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

By Lt. Gen. John Regni
Academy superintendent

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

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

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

It is by no means an easy future. We are engaged in two wars on the other side of the world - and we are engaged in a global ideological struggle against some of the most barbaric enemies we have ever faced. There are also many threats on the horizon, both traditional and non-traditional, and as always there are threats that still lie beyond the horizon, threats we can’t yet even perceive.

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

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

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

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

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

We expect great things from you in the years to come. The safety of the nation is in your hands - and there is nowhere else the American people would rather it be.

Congratulations, Good Luck.

Class of 2009, it’s YOUR TIME!

AOG congratulates Class of 2009

By William “T” Thompson, Esq., ’73
President & CEO, Association of Graduates

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

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

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

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

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

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

I know it has been a long four years, and you are ready to meet the new challenges that lie ahead. Yet I strongly urge you to stay connected to the institution that has given you such a unique opportunity. Join and become involved with the Association of Graduates. Help to support the many cadet programs that you have had an opportunity to experience; the leadership and character programs, the conferences and symposiums, intramurals and cadet clubs, and the foreign travel and language immersion programs, to mention just a few.

Understand that you have the responsibility to reach back by giving back to the cadets who will follow you. Realize that you have an obligation to insure that they enjoy a better opportunity than you have enjoyed just as prior grads have insured that you have had opportunities that didn’t exist when we were cadets.

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

Cover Design: Photos courtesy DenMac, graphic layout Ken Carter

William “T” Thompson

To responsibly inform and educate the Academy community and the public about the Air Force Academy
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Deadline for all stories is noon Friday, one week prior to the desired publication date. Refer questions to the Academy Spirit editor at 719-334-8023.
The Academy Spirit also accepts story submissions by fax at 334-804 or by email at pa.news.paper@usafa.mil.
In his first visit to the Air Force Academy since being elected as vice president of the United States, the Honorable Joe Biden will offer the commencement speech today recognizing the accomplishments of the Class of 2009.

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

Just weeks after the election, tragedy struck the Biden family, when his wife, Neilia, and their 1-year old daughter, Naomi, were killed and their two young sons critically injured in an auto accident. Biden was sworn in at his sons’ hospital bedside and began commuting to Washington every day by train, a practice he maintained throughout his career in the Senate.

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

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

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

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

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

The Air Officer Commanding is Maj. Jacqueline Breeden.

The squadron commanders are Cadets 1st Class Elijah Culpepper and Kenneth Montague.

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

Academy recognizes more outstanding squadron performances

Outstanding Squadron Academic Achievement

Outstanding Squadron Leadership and Scholarship

Outstanding Squadron Drill & Ceremonies Comp

Outstanding Squadron Military Proficiency

Outstanding Squadron Intercollegiate

Outstanding Squadron Core Values

Outstanding Squadron Intramural

Outstanding Squadron Athletic Excellence

Outstanding Group- 1st Group

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By Academy Spirit staff

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Not forgotten
More than 800 American Flags were placed at gravesites throughout the Academy Cemetery honoring service members and their families for Memorial Day.

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File Photo

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

Outstanding Cadet Spring Wing Commander
Jonathan Yates, CS-21
Outstanding Cadet Fall Wing Commander
Jacob Schogin, CS-37
Outstanding Cadet Summer Wing Commander
Anthony Ferrara, CS-27
Outstanding Cadet Group Commander
Bradley Dewees, CS-22
Outstanding Cadet Squadron Commander
Michael Mazarr, CS-23
Outstanding Flight Commander
Tyler Olimstad, CS-2
Outstanding Cadet Element Leader
Andrew VanTimmeren, Class of 2010, CS-12
Outstanding Cadet Who Best Exemplifies the Highest Ideals of Loyalty Integrity and Courage
Ryan Sivertsen, CS-34
Outstanding Former Regular Enlisted Cadet
Outstanding Cadet in Aeronautical Engineering
Josiah VanderMey, CS-9
Outstanding Cadet in Astronautical Engineering
Roni Yadlin, CS-30
Outstanding Cadet in Behavioral Sciences & Leadership
Abigail Rogers, CS-22
Outstanding Cadet in Biology
Brit Long, CS-22
Outstanding Cadet in Chemistry
Brandon McCutcheon, CS-15
Outstanding Cadet in Civil Engineering
Kathleen Grieshop, CS-36
Outstanding Cadet in Communications
Daniel Castle, CS-19
Outstanding Cadet in Computer Engineering
Eric Kitaif, CS-2
Outstanding Cadet in Computer Science
Douglas Sutton, CS-18
Outstanding Cadet in Eastern Language Minor
Benjamin Otte, CS-20
Outstanding Cadet in Economics
Philip Cho, CS-24
Outstanding Cadet in Electrical Engineering
Matthew McCormack, CS-16
Outstanding Cadet in Engineering Mechanics
Daniel Zheng, CS-20
Outstanding Cadet in English
Kerick Roy, CS-19
Outstanding Cadet in Environmental Engineering
Anthony Hylik, CS-33
Outstanding Cadet in Foreign Area Studies
Brian Williams, CS-23
Outstanding Cadet in Geospatial Science
William Hettschuen, CS-7
Outstanding Cadet in History
Daniel Jackson, CS-5
Outstanding Cadet in Intercollegiate Speech Comp
Joshua Seefried, CS-29
Outstanding Cadet in Legal Studies
Brady Augustin, CS-32
Outstanding Cadet in Management
Sean Rotbart, CS-12
Outstanding Cadet in Mathematics
Gregory Oswald, CS-7

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For more information call 2-1-1 or 955-0742

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Morning community news

May 27, 2009
Harvard, MIT, Oxford, Cal Tech and Rice are just a few of the post-graduation destinations for members of the Academy’s Class of 2009.

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

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

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

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

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

Cadet 1st Class Brian Mueller is bound for King’s College in the United Kingdom after winning a Marshall Scholarship. Cadet Mueller is one of only 40 people in the United States to win the scholarship in 2008.

Through the Acquisitition Accession Program, several cadets majored in everything from physics to behavioral sciences are bound for graduate school. This program sends graduating cadets to the Air Force Institute of Technology in residence and select civilian universities, based on the current needs of the Air Force. It includes a new AFIT in residency program for cyber operations, which was introduced in 2008. These cadets are: Cadets 1st Class Ainsley Allen, Eric Diss, Luke Ferrel, Byron Fryer, Harmon Gage, Joshua Heffermen, Adam Hillier, Alexander Kaszynski, Charles Keaton, Adam Kruse, Garrett Kurtz, Spencer Lee, Benahia Lozano, Brooke Lunde, Erin McNel, Ashley Miller, Crystal Murray, Michael Paul, Emily Purcell, Robin Rogers, Stephanie Schmidt, Nathanael Sladek, Alexander Stevenson, Jared Tinstaun, Ariella Walker, Matthew Williams and Abby Rogers.

Cadet Abby Rogers also earned an NCAA postgraduate scholarship, along with Cadet 1st Class Roni Yadlin. Cadet Rogers is a gymnast while Cadet Yadlin played soccer.

These scholarships are awarded by the NCAA to graduating student-athletes who have performed with distinction in both athletics and academics. The NCAA awards fewer than 300 scholarships annually to the best of more than 200,000 NCAA athletes. Cadet Yadlin also won an endowed scholarship to Oxford University, United Kingdom.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

87 cadets bound for Grad School

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

By Academy Public Affairs

May 27, 2009

G R A D U A T I O N  2 0 0 9

GRADUATION 2009

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GRADUATION 2009

7
Soaring success paves way for future recruitment

By Maj. Stephen Stumbo
Assistant Director of Operations
94th Flying Training Squadron

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

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

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

The road to Sun ’n Fun was just that — after C-130 airlift support fell through, Cadet-in-Charge Nic Zimmerman and his crew loaded the Air Force Academy Sailplane Demonstration Team’s glider into a trailer and two officers from the 94th Flying Training Squadron and 70th FTS drove it across the country. 1,850 miles and four days later, the aircraft was now a static display at America’s second largest fly-in and the 94th’s team was busy answering questions and handing out recruiting materials to the estimated 138,000 in attendance at Lakeland’s Linder Regional Airport. Cadets 1st Class Justin Ledvina and Shannon Reichert made a presentation at Lakeland’s George Jenkins High School, meeting with students who were in awe of the detail which they gleaned from the cadet’s description of life at the Academy. “It was amazing to see how impressed the high school students were with daily life here”, said Cadet Reichert.

 Majors Steve D’Amico and Jim Stumbo provided officer oversight for the trip and were glad the team was able to make the whole trip happen. “Right from the beginning of the planning phase, we faced several challenges,” said Stumbo. “Funding, airlift, SCA, recruiting resources … all areas seemed to require a huge team effort on the part of several Academy agencies and in the end, the teamwork paid off.” When asked why the 94th would go through such strides to pull an event like this off, it all boiled down to the mission.

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

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

Along the way, they’ll also be providing an incredible recruiting tool to ensure USAFA continues to attract and train America’s best and brightest for service to their country.
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Classes start July 6 and August 17
Cadets claim victory in battles against cancer

By Butch Wehry
Academy Spirit staff

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

The cadet suspected things were serious. Cancer was confirmed the next morning before the operation.

"At the very beginning of November, I developed a cough that wouldn’t go away. After a little over three weeks I went to the cadet clinic. They figured it was a virus, but decided to do a chest x-ray to see if it was pneumonia," said the systems engineering management major from Cadet Squadron 17.

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

"As a cancer victim, one is not in control. My family and friends supported me—Mom was physically there through all of it—but definitely there was a trust in God’s plan no matter what," said the cadet from Green Bay Wis.

"I went to the cadet clinic. They figured it was a virus, but decided to do a chest x-ray to see if it was pneumonia, just in case. There was a huge spot on the x-ray, so they asked some more questions."

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Self pity does not appear to be one of this cadet’s traits. For one, I certainly have a lot more medical knowledge now than I could have ever wanted to know from doing lots of research about this, other cancers, and related topics," he said. "I have been optimistic the entire time and I think that’s really helped."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Association of Graduates determines the names of graduates to be listed. The AOG spearheaded the fundraising efforts for the memorial that was completed in 1970. Since its dedication, the Class of 1970 oversaw the construction of a smaller replica of the Memorial Wall outside the AOG headquarters. During in-processing doolies receive a briefing on the significance of the service and the sacrifices that may be required of them.

In early 2006, a small team of USAFA graduates took on the substantial and painstaking challenge of creating a database of information pertaining to graduate combat losses. Former Preparatory School commander and Col. (retired) Jock Schwank, Class of 1960, is a member of the research team. He said the project took three years and was only completed in December last year.

The team culled nearly 20,000 bits of information from AOG data, from such sources as newspapers, Arlington National Cemetery, hometown obituaries, family members and classmates. Supported by the The Friends of the Air Force Academy Library, it was a labor of love.

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

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

Every name on the wall has a story. One tells of the intriguing odyssey and return of a graduate's class ring in 2007, 40 years after his death in Vietnam. A Chinese family, living in Vietnam at that time, had found it and cared for it through the years. Through a series of sheer coincidences, the ring eventually made its way back to the deceased graduate's brother, former Secretary of the Air Force Michael Wynne. The ring belonged to his older brother, Maj. Patrick Wynne, Class of 1966.

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

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

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

"They experienced the same things. It is a road full of bumps," he said. Mr. Rauschkolb emphasizes the Air Force is not a job.

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

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

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

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

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

To view all the stories behind the War Memorial, visit www.friends.usafalibrary.com and click on "Memorial Wall."
Thunderbirds set to soar for Class of 2009

From Staff Reports

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Thunderbirds converted to the T-38 Talon, the Air Force's front-line fighter, the F-4E Phantom. In 1974, the Thunderbirds were officially activated June 1, 1953, as the 3600th Air Demonstration Team at Luke AFB, Ariz. Their first aircraft was the straight-winged F-84G Thunderjet, a combat fighter-bomber that had seen action in Korea. Early in 1955 the team transitioned to the swept-winged F-84F Thunderstreak.

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

From 1969 to 1973, the Thunderbirds flew the Air Force's front-line fighter, the F-4E Phantom. In 1974, the Thunderbirds converted to the T-38 Talon, the world's first supersonic trainer. The T-38 was more fuel-efficient and less costly to maintain than the larger F-4.

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

The Thunderbirds returned to Europe for the first time in 13 years in 1984. More than 3.2 million people viewed the aerial demonstrations in 11 countries. In 1986, the Thunderbirds participated in the rededication flyby of the Statue of Liberty and in September, another milestone was attained when the team went over the 200 million mark for total attendance.

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

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

In 1996, the team traveled again to Europe where crowds from former Warsaw Pact countries enjoyed the "Ambassadors in Blue." In July 1996, the team participated in opening ceremonies of the Centennial Olympics held in Atlanta which were viewed by an estimated 3.5 billion people around the world.
Class of 2009 Graduates

Squadron 1
Lisa Marie Bush
Patrick Eugene Beville
Karan Bansal
William Robert Wargula
Debra Ellen Starkey
Kenneth Drew Powers
Michael Hank Persiani
Tyler Kent Olmstead
Steven Lewis Miller Jr.
Michael Colin Mayra
Dana Marie Loveless
Kali Jean Kranz
Melissa Elizabeth Edwards
Corey Whitcomb Crowell
Devin Matthew Bordelon
William Mercier Parker IV
Jason Jaewoong Lo
Justin Keith Lechner
Damien Peter Koolis
Meghan Leigh Kiser
Jordan Matthew Howen
Meghan Leigh Kiser
Damiem Peter Koolis
Justin Kirk Mason
Ryan Martin Meeter
Thomas DeWitt Meyer
David Anthony Ocampo
William Mercer Parker IV
Stephanie Diane Randall
Satapat Rattana
Nathanahle James Sladek
Liam Ryan Taylor
Philip Michael Vehrle
Leah Kim Weiss
Jessica Marie Zenger

Squadron 2
Charles Lee Bayne III
Adam Peter Michael Bergso
Devin Matthew Bordelon
Kevin Andrew Brady
Mark Bradford Chinery
Corey Whitcomb Crowell
Donahoe Andrew Davis
Melissa Elizabeth Edwards
Eric Dean Kitait
Kali Jean Kranz
Michael Alexander Kravitz
Dana Marie Loveless
Michael Colin Mayra
Steven Lewis Miller Jr.
Tyler Kent Olmstead
Tyler Charles Perry
Michael Hank Persiani
Ryan Joseph Pinner
Kenneth Drew Powers
Kathlynn Marie Riley
Andrew Joseph Small
Debra Elizabeth Starkay
William Robert Wargula

Squadron 3
Karan Ransal
Patrick Eugene Beville
Lisa Marie Bush

Squadron 4
Elijah Daine Calippeper
Thomas Emerson Daniels
Daniel Walter Eicklebe
Joana Ruth Everett
Luke Joseph Ferrell
Andrew George Thomas Gibson
Timothy Lee Gorski
Aaron Benjamin Green
Kirk Andrew Habran
Derrick Antill Hoxie IV
Michael Thomas Laney
Elizabeth A. N. Lolton
Genelle Monique Martinez
James William Miller
Kenneth Scott Montague
Kyle Alexander Norris
Kevin Chase O’Neal
Jesse Morgan Prater
Ramiro Rios Jr.
Danielle Marie Rogowski
Jack Michael Rufus
Daniel Timothy Smith
Nicholas Thomas Varnum
Andrew Lee West
Jeffrey Michael Winters

Squadron 5
Steven Charles Beaulieu
Mark Robert Bishop
Michael Grant Britner
Jared Michael Consolo
Jeremy Kristen DeGuzman
Robert James Edmunds
Nathan James Eldredge
Victoria Elise Galli
Garrett Chase Gilbertson
Benjamin Adam Golata
Tyler James Hewko
Daniel James Jackson
Erin Elizabeth Johnson
Branden Michael Lynnam
Brooklynn Amber Mauss
Brian Christopher Mueller
Bryan Edward Musller
Ben Thomas Nail
Jeffrey Michael Pecora
Laurenaryngnoc Pineda
Joshua David reddis
Alexander Michael Rizkowsky
Dempsey Erin Slough
Trevor Mark Steen
William Taylor Timblake III
Christopher Joseph Totorica
Marisa Janine Winther
Matthew Steven Williams

Squadron 6
Jonathan Steven Andreason
Douglas Howard Banning
Marie France Barrett
Nathanial David Beene
Joshua Daniel Bird
Ryan James Brooks
Thomas John Cousino
Kyle Lee Epperson
Nathan Alexander Estes
Matthew Austin Gilbert
Michael Andrews Greene
Michael McCool Hayes
Alex Gordon Hill
Trevor Hoar Johnson
Andrew William Kirk
Ashley Taylor Maddox
Michael Louis Mangano
Kelly Anne McGowan
Timothy Joseph Nesbitt
Anthony Kenneth Pavliko
Juan Amando Perez
Jacob Richard Rennebaum
Ryan Allen Rocca
Kenji Jatuput Shinoda
Laken Elizabeth Stogner
Przemyslaw Strekowski
Drew Steven Vorhey
Ryan Cody Winston

Squadron 7
William Walter Blumhoefer
Scott Alexander Brenner
Christopher Robert Conley
Brian Brandon Crum
Nicholas James Davis
Justin Daniel Day
Sean Thomas Fedornak
Jennifer Lynn Gublransen
Robert Miller Hagener
Joshua David Hausmann
Kai Heimburger
William David Heitshousen
Bruce Allen Hrabak Jr.
Jesse William Johnstone
Luke Michael Kaspari
Michael Brandon Kemp
Christopher Allen Marti
Ashley Ann Miller
Marisa Akimi Miyamura
Thomas Lloyd Nicholson
Gregory Clyde Oswald
Michael Andrew Phillips
John David Rulien
John Ryan Kale Steiner
Ariella Courntney Walker

Squadron 8
Scott Douglas Adsonson
Hoban Ansel Blume
Andrew Jarrod Deval Buchanan
Casey Grant Butikofer
David James Butler
Scarlet Irene Coburn
Robert Jacob Consiglio
Phillip Thomas Cunningham
Kirk Harrison Devine
Brett Michael Finneran
William John Harrison III
James Corey Hickerson
Keri Lyn Holcomb
David Daniel Horng
Gyosz J. J. Holloway
Troy Fabian Kinchen
Joshua Boyce Loomis
Kyle Burton McClure
Lisa Christine Moe
Mary Katherine Murrill
Victoria Ann Ross
Samantha Lindsey Saenger
Nicholas Adam Schmieg
Zachary Evans Thompson
James Steven Tippets
Chase Merrell Webster

Squadron 9
Scott Daniel Bogner
Michelle Lynne Bosch
Adam Milton Bunker
Dustin Robert Danielson
Mitchell Erik Fossun
Craig Lee Franke
Lucas Charles Gagliard
Andewathan Jonathan Gilzean
Joseph Stephen Henney
Torin Thomas Herring
Jamie Marie Illig
Matthew Parker King
Carlos Anthony Lopez
Kyle Robert McIntosh
Joseph Michael Mercuro
Ashleigh Anne Peck
Timothy Gerard Phillips
Stephanie Regis
John Wesley Schroeder
MacLane August Townsend
Josiah Thomas VanderMey
Andrew Y. Verrathannodgdecht
Christy Marie Wise

Squadron 10
Daniel John Bar
Rebecca Cathleen Childers
Tyler Paul Cody
Thomas George Coker
Kellen John Curry
Christopher Ryan Ferguson
Leif Andrew Albert Hulsehfer
Charles Wedge Keeling
Garrett Michael Kurtz
Andrew Choc Lee
Bradley Joseph McNamara
Frank Joseph Panbianco
Vasquez Angelica Maria Plaza
Hayden Randall Poo
Carolyn Rose Price
Shelley Pak Rodgers
Jonathan Michael Seppl
Sean David Shay
Joseph Robert Tomczak
Clinton Tyronne Walls IV
Matthew Kenney Williams

Squadron 11
Stephanie Ann Baccu
Derek Jeffrey Candiotti
Shawn E. W. D. Carrier
Brooke Caswell Cultra
Daniel James Davis
Brian Kevin Delaney Jr
Jeremy David Fox
Bryan Nathaniel Hoffler
Jesse Robert Horton
Jason Kent Kotelwski
Shane Robert Kaitelmann
Matthew Dustin Miller
Daniel Edward Mitchell
David Wesley Nan III
Aaron Vincent Nelson
Sebastian Fernando Ortiz
Bernard Lawrence Patenaude IV
Laura Beth Regnier
Eric Tyler Robbetter
Carlos Eduardo Sanchez
David Allen Seasman
Daniel Jeremy Tucker
Christopher Joseph Vicari
Crystal Yang

Squadron 12
Christine Renee Abayan
James Emmett Beard
Justin Dean Berorgida
Randall Vincent Chiebeke
Melissa Antoinette Ehrler
Nicholas Anthony Gilbert
Seth William Hulfin
Kim Elizabeth Kreke
Brian Grant Kroege
Jameson Foster Lamie
Michael Gregory Lewis
Galen Win McRae
Travis James Miller
Louis Cagigal Murphy
Michael David Peterson
Jasmine Renee Pettie
Lindsey Joelle Robinson
Sean David Robart
Cody Ryan Singletary
Andrew Marshall Smith
Brent Alexander Smith
Billy Wayne Terry
Jonathan Lee Watford
Jason Paul Watson
Nicholas H. Zimmerman

Squadron 12
Andrew Dwight Borders
Andrew Lee Cooper
Matthew William Davis
Denise Rachelle DeShazo
Stephen Benjamin Elliott
Katelyn Rose Fabbi
Brian Daniel Gilliam
Robert Eric Goderrech
Nathan Garret Hocking
Reid Pierce Inman
John Kenneth Langley
Ashley Elizabeth Love
Michael Peter Mayor
Matthew Ward McCallum
Sean Clark Milliner
Preston Phillip Moon
Kevin Brett Mulligan
Nicole Louise Paget
Mark Ronald Pratt
Jose Antonio Robaina Jr
Anthony John Schelstrate
Edwin Judson Sned IV
Chad Wayne Stoll
Travis Jared Whittemore
Kai Jason Yamashiro
Kristopher P. W. Yarlett

Squadron 13
Brooks David Adamo
James A. C. Bowron
Eric Dane Burton
Christopher Yanagida Carrillo
Jose Antonio Chaparro
Christopher Joseph Danile
David Thomas Day
Victor Vincent DiTommaso III
Christopher Richard DuBois
Kenneth Howard Eaton III
Matthew John Eftharity Jr.
Joshua Michael Gminski
Dale Joseph Hargis
Anthony Earl Hertach
Robert Craig Hvatt
Gavin Wayne Light
Edwin John Miltenberger Jr
Patrick Carlin Mount
David William Nungent
Kavir Hirendra Patel
Michael Benson Reeder
Joshua Robert Schirner
Christopher Marc Schroer
Holly Silvana Simeon
Scott Ryan Springer

Justin James Wilkins

Squadron 15
Ashley Nicole Alexander
Austen Grant Bartlett
Jason Michael Dall
La Torre Francisco Javier De
John Alcantara Deloreyes
James Robert Elliott
Steven Daniel Glowiacki
Carl Andrew Gotvald
Ryan Francis Harrison
Samuel Kevin Holbrook
Gregory Alexander Jemo
Kevin Daniel Johnston
Kyle Douglas Jones
Jennifer Ann Kneiff
Casey Thomas Lynn
Casey Nicholas Masters
Andrea William McBeth
John William Munson
Charles John Neal
Tracy Pribyl
Matthew Ryan Robbins
Jonathan Kory Rodgers
Nicholas Ryan Schlagheck
Christine Patricia Stagg
Joseph Michael Stefies
Frederick Angelo Tarantino Jr
John Wrigley Tucker
Michael Donovan Wagner
Daniel Edward Warner
Adam Stewart Williams

Squadron 16
Aisley Larue Allen
Andrew James Amack
Seann Kerns Anderson
George Alexander Arbucket
Brady Lee Behrendt
Justin John Brozetti
Andrew Lawrence Caulk
Ian Russell Crawford
David Joseph Fang
Michael Loreto Fantauzzi
David Robert Fondacaro
Kali Jessica Green
Wyatt Jacob Harris
Ian Timothy Hurdle
Katherine Suzanne Kennedy
Mark Milman Manship Jr
Matthew Michael McCormick
Amo Jo McInteer
John Harold Nussbaum
Joshua Steven Roote
Jessica Mable Stewart
Daniel Joseph Strishock
Sean Thomas Sullivan
Dallas Marcus William Wright
Luke Yeager

Squadron 17
Mark Anthony Balle
Jennifer Kay Beasock
Kenneth Ian Bull
Jarred Alan Epstein
Shane Timothy Schauman Frey
Christopher Michael Gurrula
Mary Beth Guzowski
Michael Terrence Hanagan
Andrew Joseph Hendel
Briand Christopher Jarrell
Brandon Jarrod Jones
Simon Peter Christian Kassemi
Charles Bernard Kennedy
Ashley Jaye Miller
Andrew Christopher Morris
Andrew David Musser
Ian Alexander Noel
Mark Edward Pufibeneger
Zachary Wayne Rieger
Logan Joshua Roberts
Randy Clarke Rogers
Anthony Louis Santosus
Darshan Ram Subramanian
Taylor Maclin Tally
Erie Brianne Wallace

Squadron 18
Robert Alexander Arcand
Lyndon Grant Bartlett
Andrea Veronica Berger
Jordan Michael Bobbs
John Anthony Butler
Jason Alden Correll
Ryan Thomas Cwynar
Edward Porter Foulon
Nathan Cameron Hawkins
Daniel Paul Hendren
Michael Robert Hofer
Violandrine Viola Iup
Stephen Roy Jude
Colby David Kinsel
Michael Austin Koepe
Nathaniel Philip Leach
Jason Thomas Mayor
William C. McCormick
Robertta Michelle Nitzberg
Cassandra Rochelle Overman
Ryan Hal Rutherford
Charles Edwin Scholfield Jr
Mark Bernard Schriner
Patrick Daniel Sutton
Jason Wesley Thomas
Edward Emmanuel Tison

Squadron 19
Matthew Scott Carver
Daniel Allen Castle
Matthew Hollis Danley
Jonathan Forest Dippold
Joseph Patrick Dougherty
Alexander Christopher Gallman
Addison Abraham Harding
Matthew Edward Herschberg II
Mark Andrew Jaszczak
Jennifer Michelle Johnson
Barry Eli Knoblock
Shankar Sam Kulkami
Josiah David Loeser
Jacob Ross Lowrie
Joshua Lloyd Martinez
Nathan Carl McCaskey
Sam Phillips McKenzie III
William Levi Moak
David Kenneth Opherdal
Beth Ann Pershing
Jeffrey Guy Randolph Jr
Kimberly Ann Robinson
Krudson Jamel Roy
Mark Anderson Scott
Wesley Chase Tabman
Robert Christopher Vasta
Stephen Sheng Han Wang
Tyler Colin Weeks
Jessica Ashley Wissner

Squadron 20
Patrick Casey Allen
Hunter Leslie Link Altman
Robert Daniel Carpenter
Lauren Alexis Chaste
Bradley Kent Christon
Edmund Eric Evans Jr
Bradley Joseph Hencka
Timothy Chan-Tan Lee
Andrew Wayne Long
David Delamarre Mackintosh
Keith Steven Madsen
Christopher Michael Maffuccio
Rudy John Monteagut
Benjamin Palmer Otto
Caitlin Nicole Prantl
Justin Michael Raabe
Sandra Susi Salviaretti
Zachary Howell Shapiro
Todd Randolph Stieling
George Ralph Sondecker IV
Robert Brice Van Roekel
Harvey Mitchell White III
Matthew Edward Wichmann
Timothy Kevin Wilde
Layne William Wilson
Kelly Jo Wright
Daniel X Zheng

Squadron 21
Nasser Khamees al Shih
Jonathan Mikhail Aronoff
John Mark Campbell
Mary Renae Conley
Matthew Moore Cork
Tracee Lee Curlett
John Andrew Jackson Fugate
Andrew James Haufie
Chasmine Macalonio Jones
Hannah Joy Kosirog
Brett Ryan Lesser
Alexander Alba Marana
Joshua Scott Martz
Brian Anthony Massa
Orrmund Randolph Ortiz
Jason Andrew Palle
Michael Charles Paul
Shannon Marie Reichert
Ryan David Sleeter
Eric Richard Sullivan
Forest James Underwood
Cameron Charles Unterberger
Benjamin Robert Walker
Phillip Whittier Wilson
Jonathan Mark Yates

Squadron 22
Erin Brianne Wallace
Taylor Maclin Tally
Darshon Ram Subramanian
Anthony Louis Santosus
Taylor Maclin Tally
Erie Brianne Wallace

File Photo
Graduation 2009

Class of 2009 Stats

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

When They Entered in 30 June 2005:
— 1,746 were offered appointments — 1,390 were processed into the Academy

Graduation Class size: 1,046 (874 men, 172 women)

Minorities: 197

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

Sets of twins: 1

First-child graduates: 93
Second-child graduates: 31
Third-child graduates: 28
Fourth-child graduates: 1
Fifth-child graduates: 1

Attending pilot training: 520
Attending navigators training: 28
Attending air battle manager training: 4

Total graduates since 1959:
Male: 37,927
Female: 3,936
Total: 41,863

Graduates who have attained the rank of general: 495
(212 active duty, 175 retired, 8 deceased)

Total number of international graduates: 266
By Butch Wehry
Academy Spirit staff

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

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

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

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

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

“Success, said General Todd, has many fathers.

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

“It occurred to me that this would be a meaningful opportunity for the first 50-Year Class” to link with the first “50th Anniversary Class” in some tangible manner,” the general said. “I cleared the idea with the Academy authorities and with the rest of the class. The Class of ’59 approved and authorized the funds necessary for the purchase and engraving.”

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

Might this become an every 50 years traditional event? “That’s for others to decide,” General Todd said. “Eventually, it may evolve to a ‘Legacy Class’ event.”

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

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

“The Class of 2009 generally doesn’t know yet, it is going to be more of a surprise,” said Cadet 1st Class Gregory Oswald in early May. “I would like to tell my class first. But for the few who do know about it including myself, we are humbled and feel it truly shows how the Class of ’59 feels about their alma mater and how important their connection to the Academy can be to future classes.”

“The very fortunate part about this inscription is that it’s done inside the bars so we will be able to wear them if we choose. I am sure many of my classmates will use these bars at their commissioning ceremony. I’m very sure that the Class of 2009 will want to repeat this gesture or a similar one 50 years from now,” said the cadet wing commander. “The Class of ’59 has set the example of how alumni should be involved with and mentoring the future classes of the Long Blue Line.”

Wreath Unveiling
William T. Thompson, president and CEO of the Association of Graduates, left, and Lt. Gen. John Regni, Academy superintendent, reveal the Memorial Day wreath during a ceremony on Stillman Parade Field Monday in conjunction with the organizational parade.
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2009 Outstanding Athletes earn Athletic Department recognition

By Athletic Communications

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

Most Valuable Male Athlete: Sophomore Jacques Lamoureux became the second All-American in school history and was one of 10 finalists for the prestigious Hobey Baker Memorial Award, given annually to the nation’s top collegiate hockey player. Lamoureux was named the Atlantic Hockey Association Player of the Year and was a first-team all-conference selection. He led the nation in goals (33), power-play goals (15) and game-winners (9). He spent the majority of the season as the nation’s leader in points per game with seven goals and 42 assists on both goals in the 2-0 win over third-ranked Michigan in the NCAA East Regional. He assisted on three of the Falcons’ first four goals and was the team’s top-scoring defenseman. Lamoureux continued his strong play throughout the season, earning all-conference titles and the MWC High Point Award (the first-ever Falcon to claim that distinction). He became just the third member of the program to earn MVP honors in multiple years. Rogers capped an amazing collegiate career with her second straight MPSF Gymnast of the Year award and three conference titles. The senior, who earned an invitation to the NCAA Regional Championships, paced the Falcons with four all-conference selections. She posted the squad’s highest total of the year on every event, while collecting three MPSF Gymnast of the Week awards and 16 first-place finishes. The native of Philadelphia, Pa., who upped her career-best score in three of the four individual events, as well as the all-around, also received numerous academic awards. Rogers earned academic all-conference honors, a place on the USAG All-Academic Team and a NCAA postgraduate scholarship.

Athletic Excellence Award: Senior Mike Phillippich, the Most Valuable Athlete for both the men’s track and field and cross country, had a remarkable senior season. During the cross country season, he paced the Falcons at the Mountain West Conference Championships, while earning all-conference and all-region honors. Houseworth continued to shine during the indoor season, winning two conference titles and the MWC High Point Award (the first-ever Falcon to claim that distinction). He became just the second runner in conference history to win the two longest races (3000- and 5000-meter) of the indoor meet. It was the second straight year he had won the 3000-meter race, clocking the fifth-fastest time in MWC history. His success continued as the team moved outdoors. Houseworth automatically qualified to the NCAA East Regional, Lamoureux scored the third-ranked Michigan in the NCAA Division I 100 career points, while his 77 career goals are the most of any Falcon in the last 10 seasons. Air Force’s best all-around player, contributing both offensively and defensively, Nevitt led the Falcons to their best season since 1997 to earn MVP honors. Although Air Force started the season with a 3-6 record, Nevitt was able to keep his teammates focused on their goals, as the team won four straight games to claim second place in the conference and a spot in the Great Western Lacrosse League tournament for the first time in program history.

Scholar-Athlete Award: Senior Mike Phillippich graduated with a 3.75 Grade Point Average as a systems engineering major. He ranked second in his class out of 73 systems engineering management majors with a 3.90 major GPA. He was named the conference’s Athlete of the Week following that performance, which ranked him eighth in the nation. He went on to claim all-conference accolades in the 5000-meter run after an impressive third-place finish.

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

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Athletic Achievement Award: Senior Greg Flynn became the first two-year All Atlantic Hockey Association selection and was chosen as the league’s best defenseman. He was the top scoring defenseman in school history to earn All-American honors. Flynn was a first-team all Atlantic Hockey Association selection and was chosen as the league’s most inspirational player. A two-year team captain, Phillippich was also one of 10 finalists for the Lowe’s Senior CLASS Award, recognizing excellence in academics, athletics, character and leadership. The native of Lansing, Mich., earned the team’s Vic Heyliger Award, which is voted on by the team and given to the player whose dedication, character, leadership and work ethic exemplify Falcon hockey. He also earned the teams Jim Bowman Award as the top scholar-athlete.

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MVPs shine under post-season spotlight

By Athletic Communications

Men's Cross Country: Senior Sean Houseworth, cadet squadron 24, posted the Falcons' top times at the Pre-National Meet and the Mountain West Conference Championships. He finished within the top third (64 out of 267) at the Pre-Nationals Meet with an 8K time of 24:35 and earned all-conference first team honors with a seventh-place finish (24:53) at the MWC Championships. His time of 24:35 at the Pre-NCAA meet was the best 8K time by any Air Force runner this season.

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

Football Most Valuable Defensive Player: Senior defensive end Jake Paulson led the Falcons and ranked among the league leaders with nine tackles for loss for 44 yards, four sacks for 33 yards and a conference-leading four fumble recoveries. He also forced two fumbles and had an interception. Thomas recorded a career-high 17 tackles vs. BYU and set an Armed Forces Bowl single-game record with 16 vs. Houston.

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

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

Water Polo: Junior goalkeeper David Beck led the team in scoring, averaging 12.9 points per game. Beck led the Mountain West Conference, averaging 36.6 minutes played per game. Her 72 three-point baskets ranked second in the conference and her 386 points tied a school record for single season points in the Div. I era. Beck hit eight consecutive three-pointers, which was two shy of the NCAA record.

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

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

By Athletic Communications

Chris Thomas
Football Overall MVP: Junior defensive back Chris Thomas established himself as one of the top all-around players in the Mountain West Conference, earning second-team all-conference honors and first-team all-Colorado honors by the National Football Foundation. Thomas recorded his second straight 100-plus tackle season with 107, including a team-best 66 assisted. He was among the top defensive ends in the nation with 9.5 tackles for loss.

Ryan Harrison
Football Most Valuable Lineman/Special Teams Player: Senior kicker Ryan Harrison established himself as one of the best kickers in school history. He set a school record with 24 field goals this season, breaking the mark of 19 he shared with Dave Lawson (1974) and Dave Adams (2000). Harrison, who is second all-time at the Academy with 43 career field goals, was a semifinalist for the Lou Groza National Placekicker Award and was a second-team all-Mountain West Conference selection. He finished second in the conference in scoring with an 8.3 per-game scoring average. Harrison led the league and ranked third in the nation in field goals with a 1.85 average per game.

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

Anwar Johnson
Men's Basketball: Anwar Johnson, a senior guard from St. Gabriel, La., finished second on the team in scoring at 11.9 points per game and led the team with 76 assists. He earned all-tournament honors at the Golden Bear Classic in December when he averaged 12 points and four rebounds in the Falcons' games against Portland and Dartmouth. Johnson scored a career-high 25 points against Stony Brook on Dec. 31 and notched a game-high 24 points in his final collegiate game against BYU at the MWC Championships. He started all 31 games despite playing with a stress reaction in his right foot for the last two months this season.
MVP

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

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

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

Jane Hwang

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

Wrestling: Senior captain Shaun O’Bryant

Baseball: Senior designated hitter/first baseman Matt Alexander was the team MVP for the Air Force baseball team in 2009. Alexander led Air Force in nearly all hitting categories, batting .383 with 15 homers, 19 doubles, 53 runs, 65 RBIs and 82 hits. Alexander led the Mountain West Conference in homers and RBIs during the regular season. Alexander cracked the Air Force single-season top 10 in home runs (seventh), RBIs (fourth) and hits (third). Alexander picked up several accolades on the season, earning MCC Player of the Week, Collegiate Baseball News Louisville Slugger National Player of the Week and College Baseball Foundation National All-Star Lineup. Alexander’s biggest honor was being named one of 16 finalists for the Dick Howser Trophy, given to the top collegiate baseball player in the nation.

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

Baseball: Senior designated hitter/first baseman Matt Alexander was the team MVP for the Air Force baseball team in 2009. Alexander led Air Force in nearly
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in the individual standings, while his three-round total of 214 (-2) at the Desert Shootout in March was a season low.

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

Women’s Tennis: Senior Christine Abayan played the majority of the season in 2008-2009 at No. 1 singles. She tied for the team lead with two singles victories against MWC opponents, winning the No. 2 match against Utah and 6th-ranked UNLV. She posted 55 career singles wins and 70 career doubles wins in her four years at Air Force.

Men’s Track and Field: Sean Houseworth had a stellar senior season, winning a pair of conference titles and setting another Academy record. Houseworth, who was also the MVP of the cross country team, won conference titles in the two longest distances of the indoor championships. He also earned the MWC High Point Award. He is the only Falcon to earn the award as the meet’s top-scoring performer. In addition to defending his title in the 3000-meter run, Houseworth moved into the conference record book with the fifth-fastest time in MWC meet history. His success continued in the outdoor season, as he automatically qualified to the national meet in the 10,000-meter run with an Academy record time. Houseworth, who earned MWC Athlete of the Week honors in March, went on to claim all-conference accolades in the 5000-meter run at the MWC outdoor championships.

Women’s Indoor Track and Field: Junior Sara Neubauer, last year’s MVP, continues to rewrite the Academy record books. Making her debut in a pair of events, she is now listed in the top-10 of every throwing event. During the indoor season, Neubauer broke her own record in the shot put, while recording the program’s second-best weight throw distance in just her first year of throwing the implement. Her success continued in the outdoor season, as she set two more Academy standards. In just her first year of throwing the hammer, she tallied a new program record at the Mountain West Conference Championships. The very next day she upped her own record in the shot put, while moving into eighth in the javelin throw records. Additionally, she bettered her second-place standing on the discus throw’s all-time list. Highlighted by all-conference honors in the shot put and discus throw, Neubauer became the first athlete to score in all four throwing events at the conference meet.

Men’s Track and Field Outstanding Competitor: Senior Kellen Curry picked up the first conference title of his career, winning the 200-meter dash at the MWC indoor championships. He also earned indoor all-conference accolades with a runner-up finish in the 60-meter hurdles at that meet. Once the outdoor season began, Curry qualified for the NCAA Regional Championshps in the 200-meter dash and 110-meter hurdles. He moved into third on the Academy’s all-time list in the 200-meter dash, while finishing fifth in that event at the MWC Outdoor Championships. He was the runner-up in the 110-meter hurdles and ran the final leg of the all-conference 4x100-meter relay team that finished third.

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