

THE THUNDERBOLT

February 2013

592ND CADET WING

THE THUNDERBOLT STAFF

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PHYSICAL FITNESS ASSESSMENT >> KIRA JOHN



Those three dreaded letters: PFA. Every cadet knows them, and many cadets wish that they did not exist. The Physical Fitness Assessment is not only part of the Air Force ROTC, but part of the Air Force as a whole. As representatives of the United States, members of the military are expected

to be in excellent physical shape, and the same goes for members of the ROTC program. Although the requirements are different between men and women they are strenuous nonetheless. Each cadet must make a score of 75 or more to pass the PFA, most of which comes from the run time. For the GMC cadets (freshman and sophomore) there is a maximum of three semesters' failure of the PFA before being dropped from the program. The POC cadets, having already gone to Field Training, do not have such lee-way.

In general, the purpose of this assessment is to ensure that every cadet and airman is always 'fit to fight'. That is, in shape for the rigors of military training and eventually active duty. The GMC that are preparing for Field Training are becoming fit to endure the physical difficulties that they will face there, and the POC are preparing for the physical difficulties that they will face once they are actively commissioned to the United States Air Force. Aside from those reasons, however, the PFA ensures that cadets know the standards for being 'in shape' and can follow them for the rest of their lives regardless of when they retire and return to civilian life. Detachment 592 holds high standards for the PFA and expects a lot from its cadets—expectations that were certainly met during the most recent Physical Fitness Assessment.



AIR POWER SUPPORT ORGANIZATION

>> ALETTE PITTMAN

Every organization needs a fundraising sector and for the 592nd Cadet Wing, APSO brings home the bacon. The Air Power Support Organization ensures that we have the funding for Base Visits, Dining In/Out, and other morale events essential to AFROTC culture. Cadet Alan Browning, this semester's APSO President, helps us learn more about this new addition to the Detachment:



What exactly is APSO's purpose? *APSO's purpose is to raise money for its members, who also happen to be members of AFROTC.*

What kind of events can we expect to see in the future? *We are currently entertaining several fundraising ideas, including a potential 5k and a 50/50 raffle, but we are always open to more ideas. We did recently have a fundraiser at CiCi's and while it didn't raise as much money as I would have liked, it's a starting point.*

Can anyone get involved? *If any APSO member wants to step up, get involved, and spear-head his/her own fundraising idea, APSO will give them its full support.*

Why should we be part of APSO? *The organization was in shambles when it first began, and we had to create a whole new organization from the ground up. New bylaws, new officers, new everything. So we are moving forward and trying to get people on board to help us out. Please encourage people to help! We want to raise a ton of money but our first priority is to lay the groundwork for an organization that will prosper in the future.*

RATED SLOTS >> CHRISTOPHER PITILLO

As each cadet walked into Lead Lab last Thursday, there was one image that crept into their minds: the sight of flight suits hanging dead center in the front of the classroom for all to see. All knew that this could only mean one thing: the rated slots were finally going to be announced. Tensions were already running high amongst the Junior and Senior class as rumors spread from peers across the country that the names were being released. One by one we heard from our fellow cadets the confirmations of their selections into the rated career fields (those being Pilot, Combat Systems Officer, Remotely Piloted Aircraft Pilot, and Air Battle Manager), but when would Detachment 592 find out the results? We all knew that the day had finally arrived.



Lead Lab went on as per the usual schedule, with subtle hints towards the announcement here and there. For those that awaited the big promulgation, the normal hour and fifteen minutes surely dragged on for an eternity. At final formation the moment had finally arrived. Cadet Fontalvo was called front and center by the commander himself and handed the flight-suit he had dreamed of wearing since he was a boy. Cadet Fontalvo had been selected to be a Combat Systems Officer in America's Air Force. His enormous smile said more than any words could. Congratulations to Cadet Fontalvo; make your Detachment and your country proud!

CADET LIFE

Arnold Air Society >>Earl Gratton

Arnold Air Society has started several fundraisers and community service events within Detachment 592 towards their Joint National Project, The promotion of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (S.T.E.M.). As for the Arnold Air Society candidate class they have reached the half-way point this month and have only 5 weeks remaining.



Silver Wings >>Marvis Joseph

On February 20th, Silver Wings held their first meeting to officially recruit its new members. So far, the society is an official UNC Charlotte student organization group and is seeking to be nationally recognized by the end of the semester. Now that the founding stones have been laid, the society is on its way to plant the seed of its motto of "Knowledge, Wisdom and the courage to serve" at the heart of our 49er community.

Intramurals >>Earl Gratton

Our intramural AFROTC team has put together their men's and co-rec softball team this month. Their first game will be right after spring break, 11 MAR 13, come out and support!



ACTIVE DUTY >>ALETTE PITTMAN



I am **SMSgt Jason Ellis**, assigned to the 437th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina. As the Superintendent of one of two Aircraft Maintenance Units, I am responsible for the care and well-being of 278 enlisted personnel. Our mission is to service, repair and generate 27 Strategic Airlift C-17s providing transport of troops, passengers, military and aeromedical equipment, cargo and supplies globally.

I originally joined the Air Force on 3 May, 1989 and following Basic Training I became an Aerospace Propulsion Specialist or jet engine mechanic. I've been stationed in Florida, England and of course here in South Carolina. As a jet engine mechanic I have worked on jet engines powering aircraft used for training (T-38), fighters (F-4, F-111, F-16, F-15), tankers (KC-135R) and most recently the venerable C-17. My assignments enabled me to deploy in support of many operations to locations such as Bulgaria, Iraq and Qatar. In between deployments, I traveled the world over on Temporary Duty (TDY) assignments to South Africa, Tunisia, Germany, Singapore and Afghanistan. As you probably can imagine, my travels gave me plenty of memorable experiences – one

deployment in particular stands out.

I was deployed to Iraq in the summer of 2007 as a Production Superintendent ensuring C-17 and C-5 aircraft remained mission capable while transiting our location. While there, I stayed busy by volunteering at the hospital during my off-duty hours where I assisted in off-loading injured soldiers to receive life-saving care. One particular day a call went out that a HH-60 helicopter was inbound with a casualty. At that time I had only assisted with a few patients but I was still prepared to help. The helicopter landed, we responded and immediately the medic on board handed me an oxygen mask and told me to put it on the patient, but something didn't smell right. When I leaned forward to put the mask on I realized what I smelled was the injured soldier. You see, he was burned from head to toe as a result of an Improvised Explosive Device. His face was unrecognizable and I really didn't know where to put the mask on. I helped the medical team get him to emergency room and hoped they could save him. The rest of the day was slow and eventually my shift was over so I headed back to my quarters. Still in a bit of shock, I tried



to wash my hands but the smell stuck with me for a few days no matter how much I scrubbed. Later I would find out he didn't survive and that the event was very emotional for some of the medical staff. As the weeks rolled on, I continued to volunteer; it was humbling to meet and talk with the soldiers who came through the hospital. When they realized I was an Air Force jet engine mechanic, they would say "thank you for volunteering." All I could do was thank them for their willingness to stand in harm's way to protect people they didn't even know. Although this was a major event during my deployment there were others that were uplifting.



At the time of my deployment, shipping Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles to the troops on the ground was a huge concern to the Department of De-

fense. Charleston is home to a local company that manufactured these MRAPs so quite a few were loaded on our C-17's. It was awesome to see Charleston aircraft landing with armored vehicles from back home. Unloading these vehicles, I felt a personal pride as I watched them drive off base in convoys knowing they provided better safety to our troops than the older Humvees. It was a great feeling to be a part of a huge team of civilians and Airmen ensuring those deliveries were successful. It was also great to see our C-17s performing their mission. At home-station we generate training missions every day but rarely see the mission impact. To watch the aircraft land full of cargo, and then in a few short hours get that same aircraft reconfigured and turned to an aeromedical evacuation mission is awe-inspiring. I can't say it enough...being part of a deployed team of aircraft maintainers, medical personnel, aerial porters, services personnel and pilots is very, very humbling experience.

Naturally, there are plenty of stories, too many to fit on these pages. You too will have an opportunity to gain your own memorable experiences. But along the way, take the time to learn what your Airmen (Big 'A' officers and enlisted) do and who they are. Be humble, it's not about you - it's about those you lead! As you transition into the Air Force and become leaders, remember, you are part of the world's greatest and most respected Air Force.

SMSgt Ellis was promoted to Chief Master Sergeant on 10 January, 2013 and will be authorized to wear the new rank in September.



COMMANDER'S CORNER >> Shanttee Cunningham



Lt. Col. Fitzgerald (Ian Lindstrom)

In last month's Thunderbolt we learned a little bit about our commander Lieutenant Colonel Dean Fitzgerald through some questions that we had for him. This month, however, we would like to hear more about his background through his own words!

"I was born in Scottsbluff Nebraska...but I grew up mostly in a small town in South Dakota...I have [well] my mother and my father...two older brothers and two younger sisters. We're separated by eighteen years, all the siblings are. When I graduated High School I went to the University of Nebraska at Lincoln where I got a Business Administration Degree, I also was in ROTC and got my commission through it... I got married ten years ago; my wife's name is Jennifer. She is an Occupational Therapist. I have two kids, Kellen is seven years old in second grade and Erin is five years old and she's in kindergarten... I was commissioned in 1993 in May...May 6 to be exact... I came on active duty November 7th of that year....In High School I played football, I played baseball, basketball, all four years of high school and I ran track for two years. I was also in the theater department and a drum major in the marching band and choir. That's the beauty of being in a small High School..."

By the way: our commander likes different types of music but prefers Rock... Although today it's considered Classic Rock. He also has a knack for mountain climbing and other outdoor excursions.



PICTURE OF THE MONTH

Cadet Fontalvo, Future Combat Systems Operator



BIRTHDAYS

William Rollins, 8 Feb

Seth Yelton, 9 Feb

Cole Garde, 13 Feb

Eleanor Wyatt, 15 Feb

Samuel Johnson, 26 Feb