

THE GOLDRUSH



Airpower Starts Here

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Community Service Events By Katie Ebiner

Throughout Fall 2016, Detachment 592 participated in many volunteer opportunities. In September, the cadets participated in a 5K run/walk for Be the Match. Be the Match is a foundation that raises money for bone marrow transplants to aid victims of cancer and other fatal diseases. During the month of October, the AFROTC cadets partook in UNCC Campus Cleanup in honor of Sustainability Week. They were able to represent Detachment 592 around campus as they helped pick up trash and helped with campus maintenance. In mid-October, they helped build homes for Habitat for Humanity. In November, the cadets helped Second Harvest Food Bank collect canned goods and donations at Stonecrest Shopping Center to provide food for impoverished families in the local community. AFROTC cadets have participated in a wide variety of events to aid their local community and continue to be a helping hand in the Charlotte community.

Volunteering in the Detachment



Fundraising in the Renaissance

By Robert Quinlan

Thousands of people flock to the Carolina Renaissance Festival in the months of October and November. Its unique atmosphere makes the festival a nationally known event. Guests are able to experience a wide variety of extravagant costumes, acrobatics, theatrical performances, and food. However, very few people are given the opportunity to see the other side of the festival. Every year, our lucky 49er Air Force ROTC cadets are granted a chance to volunteer and play an active role in this tradition. Participating cadets are first given costumes consistent with the renaissance theme. They are then dispersed to various stations around the park to serve food or perform any other services needed at the time. "I really enjoyed selling the giant turkey legs, everyone was so excited to get one," Cadet Evans replied when asked about his favorite activity from the previous weekend. Not only is working at the Renaissance Festival an unforgettable experience for our cadets, it is also the main fundraising source for our detachment. We made a total of \$3,300 this semester for the services we provided. This money is used to purchase training equipment and other necessary supplies to prepare our future Air Force officers.



Detachment 592 at 49er Football Games

Detachment 592 showed spirit at the University football games as flag runners, attendees, and as participants in the Color Guard throughout the fall semester.



Military Appreciation Day Football Game

By Atlanta Bair

Friday, November 11th and Saturday, November 12th, the Cadet Wing had the opportunity to honor our country's veterans and partake in events for the Military Appreciation Day football game. The events kicked off Friday night at the men's basketball game where C/Col Nigg and C/1stLt Blair received the football from Norm. Our cadet volunteers ran 26.2 miles from the Cornelius Veteran's Monument at the Cornelius Town Hall. Cadets in the first shift observed the monument in silence for a few minutes prior to the run. There was outstanding motivation and determination shown by the cadets to be brave and unfaltering on the cold and dark run. On Saturday, our cadets marched into the stadium led by veterans of World War II, the Vietnam conflict, and the Korean conflict. During the parade, students, alumni, fans, family and friends cheered as the cadets marched through campus. We had an outstanding turnout for the run, the parade and the game and the event was a tremendous success overall.

Welcome John Hukka

Interviewed by John Patrick O'Donnell, Christopher Sweeny, and Valen Booker



Mid Fall semester, Detachment 592 received a new member of cadre. Captain John Hukka journeyed from Hill Air Force Base in Utah to Charlotte, North Carolina in order to be a part of the Air Force ROTC experience once more. With that being said, we found it imperative to formally introduce Captain Hukka with an interview in this semester's edition of *The GoldRush*.

On 22 November, we knocked on Captain Hukka's door for our 0800 appointment. He was more than willing to share with us his experiences as an officer— from being an F-16 landing gear engineer to an executive officer for a Colonel. In addition, we learned of some of his outside hobbies as well as his background when he was a cadet in ROTC. This is perhaps the only place where a cadet can learn what being a cadre member entails

especially in regards to training. Below is a transcript of the interview, which provides a highly interesting account of the perspective of a cadre member.

How has the transition been for you so far? How are you adjusting to Charlotte?

“It's phenomenal. Coming from Hill AFB to here, I miss the active duty style and culture. The surrounding area is fantastic. The difference between Utah and here is basically that there is more diversity here. After a while out there it gets mundane and boring. The one thing I'm going to miss about Hill is the skiing. Anything with snow and mountains to me is fun.”

What made you decide to come to Charlotte and join our detachment as a member of the cadre?

“I truly believe that AFROTC has one of the most important missions in the Air Force. The reason I chose Charlotte over any detachment is twofold—The first reason is because my wife has a biomechanical engineering degree. When the tobacco industry started failing here in NC, there was a huge economic impact because no one is smoking anymore. New industries in NC are heavily looking into the biomechanical field, which provides opportunities for my wife's

career. The second reason is this guy right here (knocks on the wall towards Captain Evans office) I think he has a unique leadership style. He has a revolutionary approach to how we go forward as an Air Force and I wanted to be a part of it.”

How does it feel to be on the other side of the table as an instructor instead of a cadet?

“Insanely different—as a POC member you run the detachment. As a cadre member, you’re really handling more of the administrative side of the detachment. I don’t really handle the operation—and I shouldn’t. I want to, but that’s not what I’m here to do. I’m here to groom and develop quality leaders for the United States Air Force. We inject certain statements and corrective actions at opportune moments, and from there we’re able to kind of shape how you all operate as a Cadet Wing. As a cadet, I had more of a free reign on the operational side of things. Here, I don’t have the same ability to change things as much as I want. I can see you guys running with blindfolds on about to hit the wall, well I can let them hit the wall and learn from their mistake, or I can pull them away from it and push them. It really just depends on what wall it is, whether it’s going to hurt you guys or make you learn from your mistake. We won’t intentionally let you fail, but we will intentionally let you have obstacles that you will have to overcome.”

What was your favorite part about your ROTC experience?

“My favorite part about the ROTC part as a whole is that you truly make life long friends. I have met my best friends in my life through college. One guy, William Reams, he’s a lieutenant over at Columbus AFB, and a 238 pilot. I saw him last weekend, I saw him last month—he and I just see each other constantly. It’s because of that relationship we formed during ROTC; ROTC is one of those things that’s like a brotherhood through shared suffering. We both had to deal with engineering classes, we were constantly meeting with the OFC, and it’s just being under that pressure with another person, you start to develop a bond that is very difficult to break because you’ve been in situations with each other that no one else can really relate to except for you two. It goes back to the friendships that I’ve gained. My favorite experience though, was probably giving Lt. Reams his flight suit. The OFC called me in, and I got to present it to him because we had a really close relationship. I got to see him have worked his whole life—he wanted to a pilot his whole life, kind of culminate in that one moment where he got to get a flight suit. Being a part of that was probably the coolest thing.”

Where did you graduate?

“I graduated from the university of Arkansas. That was incredibly difficult. The reason that is, is because while you’re going to school you’re performing your job in ROTC. Mechanical engineering was extremely tough.”

What was your job in the United States Air Force?

“I had three jobs. The first job was an F-16 landing gear engineer. I was the only engineer for the F-16 landing gear for the Air Force. When I say the Air Force, I also mean all of our foreign military support Air Forces—so Egypt, Belgium, and Israel—those people would come to me with questions. We were constantly getting bombed with questions and TDY’s. It was the coolest assignment I could have ever gotten. I thought it was going to be the worst, given the job title. That was the most fun I’ve had the Air Force. I was given a lot of responsibility, they

throw you in there day one and you're supposed to know things. It's a sink or swim kind of environment. If you're not ready to start swimming, they're going to pull you out and find someone else that will. We don't have time on active duty unfortunately; we're in a resource-constrained environment to walk people through things. When I deployed, I was an aircraft air battle damage repair engineer. My job was to go out and find aircraft in the AOR (Area of Responsibility) that had been damaged and repair them. I did that for a while in Qatar and northern Afghanistan. When I got back, I was the Executive Officer for the 748 supply chain management group. The XO was the most stressful job I ever had in the Air Force. When you're working directly for full bird colonel, every question he has you have to answer immediately. He's asking not because he wants to know, but because he needs to know to answer somebody else. Who would a full-bird colonel be answering to? General Officers. The biggest thing I learned from being an XO is that when you have a senior leader that you're working under, you need to learn how to answer his questions. Look at the bigger picture and find out what the colonel really wants to know before he digs the hole."

How does your role as an instructor compare to your role as an engineer?

"It's not honestly all that different. The reason I say that is because the Air Force is a lifestyle, it's not just a job. You're constantly striving to better yourself and uphold the standards. When I come here, I'm not changing anything I do. I need to make sure I'm doing my best to develop you guys as future leaders of the Air Force. It's the same thing I do with Airmen in the real Air Force. I don't expect you guys to just be technically proficient, you should be, but you have to be a step beyond that and comfortable operating in the gray area and making decisions on your own. I don't want to say that they're much different. I have the same hours as when I was an XO. I used to coach lacrosse, and I think that's more applicable to this job than being an engineer—again because its about trying to make you guys realize your potential and find what you're capable of what you're doing."

How do you plan to apply what you've learned as an officer to your new role as an instructor?

"It's the drive in all honesty. The thing I want most out of my lieutenants is to strive for perfection and have a drive to be here. What I can't stand is an apathetic approach to training or the Air Force in general. We're training you guys to be the trainers. You're going to encounter situations that we don't even know how to prepare you for. I need to know from your problem solving techniques and your demonstrated drive that you're capable of encountering these situations and that you're going to excel in them."

What kind of hobbies do you have outside of the Air Force?

"I love riding motorcycles—you guys have probably seen my motorcycle outside. Aside from that, I love lacrosse—I used to coach. I plan on either coaching or playing sometime here soon."

How many places have you been with the Air Force? Which was your favorite?

"In my career, I've probably been to around 15 bases since I've been active. My dad was in the Air Force so I've moved through 9 different bases. Numbers become inconsequential at a point because the biggest thing is really the people that make the base and not the location. Its not where you go, it's who you're there with. It's what you make of it. It's all fun."

Interview with the Cadet Wing Commander

Interviewed by Valen Booker



What made you want to join the Air Force?

"I wanted to be a part of something larger than myself, so that I might impact the world in a positive way. I wholeheartedly believe that the U.S. Air Force and military is a force for good. We can improve people's lives and protect them. We can bring aid to people in need. The list goes on... But the important thing is that I have an opportunity to safeguard my country and aid people through the U.S. Air Force. That's something that not a lot of other people can say."

What career are you going to have in the Air Force?

"I really wanted to be in Missile Operations, and I received a scholarship for a 13N position. I am hoping the 13N career field opens up new opportunities for me to transfer over to other AFSC's, or continue working within Global Strike Command. If I need to career change after Missiles, I will switch to contracting hopefully."

If you could be stationed anywhere in the world, regardless if there was a base there, where would that be?

"Ramstein AFB, Germany. That would be an awesome base to be stationed at. There are plenty of places to travel and visit."

What are your hobbies/what do you enjoy doing?

"Does typing OPORD's count? I haven't thought about the hobbies I enjoy in a while. I enjoy hiking, swimming, traveling, and going on road trips. I'm also quite obsessed with all things Star Wars."

What is one aspect that you would like cadets to know that would help them be better people and or cadets?

"First off, I would like to tell our cadets that it's okay to make mistakes. Do not be afraid to fail at something. You will close so many doors on yourself if you are afraid to try something new. It's far better to try and fail at something, than it is to never try and accept defeat. Secondly, always give your best effort in every situation. Leaders are dependable and consistent. You always want your people to be thinking, "I can depend on this person for information and feedback". If you ever get to the point where people are no longer looking to you for guidance or help, you need to make changes in how you operate on a day-to-day basis."

28th Annual 49er Drill Competition

By Nick Angel

This semester we held our 28th annual UNC Charlotte 49er Drill Competition for high schools across Mecklenburg County and abroad. 13 schools came out and participated in a well-fought and close competition, ending with Sun Valley High School JROTC taking first prize. Outstanding performances of armed/unarmed regulation drill kept the judges on their toes. The second portion of the day consisted of exhibition drill where the students were able to show off their expertise in tossing and spinning heavy drill rifles in ways that could keep you on the edge of your seat.

We ended the day with a massive game of Knockout where each competitor got to show their individual drill skills in a game of elimination. The 49er Drill Competition is a great way to connect ROTC and JROTC cadets and is a fantastic fundraising opportunity that brings a majority of our money into the Air Power Student Organization (APSO) program. Our very own Arnold Air Society provided refreshments throughout the day as well. None of this could have been possible without the help of the GMC and POC planning and execution resulting in an exciting and educational opportunity. This event brought in \$3000 for the Cadet Wing.



GMC Takeover Week

By Caleb Eng

General Military Course (GMC) Takeover Week occurs each semester and is a great opportunity for GMC cadets to gain valuable leadership experience. As the Wing Executive Officer, this semester I had the opportunity to serve as the Wing Commander for the GMC week. During the week, cadets had competition, which tested academic knowledge, physical fitness and drilling capabilities. I had a great staff of fellow GMC cadets who helped ensure everything ran as smoothly as possible. Without them, this week would not have been as successful. Overall, this week was a great opportunity for me and other GMC cadets to sharpen our leadership skills and I know that we will be able to apply what we learned over the week, and in the GMC in general, in future jobs.



Career Day

By Valen Booker

Leadership Laboratory took on a new setting on 10 November in order to host this semester's Career Day. We moved to the third floor of the Student Union in order to accommodate eleven officers

from Shaw Air Force Base and the entire Cadet Wing for this event. The officers that visited were among the cyberspace operations, contracting, personnel, aircraft maintenance, pilot, security forces, airfield operations, optometry, and judge advocate career fields. Each officer had approximately ten minutes with each group where they shared information about their specific career fields and personal experiences. Each group was a mix of all cadet levels rather than a flight or AS class in order to create a good range of questions for the officers. Career day was ultimately a success with all of the volunteering officers being granted a challenge coin for their time and cooperation.

Cadet Thanksgiving Dinner

By Anna Weeks

Thanksgiving dinner at the Detachment was a special event for the AFROTC program. While participating in such a structured and professional environment, it is important to have time to build morale and unit cohesion, which is what gathering to celebrate the holiday season accomplished.



POC provided amazing food for the entire group while everyone was able to sit down and enjoy each other's company in a casual environment. This provided a chance for people to hold conversations with others they may not have previously talked to. Events like this make everyone come together and remind us that our wingmen are a huge reason why of we do what we do.

Shout-Outs Within the Detachment



C/Riddle was awarded an RPA slot which has been upgraded to a Pilot slot!



C/Craver and C/Clark received their flight suits after being awarded the 13N scholarship!