There is a Moms In Motion exercise class for pregnant and postpartum moms every Tuesday and Thursday from 9-10 a.m. at the Garcia Gym on Fort Carson. Call 526-394 for information.

DISTANCE LEARNING TESTING

The Education Office acts as a proctor for examinations from colleges and universities for students enrolled in Distance Learning courses. People needing test proctoring may call the Education Office at 556-4034 to schedule a test. Testing is currently done at noon on Mondays and Tuesdays. Call Carolynn Farrell at 556-5034 or e-mail carolynn.farrell@peterson.af.mil for more information.



Chapel Schedule



Protestant

Worship Services:

Liturgical Service, 6:30 p.m. Sat.
Traditional Worship Service, 8 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School 9:35 a.m. Sun.
Contemporary/Inspirational Service, 11 a.m. Sun.

Catholic

Weekday Mass, 11:35 a.m. (except Monday)
Saturdays, 5 p.m.
Sundays, 9:30 a.m.
Reconciliation
Saturdays, 4 p.m.

**For more information -
Call the chapel at 556-4442 for
available chapel programs.

Blotter

The following real-life events with real individuals from around Peterson are to inform you of crimes, accidents, and events occurring on base. These entries are from hundreds recorded in the Peterson Police Blotter:

*** Editor's note: Although the Space Observer staff may make light of some blotter entries, the intent is to call attention to our security and law enforcement concerns. However, rest assured, our professional Security Forces treat each incident seriously.*

READY TO RESPOND – Jan. 15

Security Forces responded to an anonymous call regarding a rollover vehicle accident about a quarter mile south of Marksheffel Road outside the East Gate. The Colorado Springs Police Department and American Medical Response personnel arrived shortly thereafter, and CSPD assumed control from the Security Forces.

PLAIN PLANE PAPARAZZI – Jan. 15

Security Forces responded to the flightline, where an unidentified man was seen photographing the runway. The man revealed he was requested to snap some souvenir shots of a particular pilot's final flight. Once the professional produced some ID, and obtained proper clearance from Base Operations, he continued the pre-empted photo shoot.

IN-FLIGHT EMERGENCY – Jan. 15

Security Forces responded to the flightline, where an aircraft carrying six passengers reportedly lost its No. 1 engine. The aircraft landed without incident.

SACKED SACK – Jan. 15

Security Forces responded to a call at the Fitness Center, where a military member reported his gym bag stolen. While he jogged on the outdoor track, the troublesome tote apparently ran off in another direction. The jilted jogger stated he left the bag beside the track, and ventured

onto the fitness trail for a few minutes. When he returned to the track, the bag was gone. A witness reported that a woman had walked off with the gym tote.

BAD HABITS – Jan. 15

Security Forces closed all the installation's outgoing traffic lanes when they received a report of a shoplifting incident at the Commissary. A woman had allegedly been spotted pilfering a package of cigarettes. Law enforcers stopped the shifty shoplifter's vehicle and escorted her to the Security Forces Squadron. Upon questioning, the woman admitted she removed three packs of cigarettes from a carton and placed them in her desk, intending to pay for them later. Unfortunately for her, the Commissary doesn't employ a running tab system, so she was issued a summons for shoplifting.

INTEGRITY FIRST – Jan. 15

Security Forces responded to a minor traffic accident at the intersection of Paine Street and Stewart Avenue, where a military member called to report that he had rear-ended another vehicle. His braking blunder resulted in scratches to his front bumper, but no damage to the other car. Security Forces issued the candid collision causer a citation for following too close.

WATCH WHAT YOU'LL EAT – Jan. 16

Security Forces responded to the Mission Support Services Building, where a suspicious package was spotted in the main lobby. Further investigation revealed it was but a loitering lunch bag that belonged to a man who set the goody bag on a lobby table while he used the restroom.

MEDICAL RESPONSE – Jan. 17

A Security Forces member at the North Gate requested assistance for a military member suffering from hypoxia. The victim's flight training earlier that day may have caused the reaction. The Fire Department and American Medical Response responded, and transported her to Memorial Hospital for further treatment.

LICENSE AND REGISTRATION, PLEASE – Jan. 18

While performing entry control duties at the North Gate, a Security Forces member noticed one driver's registration had expired. The gate

guard then discovered her driver's license was expired as well. Apparently, the muddleheaded motorist's common sense was also expired. CSPD was notified, and the driver was issued a summons that was not expired.

SHOPPING FOR SECRETS? – Jan. 19

Security Forces received an Eagle Eyes report of suspicious activity in the parking lot of a local hardware store. A military member stated he observed a woman making annotations in a notepad, possibly recording information on vehicles bearing military installation access stickers. When he asked the suspicious stenographer what she was up to, she became verbally hostile and told him to leave her alone. The wary warrior gave a description of the shady lady and her vehicle to Security Forces.

BARRIER BEATING – Jan. 19

Security Forces responded to a minor collision at the West Gate, where a semi-truck pummeled a cement barrier. It seems the trucker was unable to sufficiently maneuver the trailer through the concrete obstacle course. Neither the truck nor the displaced barrier was damaged in the incident, though the prancing Peterbuilt pilot was issued a citation for inattentive driving.

SLICK SITUATION – Jan. 20

Security Forces responded to a wallop about half a mile outside the West Gate. Two vehicles exited the gate single-file, and collided when the driver to the rear hit the brakes, sliding into the other car. The icy road conditions that evening contributed to this fender-bender. Damage to the two vehicles included scratches to the cars' bumpers. The sliding steerer's vehicle also suffered a cracked headlight. Security Forces issued a citation for following too closely for road conditions.

ALARMING TRENDS CONTINUE:

In addition to these entries, there continue to be too many illegitimate alarm activations on base. Among those noted by Security Forces this week was one alarm activation due to human error, and three false fire alarm activations.

*** If you have any information on a crime or any of these blotter entries, please report it to Security Forces at 556-4000.*



Pilots at 84th ALF aim high, fly faithfully

By Staff Sgt. Sue Mrowiec
21st Space Wing Public Affairs

They can be seen flying over Peterson almost daily, like white gulls on the wing.

The C-21A, the military's equivalent to the civilian Learjet, belongs to the 84th Airlift Flight. The detachment maintains six C-21A planes here, and falls under the 375th Airlift Wing at Scott AFB, Ill.

The 84th ALF specializes in Operational Support Airlift, using C-21A aircraft to shuttle personnel around the country.

"We provide a passenger platform," said Lt. Col. Joseph Hickox, 84th ALF Commander. "We are the only active duty Air Mobility Command unit in Colorado."

Colonel Hickox is a former C-5 pilot and T-37 instructor with 3,700 flying hours. He spent a year and a half at the detachment -- first as director of

operations and now as commander.

"It's an incredibly fun airplane, and a great mission to fly," he said. "The people in the unit make this the most professional flying organization I've been a part of in 17 years."

That professionalism was recognized this year when the 84th was named Joint Operational Support Airlift Center Western Region Unit of the Year.

"The JSOAC falls under Headquarters U.S. Transportation Command. They're the gatekeepers on scheduling OSA transport," the colonel said.

"The distinction as JSOAC Unit of the Year is based on some objectivity, like the number of missions we've flown," Colonel Hickox said. "But it's also based on subjective factors like how willing we are to pick up extra missions and our quality of customer service."

"We're graded on the timeliness of our flights, and making sure our customers are comfortable."

Last year, that mission extended beyond the

Continental United States, as the 84th flew off in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM.

"At the beginning, we deployed a third of our unit, including pilots and maintenance troops," he said. "We flew several combat and support sorties in and out of Iraq, transporting distinguished visitors and senior leadership in-theater."

"We maintain a continuous presence of planes and crews deployed between the eight C-21 units in the U.S.," Colonel Hickox said.

At home, the 84th's mission takes on another dimension.

"Our primary mission is seasoning young pilots, while providing airlift around the country," the commander said.

"They develop their skills, becoming excellent pilots for the Air Force."

The 84th has had a unit member selected for the B-2 Stealth Bomber program for two years in a row.

"The B-2 program is an extremely competitive program," Colonel Hickox said. "It's a testament to the quality of our pilots."

"For many, this is their first assignment. They're given a lot of flying hours fairly quickly, so they're more fully qualified to fly larger aircraft for AMC."

When pilots do make a transition, be it to another aircraft or to another career, they don't do it alone.

A Fini Flight celebration is held to honor the pilot's accomplishments.

Armed with water pistols and fire extinguishers, fellow flyers soak the honoree as he exits the C-21A for the last time.

"The Fini Flight is a tradition in aviation," said Capt. Allen Pichon, a pilot with the ALF.

"When pilots move on to a new plane, or are done flying for good, the unit meets them on the ground," he said.



Capt. Matthew Michaud, a C-21A pilot with the 84th ALF, was recently selected for training in the B-2 Bomber program.

Photo by Dennis Plummer



Photo illustration by Kara Magana



Photo by Larry Hulst

Members of the 84th ALF shower a fellow pilot with water and accolades during a Fini Flight celebration last week.



A T Y O U R S E R V I C E

This Week

Today

■ Job Orientation, 1-2 p.m. at the Mission Support Center, Room 1016.

Friday

■ Open play volleyball, noon-2 p.m. at the Fitness Center.

Saturday

■ Thunder Alley, 8:30 p.m. at the Bowling Center.

Sunday

■ Sunday Brunch, 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m., at the Officers' Club.

■ Super Bowl Party at the Enlisted Club. Free admission, great prizes.

Tuesday

■ Sponsorship Training, 7:30-8:30 a.m. at the MSC, Room 1016.

■ Common Sense Parenting, 11 a.m.-noon at the Library.

■ Job Orientation, 1-2 p.m. at the MSC, Room 1016.

■ How Divorce and Separation Affect Children, 2- 4 p.m. at the Library.

■ Wall-climbing certification class, 4:30 p.m. at the Fitness Center.

Wednesday

■ Pre-separation Briefing, 8-9 a.m. at the MSC, Room 1016.

■ Wall-climbing certification class, 11:30 p.m. at the Fitness Center.

■ Stress Management, 1- 4 p.m. at the Health and Wellness Center.

Feb. 5

■ Play Group, 10:30 a.m.-noon, at the Youth Center.

■ How Divorce and Separation Affect Children, 2- 4 p.m. at the Library.

Helpful Numbers

- Family Advocacy 556-8943
- Education Center 556-4064
- Library 556-7462
- Community Center 556-7671
- Aquatics Center 556-4608
- Fitness Center 556-4462
- Officers' Club 556-4181
- Enlisted Club 556-4194
- Youth Center 556-7220
- Family Support 556-6141
- Red Cross 556-9201
- Outdoor Recreation 556-4487
- Golf Course 556-7810

This Week

Football fans rush E-Club for Super Bowl

By Staff Sgt. Sue Mrowiec

21st Space Wing Public Affairs

The play is set as the Enlisted Club kicks off Sunday's Super Bowl Party.

Game time is 2 p.m. in the lounge, where football fans can scrimmage over free food and prizes, while enjoying virtual front-row seats to Super Bowl XXXVIII on the Club's 12-foot television.

"It's basically a free party," said Garry Shaffer, the Enlisted Club manager. This is the first time we've done this in a few years. We're hoping to have a

lot of success with it."

All military and civilian Team Pete members are welcome.

"It's open to anyone, so you don't have to be a Club member to attend," Mr. Shaffer said. "We'd like to draw in people from the dorms and base housing."

Special guests attending include two Denver Broncos

cheerleaders and "celebrity" bartenders from within the 21st Space Wing.

The Enlisted Club is offering plenty of incentive for sports enthusiasts to team-up on Sunday. "We'll have specials on non-alcoholic drinks, mug beers, and shots," Mr. Shaffer said.

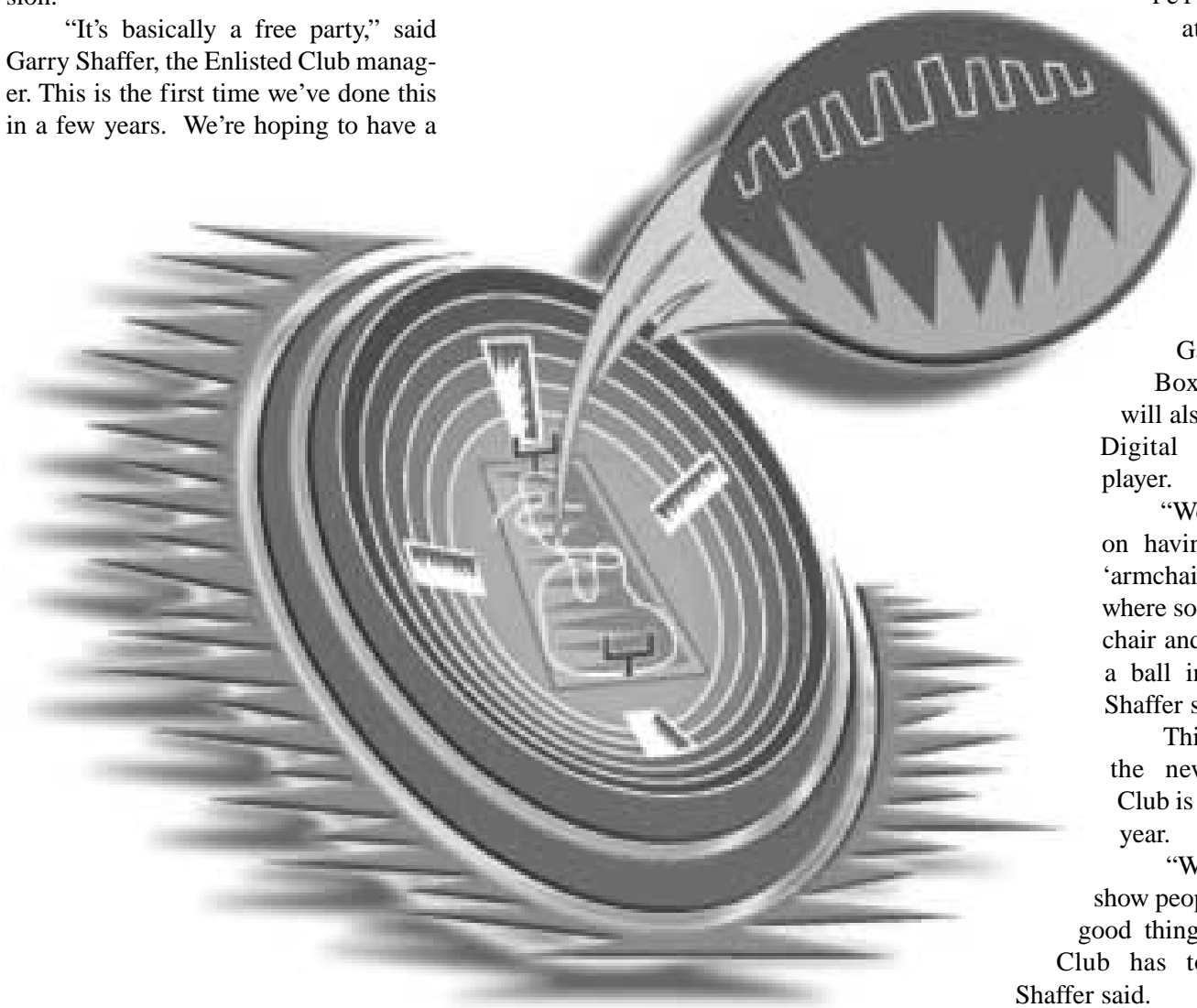
"We'll also have free snacks like hot dogs, hot wings, and barbecue."

Along with refreshments, attendees will have the chance to win some prizes. The list includes: a large-screen TV or Playstation 2, Gameboy, or X-Box. A drawing will also be held for a Digital Video Disc player.

"We're planning on having games like 'armchair quarterback', where someone sits in a chair and tries to throw a ball into a bucket," Shaffer said.

This is just one of the new events the Club is promoting this year.

"We're hoping to show people some of the good things the Enlisted Club has to offer," Mr. Shaffer said.



ARAGON DINING FACILITY MENU

Today

Lunch:

Herbed Baked Chicken
Southern Catfish
Stuffed Cabbage Rolls
Mixed Vegetables
Peas
Mashed Potatoes
Sweet Potatoes

Dinner:

Cornish Hens
Jaegerschnitzel with Mushroom Sauce
Roast Loin of Pork
Carrots
Corn Combo
Potato Halves
Orange Rice

Friday

Lunch:

Mexican Baked Chicken
Stuffed Green Peppers
Swiss Steak with Tomato Sauce
Peas and Carrots
Spanish-Style Beans
Steamed Rice
Macaroni and Cheese

Dinner:

Sweet Italian Sausage
Lasagna
Spaghetti with Meat Sauce
Broccoli Polonaise
Cauliflower
Mashed Potatoes
Italian-Style Baked Beans

Saturday

Brunch:

Cajun Meatloaf
Crispy Baked Chicken
Ribeye Steak
Broccoli
French-Style Peas
Glazed Carrots
Mashed Potatoes
Baked Potatoes

Sunday

Brunch:

Parmesan Chicken Breast
Sauerbraten
Tuna and Noodles
Cauliflower Combo
Fried Cabbage
Peas
Steamed Rice
Au Gratin Potatoes

Monday

Lunch:

Baked Chicken
Simmered
Knockwurst
Swiss Steak with Tomato Sauce
Broccoli Polonaise
Carrots
Sauerkraut
Mashed Potatoes
Steamed Rice

Dinner:

Roast Turkey
Baked Canned Ham
Fish and Fries
Succotash
Herbed Green Beans
Tempura
Vegetables
Cornbread
Dressing
Mashed Potatoes

Tuesday

Lunch:

Salisbury Steak
Onion Lemon
Fish
Yakisoba
Spinach
Stewed Tomatoes
Simmered Pinto Beans
Mashed Potatoes

Dinner:

Barbecued Beef
Cubes
Paprika Beef
Pork Chop Suey
Cauliflower
Corn on the Cob
Lima Beans
O'Brien Potatoes
Steamed Rice

Wednesday

Lunch:

Caribbean Jerk Chicken
Beef Porcupines
Chicken
Enchiladas
Mexican Corn
Peas with Onions
Scalloped Potatoes
Steamed Rice

Dinner:

Country-Style Steak
Pita Pizza
Fried Chicken
Cabbage
Fried Cauliflower
Mashed Potatoes
Oven-Browned Potatoes

Veteran's final choices show love for blue suit

By Maj. John J. Thomas

Air Force Personnel Center Public Affairs

Reid S. Wyant is dying. His daughter called me the other day and asked me to help gather the necessary items so he can be buried in his Air Force service dress uniform. Reid S. Wyant served 30 years as an airman – and it seems he's still one of us.

So, I got to thinking. What makes a person, who has lived life as a civilian since 1980, want to be buried in his uniform?

I'd like to think maybe "Service Before Self" gets into your blood. After all, retired Senior Master Sgt. Wyant switched his cancer treatment from Eglin Air Force Base not too long ago because the war was forcing them to cut back care, and he wanted the active duty people to get taken care of first. "Always thinking of others," his daughter says.

His daughter, Andrae Harris, cares for him even as he edges closer to the end. She helps him plan it all out. Arlington National Cemetery was overruled by his wife who wants him for eternity closer to family – details like that.

Ms. Harris said she always knew her dad was a hero.

He was awarded the Airman's Medal for saving three swimmers' lives "in front of my very eyes, without a care to his own safety." He almost lost his own life doing it, she said. And that pales in comparison to

his courage facing his cancer.

Sergeant Wyant might say it is the friends you find who make the Air Force something you want to be buried with.

"I've never known anyone (who) did not like my dad," his daughter said.

A former commander, Col. Roger Andersen, still visits him at home. "They would both re-enlist today," if they could, Ms. Harris said.

Reid Wyant's life with the Air Force began when the young Air Force had been around for just seven years.

"His uncle was a rear admiral and told him to join the Air Force," Ms. Harris said. Seems his uncle was a smart man.

She said "He caught a bus to Pittsburgh and never looked back."

I think he's looking back now. Looking back on the people he met as a munitions maintenance specialist and first sergeant. Born and raised in Kitanning, Pa., he served in North Africa, in the '50s; Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, and Korea in the '60s. In 1971, he was in Thailand. And he was in plenty of stateside places in between. But no assignment was more important than the move from Denver to Bentwaters, England.

That's where a boy, dirt-poor and often mistreated by his grandfather, a guy who dropped out of school and put his kid brother through college – well,

England is where he met his wife, Doreen. To hear Ms. Harris tell it, her mom's whole family fell in love with him. As much, it seems, as he loved the Air Force.

Upon retirement from his second career, he moved from Dallas to near Eglin where he fried fish and chicken for squadron picnics. That's where they first treated him for cancer a couple of years ago. And it was at Eglin that he recently went with his family to get all of his affairs together and prepare a final will.

I have never met Sergeant Wyant. But I have worked with people just like him every day of my 12 years in the Air Force. I have served with loyal members of every service. I am off to Iraq soon to work again with the State Department and other agencies. People tell me to keep my head down when I go to Iraq.

Instead I think I'll hold my head high, out of respect for people like Sergeant Wyant and all those he represents, like my own dad, and my father-in-law. When his daughter asked him the other day "why the service dress uniform for the burial?" he said that is what he has always worn for important events, and he wanted his family to recognize him. His sense of humor is still healthy.

Maybe one day, I will ask to be buried in my service dress uniform, like Senior Master Sgt. Reid S. Wyant wants to be, "with full military honors." In his case, the honor will be ours.

21st Space Wing Flag Plaza Dedication

The 21st Space Wing will host the 21st SW Flag Plaza Dedication Ceremony at 1 p.m. Tuesday in front of the 21st SW headquarters. The ceremony honors the nations that make up the 21st SW with all the total force components of the United States Air Force. All Team Pete members are invited to attend this event.

Call Maj. Jeffrey Pruitt at 556-6161 or 1st Lt. Bryson Blake at 556-3867 for more information.



Base-wide power outages scheduled

With the addition of several new facilities at Peterson, base electrical usage has increased dramatically.

The base is scheduled for an electrical upgrade project Feb. 13-15 and Feb. 20-22, requiring four distinct power outages to significant portions of the base.

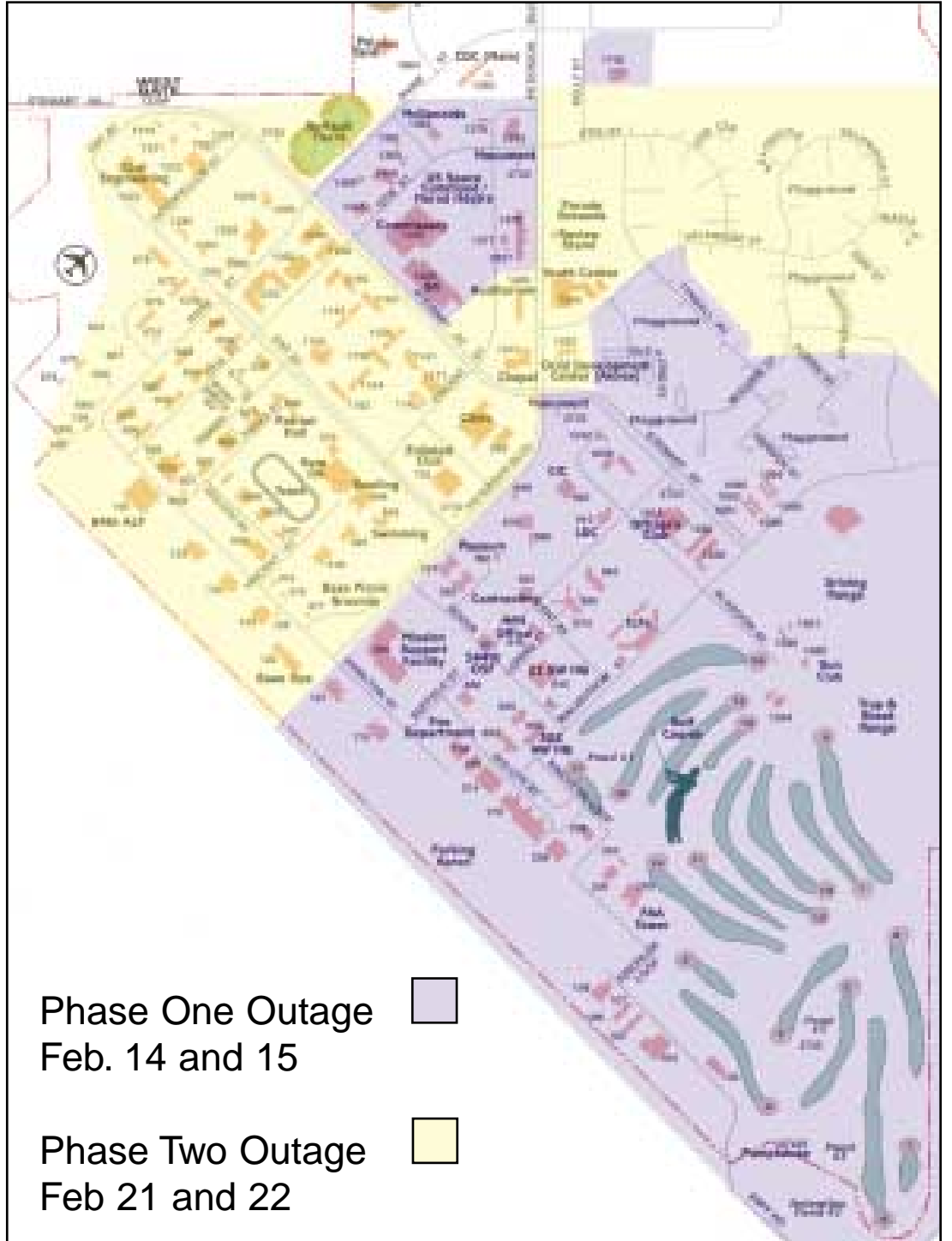
This effort is the third and final part of a Colorado Springs Utility project to upgrade our electrical system. It is critical to complete this upgrade during the winter to prevent potential capacity problems this summer when power

usage is at its peak.

The first phase power outages will occur from 8-9 a.m. Feb. 14, and 4-5 p.m. Feb. 15. The second phase power outages will occur the same hours Feb. 21 and Feb. 22.

Make appropriate plans, given the outage schedule. If you have special medical needs that will be compromised by the power outages, call the 21st Civil Engineer Service Call Desk at 556-4030.

(Information courtesy of the 21st CES)



DoD's top aquatics facility sports facelift

By Staff Sgt. Sue Mrowiec
21st Space Wing Public Affairs

The Aquatics Center here plunged back into operation Monday.

The pool opened following delays in maintenance projects that began last month.

"Now that we're open, things should start building back up," said

Eddie Johnson, the Aquatics Center's lead lifeguard. "Swimming lessons start up again next week."

Swimmers can anticipate a new look for their pool.

Natare Corporation performed the maintenance on the pool liner, while the 21st Civil Engineer Squadron tackled painting the beams and repairing the leaky slide.

"We also power-washed the deck and cleaned everything up," Mr. Johnson said

"The renovations improved the facility's appearance and overall usage," said Jared Finnigan, also a lead lifeguard at the pool. "They help ensure the longevity of the pool."

On the first day, swimmers were already diving in.

"Customers appreciate the changes," Mr. Johnson said.

This dedication to quality was recently recognized by the National Recreation and Parks Association, which named the Aquatics Center as the best recreational aquatics facility in the Department of Defense.

"We're improved, and we're open for business," Mr. Finnigan added.

The Aquatics Center has open swim hours Monday - Friday from 1-5 p.m., Saturdays until 4 p.m., and Sundays until 6 p.m.

Lap swimming is available in increments, Monday - Friday from 5:30-9:30 a.m., 11 a.m.-1 p.m., and 5-6 p.m.

The Aquatics Center also sponsors Family Swim Night Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6-8 p.m.

For prices, or more information, call the Aquatics Center at 556-4608.



Photo by Larry McTighe

It's the pits

Nine teams participated in the recent Air Force Pit Stop competition at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla. Teams vied to see who could change two tires the fastest on the Air Force/Motorcraft Wood Brothers Racing Ford Taurus. A team representing Tyndall's 1st Aircraft Maintenance Unit won with a time of 19.7 seconds. They received the hood from the Motorcraft/Air Force car that competed at Homestead International Speedway in Homestead, Fla.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Sue Mrowiec

The Aquatics Center underwent structural upgrades to the pool area. The center was recently recognized as the best recreational aquatics facility in the Department of Defense.

Enlisted Against Drunk Driving

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Please call us!

Fri. - Sat. 10 p.m. - 3 a.m.

Phone: 719-556-6384

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