Cadet pilot rescues Texas pups

By Amber Baillie
Academy Spirit staff writer

Despite short notice, using money from his own pocket, and faced with traveling to another state a few days before finals, an Academy cadet flew 10 hours to rescue a litter of puppies - just in the nick of time.

On May 11, Cadet 2nd Class Adam McMurray flew a Diamond Star DA-40 plane round-trip from Colorado Springs to Plano, Texas, to rescue six healthy Australian Shepherd puppies and their mother from being euthanized May 12 at the Humane Society.

“Texas doesn’t have any spay or neuter laws so there are dogs and cats everywhere,” McMurray said. “The shelters there were too crowded and they didn’t have enough space for them, so they were going to put them down.”

McMurray received his private pilot’s license at 18 and is a member of the Aspen Flying Club, based at Centennial Airport in Denver. The Colorado Aussie Rescue organization, based in Thornton, made an emergency call to the flying club stating they could find homes for all seven dogs if a rescue pilot could pick the puppies up in two days.

“I was sitting in my class and an email popped up from the owner of the club, Chris Dillis, requesting for a rescue pilot,” McMurray said. “I read it and it really struck a chord with me. I’ve always been an animal guy and I’ve been a firefighter for four years. I love to fly and like to help out as much as I can.”

Cadet makes difference with STEM outreach club

By Amber Baillie
Academy Spirit staff writer

Cadet 1st Class Victor Lopez was in the middle of watching the television show, “School Pride,” when an idea struck him that would change the way the Academy reaches out to youth on the importance of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math.

The 2010 reality series focused on aiding public schools in dire need of renovation. In one of the episodes, students from Yale and Stanford Universities visited a school, motivating Lopez to brainstorm ways Academy cadets could get involved in the community in a big way.

That’s when he created the Academy’s Cadet Wing STEM Outreach Club, the most active club in the Cadet Wing, logging in 1,648.5 community service hours this year to date.

“I knew one of the big needs here was STEM outreach and thought to myself, ‘What can we do with that?’” Lopez said. “I started interfacing with the community during my sophomore year, and by my junior year I started visiting local schools. A few cadets said they wanted to help out and the club grew from there. Now we have a huge number of cadets involved and it’s been a lot of fun.”

Lopez said the club began in August 2011 and has reached more than 100,000 kids. The club includes Academy cadets and faculty who educate kids on the power of STEM through interactive activities, demonstrations and competitions. Lopez said the club partners with community organizations, visits local schools, festivals and hosts events here.

“I don’t want the Academy to be the school on the hill that when I visit a middle school, no one knows about,” Lopez said. “I want to be the school on the hill that the community loves because we do so much for them. It can only become that if we start interfacing more with the community, bringing kids to the Academy and helping out where we can. We have outstanding facilities, why not share them?”

As founder and cadet-in-charge
The furlough starts July 8, at the rate of one furlough day per week. It is expected to last through Sept. 30. Most Defense Department civilian employees can expect to spend up to 11 days on furlough.

Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley
Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh III

Sequestration decision painful

By Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh III

Confronting significant budgetary challenges in response to deep, across-the-board sequestration cuts, the Air Force has taken a variety of painful actions to close our budget gap. We have significantly reduced expenditures on many support contracts, stood-down numerous flying squadrons, cancelled professional continuing education, and greatly constrained travel. However, these actions do not fully close our budget shortfall, and we regret that we must now begin to implement a civilian furlough.

After an extensive review of all options with senior Department of Defense leaders, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel announced his decision to direct furloughs of up to 11 days for most DOD civilians.

None of us are happy to be in this position. Implementing a furlough is an ugly task that will adversely affect our civilian Airmen and the vital missions they carry out every day. We recognize and regret the hardships this will create for you and your families, but the budget choices we have faced during this extraordinary year have forced a long series of painful decisions.

As you may know, we plan to begin the furlough period on July 8 at the rate of one furlough day per week. While the current plan is to continue these furloughs through the end of the current fiscal year, Secretary Hagel stated his intent to decide later this year whether our budgetary situation permits us to end furloughs early.

In the meantime, we will keep working to manage the impacts of these sequestration reductions on our military readiness while also striving to take care of you.

You are highly valued and integral to our combat support capabilities. Without a doubt, we could not be the world’s greatest Air Force without you. During this challenging time, we are counting on each and every one of you to stay focused on your critical national security missions, and we thank you for your service to our Air Force and to our nation.
Hagel orders retraining of all sexual assault responders

WASHINGTON (AFPS) — Amid allegations of criminal behavior by service members involved in the Defense Department’s efforts to prevent sexual assaults, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel ordered all sexual assault prevention and response personnel and military recruiters to be retrained and rescreened.

In a statement last week, Pentagon Press Secretary George Little said Hagel was informed about allegations of criminal behavior against an Army sergeant who was a sexual assault prevention and response coordinator at Fort Hood, Texas.

“I cannot convey strongly enough his frustration, anger and disappointment over these troubling allegations and the breakdown in discipline and standards they imply,” Little said.

Hagel directed Army Secretary John McHugh to fully investigate the matter and ensure those involved are dealt with appropriately, Little said.

“The safety, integrity, and well-being of every service member and the success of our mission hang in the balance. Secretary Hagel is looking urgently at every course of action to stamp out this deplorable conduct and ensure that those individuals up and down the chain of command who tolerate or engage in this behavior are appropriately held accountable.”

Army officials announced the Army Criminal Investigation Command is investigating the Fort Hood soldier for pandering, abusive sexual contact, assault and maltreatment of subordinates.

The soldier had been assigned as an equal opportunity advisor and sexual harassment and sexual assault response and prevention program coordinator with 3rd Corps battalion at Fort Hood when the allegations surfaced.

Obama, service leaders discuss ways to eradicate sexual assault in military

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON (AFPS) — The crime of sexual assault undermines the trust needed for the U.S. military to do its missions, President Barack Obama said after meeting with his military leaders last week.

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, the service secretaries, Army Gen. Martin Dempsey and the rest of the Joint Chiefs of Staff met with the president at the White House May 16 to discuss eliminating sexual assault from the military.

The president called sexual assault “an insidious germ” that eats at the trust necessary to hold service members together under tough circumstances.

“As such, it is dangerous to our national security,” the president said. “This is not a sideshow. This is not sort of a second-order problem that we’re experiencing. This goes to the heart and the core of who we are and how effective we’re going to be.”

Obama is confident military leaders will aggressively work to eliminate sexual assault from the services, he said.

“They’re angry about it,” the president said. “But it’s not fixed yet, and that’s clear. So even though I think there’s a level of concern and interest that is appropriate, we haven’t actually been able to ensure that our men and women in uniform are not experiencing this, and if they do experience it, that there is serious accountability.”

Obama tasked Hagel and Dempsey to lead the effort and called for accountability on the issue.

“We’ve got to create an environment in which victims feel that they’re comfortable coming forward,” the president said.

“They’ve got to know that they should have no fear of retaliation, no fear of stigma, no damage to their careers, and certainly no protection for criminals.”

The president wants justice for victims of sexual assault, he said.

“Perpetrators have to experience consequences,” Obama said.

The president called for military leaders to look at experiences in the civilian sector and learn from those advocates and professionals.

“There is no silver bullet to solving this problem,” the president said. “This is going to require a sustained effort over a long period of time.”

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Heat plant scheduled for temporary shutdown

By Bay Bowden
Academy Spirit editor

The Academy’s central heat plant is scheduled to shut down for routine maintenance and inspection June 5–June 30, base officials said.

The plant, located near the Academy Drive and Interior Drive intersection, provides hot water, steam and heat for the 10th Medical Group clinic, the High Country Inn, the Preparatory School and other facilities.

“We’ve gone through our biannual plant upgrade and we’ve got some modifications to make,” said Jack Damien, a 10th Civil Engineer Squadron utilities supervisor. “The plant was originally built in the 1950s, and we’re updating the boiler controls to a modern-day system.

Modifications will cost about $8 million, Damien said. Inspectors will also check the interior and exterior of each of the plant’s three boilers. At full capacity, the Academy’s heat plant routinely provides enough power to heat 1 million gallons of water.

“We shut the plant down every two years to have a certified boiler inspector come through and recently the boilers,” Damien said. “During the inspections, we open all the boilers and the inspectors come through and inspect them for obvious problems.”

During the shutdown, five portable 200-horsepower boilers will be connected to the Academy’s water system to provide heat and domestic hot water to vital installation facilities.

Academy grads, Airmen reach Everest’s summit

By Heather Uberuaga
Air Force Seven Summits Team

MOUNT EVEREST CAMP 2, Nepal — A group of Airmen with the Air Force Seven Summits team reached the highest point of the world, Mount Everest (29,035 ft.) just after 5 a.m. local time May 19.

The success marks the first time a team of service members from any nation has reached the highest point on all seven continents:

Mount Elbrus, Europe; Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa; Mount Aconcagua, South America; Mount McKinley North America; Mount Vinson, Antarctica; Mount Kosciuszko, Australia and Mount Everest, Asia.


“Fifty years after the first American boots stood on top of the world, the first American military team has followed in those footsteps,” said retired Col. Rob Suminsby, who has regularly posted updates about the team’s progress on their blog at www.usa7summits.com. “The team unfurled the stars and stripes and the Air Force flag on the summit right after 5 a.m. in Nepal.”

Though unable to make the journey themselves, Suminsby and Maj. Mark Uberuaga, co-founder of the Seven Summits project, supported the team at home by keeping the blog updated and relaying key messages to friends and family members of the team.

“The day they took off for the summit we received 12,000 hits to the website,” Uberuaga said. “(Chief of Staff) Gen. (Mark) Welsh himself commented on one of the blogs a couple days prior to the summit attempt. The team knew the entire Air Force was rooting for them. I know they carried that with them to the top.”

In a blog update posted May 22, the team recounted the physical toll of the climb.

“Rob is still battling a bad chest toll of the climb. “Rob is still battling a bad chest infection and hacking cough, and many on the team have sunburn, bloodshot eyes and cracked or bleeding toes,” according to the blog. “As Rob put it, ‘The mountain put up a good fight.’ Everyone made an effort to pack on some pounds before this trip, and most have lost 11 to 17 percent of their body weight — 40 pounds in Kyle Martin’s case.”

The Seven Summits Challenge began eight years ago when Wrath II, an Air Force Special Operations Command MC-130H ‘Talon II’ crashed in Albania in March 2005.

“Rob and I had been planning a climb of Mount Elbrus in Russia, which is the highest point in Europe, before the crash,” Uberuaga said. “We decided to dedicate the climb to our fallen friends. It was something we could do to honor them and it helped us deal with the loss.”

As the planning continued, Marshall and Uberuaga decided to launch an effort to climb all the seven summits to raise funds and awareness for the Special Operations Warrior Foundation, a charity providing full scholarship grants, as well as educational and family counseling, to the surviving children of special operations personnel who lose their lives in operational or training missions.
Dedicated to those for whom every day is Memorial Day.
Cadet keeps Asian-Pacific culture dancing

By 1st Lt. Brandon Baccam
Academy Public Affairs

For one cadet, attending the Air Force Academy is not just about receiving a top-notch education; it's also about helping his peers appreciate and rediscover their own culture.

Cadet 2nd Class Roed Mejia grew up in the La Union Province, Philippines, and immigrated with his family to the U.S. in 2003 when he was 15. He enlisted in the Air Force in 2006 and became a flight medicine technician at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz.

That same year, Mejia was assigned to work with the Academy Wings of Blue parachuting team as a medic while they trained in Arizona. While working with the team, Mejia learned about the many opportunities offered at the U.S. Air Force Academy and was inspired to apply for admission to the Academy through the Leaders Encouraging Airmen Development program.

In 2009, he received good news. “During the application process, I was sent to the Philippines to provide medical and language support for a joint contingency deployment,” Mejia said. “That is when I found out that I was to remain involved in Academy cultural observations and programs.”

Mejia will graduate in 2014. Until then, his goal is to remain involved in Academy cultural observations through the Pacific Rim Club, a cadet-run organization designed to educate the Cadet Wing on Asian-Pacific cultures.

As the cadet in charge for the club, Mejia looks to proactively engage the community next year. “This is the first time in my three years involved with the club that a cadet has stepped up and (taken) ownership of the Pacific Rim Club like Mejia does,” said Tech. Sgt. Annette Santos-Barnes, the NCO in charge for the Pacific Rim Club. “He is locked into what he wants to do with the club and he is executing smoothly.”

Mejia’s motivation to serve in the Air Force and attend the Academy has given him the opportunity to share his culture with others and help others rediscover their own cultures. “I think the American culture, in general, is revolutionizing toward accepting everyone: no matter who you are, what you look like, where you’re from, or what you believe in,” he said. “This is the reason why we should also celebrate cultural months and remind us how different people from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds contribute to what we know as the diverse United States today.”

Assimilating to an American lifestyle was easy, Mejia said. “In some of my classes at Maize High School, I found myself to be the only student with brown skin,” he said. “Everyone else was white but it did not matter and I never felt different.”

Mejia hopes to shape the influence of the Pacific Rim Club to reach cadets who aren’t as open about their cultural origin as others here might be. “There are a lot of cadets with an Asian-Pacific heritage here and some still do not know what their cultural background is like,” he said. “Some cadets just did not grow up practicing the same cultures as their older generations did.”

Mejia plans to stay involved in the club and continue to support Academy cultural functions. The U.S. is a hodgepodge of many cultures,” he said. “To celebrate the fusion of these cultures, it’s important for us to observe how much each of these differing cultures contributes to the diversity and inclusion.

Club highlights Asian-Pacific issues

The Pacific Rim Club meets on the last Thursday of every month to discuss ways to share Asian-Pacific issues with the local community.

“Our ultimate goal is to be able to attend Asian leadership seminars around the country, volunteer in the community continue to grow what we have now and educate (people) on the Pacific Rim region,” said Tech Sgt. Annette Santos-Barnes, the club’s NCO in charge. The club’s largest event this year was the Asian Pacific-American Heritage celebration May 8 at the Arnold Hall Ballroom where cadets performed a variety of high-energy cultural activities including a Haka dance, Polynesian dance routines and a Hula dance, in front of nearly 300 cadets and Academy staff.

“This was the first time since 2005 that the club has been (excused from Academy activities) to participate in a multicultural event,” Santos-Barnes said.

For more information on the Pacific Rim Club, call 333-7693.
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Army veteran Lance Thornton draws an arrow from his compound bow during the Warrior Games archery competition at the Academy May 15.

Annual competition concludes, showcases spirit of wounded service members

Wounded, ill and injured service members from all service branches and Great Britain competed in the Warrior Games May 11-16 at the Academy and the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs. More than 200 athletes competed in track and field, shooting, swimming, cycling, archery, wheelchair basketball and sitting volleyball. Britain's Prince Harry was among the distinguished visitors who visited the Academy during the games to cheer on the athletes.

ABOVE: Retired Air Force Staff Sgt. Jaxon Morgan goes "head-to-head" with a canine supporter before the Warrior Games handcycle race at the Academy May 12.

RIGHT: Retired Senior Airman Scott Palomino runs during the Warrior Games 1500-meter track and field race at the Academy May 15.
Rescue who drove the pups to Thornton to find them new homes. McMurray said it was neat to have a true and touching reason to fly, and would do it again in a heartbeat.

“When I had my puppy, she gave us 15 years of a lot of great memories and companionship,” McMurray said. “Now there are seven families who have the opportunity to do that just because we made the flight.”

Colorado Aussie Rescue founder, Lynne Leshere, said finding a rescue pilot last minute is hard to do because the pilot has to try and clear their schedule. McMurray was able to approve the trip through his air officer commanding for Cadet Squadron 38, Lt. Col. Kevin Hornburg, who was very supportive of the mission.

“I can’t thank Adam enough for everything he did,” Leshere said. “He was courteous, prompt and got the job done. He was everything you’d expect from a service member.”

Leshere said Adam is the first pilot to help out with one of their rescues and showed her a different side of the Air Force.

“I think what Adam did showed the human perspective of the military,” Leshere said. “I didn’t expect a rescue pilot from the Air Force to volunteer because they’re usually pretty busy. He seems like a happy-go-lucky guy who is highly motivated. By helping us, he’s helped promote our cause and went above and beyond the call of duty for the flight. I think how this rescue came together was a miracle.”

McMurray said he’d like to make more puppy rescue flights in the future if he can find volunteers to help alleviate the cost.

“There’s a huge need in the next four weeks,” McMurray said. “There are 75 more dogs that need rescued and the biggest issue is money. You need rescued and the biggest issue is money. You can make a donation on the Colorado Aussie Rescue’s website directly toward these flights.”

Academy Spirit
FRIDAY, MAY 24, 2013

JOHN VAN WINKLE

Cadet 1st Class Darrell Cherf fills sandbags Saturday to mitigate erosion of areas near the Waldo Canyon Wildfire burn scar. In all, 70 cadets assisted city volunteers fill 10,000 sandbags to shore up local homes. The cadets went through 180 tons of dirt.
These are the places we remember,
to honor the lives of those we’ll never forget.
POLICE WEEK

ABOVE: Airman Marcella Davis of the 10th Security Forces Squadron shoots a 9mm pistol at the Academy's firing range during a shooting competition May 16. The competition was one of many National Police Week events at the Academy hosted by the 10th Security Forces Squadron May 13-17. National Police Week takes place annually across the U.S. in May to honor law enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty.

RIGHT: Airmen hit the trail for a 10k ruck march May 13 at the Academy. The march, along with a 5k run, opened National Police Week events at the Academy.

FAR RIGHT: Senior Airman Hendrick Martinez (left) and Airman 1st Class Josiah Brodsky of the 10 SFS lower the U.S. flag at the 10th Air Base Wing flagpole during a final retreat ceremony May 17 to commemorate law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty and the conclusion of National Police Week.

Discover local resources for military families
Hannah Dake wins national sportsmanship, leadership award

Academy Athletics

Air Force senior Hannah Dake was named recipient of the Intercolligate Tennis Association’s National Arthur Ashe Jr. Leadership and Sportsmanship Award for the 2012-13 academic year, May 21.

After winning the Mountain Region award last week, Dake was on the national ballot with 11 other regional winners.

The award recognizes outstanding individuals in all divisions at the regional and national level. In August the national winners will be honored during a special ceremony hosted by the U.S. Tennis Association during Arthur Ashe Jr.’s Day inside Ashe Stadium, Flushing Meadows, N.Y.

“I was completely surprised,” Dake said. “This award proved that I’ve made it, thanks to my family, my friends and God. I can’t think of a more special way to end my time at the Academy.”

The award, which dates back to 1982, goes to NCAA Divisions I, II and III. NAIA and Junior College men’s and women’s players who exhibit outstanding sportsmanship, leadership, scholastic and extracurricular achievements.

“Hannah’s Arthur Ashe Award is the biggest honor a player can receive,” said Air Force women’s tennis head coach Kim Gidley. “It is so great to see that Hannah’s efforts on and off the court have been recognized and I know she will continue to serve and be a leader as she embarks on her Air Force career.”

Dake, this year’s team MVP, led the Falcons with 25 doubles wins and was second with 20 singles wins this season. Her 25 wins with fellow senior Melissa Cecil were the most by an Air Force doubles team in one season since Kat Bushey and Christine Abayan had 29 in 2005-06. She will graduate ranked No. 3 on the school’s career list with 82 overall doubles wins and 152 combined (singles and doubles) victories in the Division I era (since 1996).

Dake also earned her first all-Mountain West selection this season. Off the court, Dake has been involved in several local community activities including events at Skyway Elementary School, the Salvation Army, Habitat for Humanity, the Humane Society and the Marion House Soup Kitchen.

After graduating May 29 with a bachelor’s in humanities and a minor in philosophy, Dake will report to Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C. as a force support squadron officer.

GOLF: Kyle Westmoreland will compete in a sectional qualifier June 3 at the Lakewood Country Club, Dallas, for a spot in the U.S. Open.

TRACK AND FIELD: Today and Saturday in the NCAA Preliminary Round in Austin, Texas.

BASEBALL: The MWC Championships, Fresno, Calif., games to be announced.

UPCOMING FALCON SPORTS EVENTS
Network Security Responsibilities

Air Force guidance prohibits certain activities and devices, including establishing modem connections, installing peer-to-peer or personal proxy, voice-over Internet Protocol software, network devices such as hubs, routers, personal computers, gaming consoles, etc., not specifically authorized by the 10th Communications Squadron.


Commanders, in accordance with Defense Department 5200.2-R and DOD Personnel Security Program guidance, weigh individual instances of prohibited network activity when making classified information access determinations and continued security clearance eligibility decisions.

For more information, contact your unit security manager or the 10 CS Help Desk at 333-4357. For more information, visit www.usafa.edu/security.

AFRC Events

Academy members may register for the events listed below by calling 333-3444.

**AFRC Events**

- **Cadet Sponsor Program**
  - Class of 2017 cadets need sponsors to build a professional mentoring relationship and provide a home away from home for cadets. Eligible sponsors are captains and above, technical sergeants and above, and civilians GS-05 and above.
  - Cadets are scheduled to meet their sponsors at the Doolie Day Out event at the Academy July 20. For more information, visit www.usafa.edu/cadetFocus/cadetSponsor or call 333-2247.

- **PECI program**
  - The Air Force Productivity Enhancing Capital Investment program provides funding for productivity improvement projects. There are two project classifications: The Fast Payback Capital Investment and the Productivity Improvement programs.
  - The Southern Colorado Retiree Activities Office seeks volunteers to help plan this year’s Academy Boy Scout Patriotic Program. For more information, call 333-3733 to schedule a personal session with HAWC staff who will guide them through behavioral, casual and supply training.
  - Walk-in appointments are available Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 1-3 p.m. Patients interested in using medication to break their tobacco habit must visit their primary care manager prior to visiting the HAWC.
  - Once customers receive a briefing by HAWC staff, they will receive a certificate to get their prescription filled.

- **Women’s Equality Day**
  - The Women’s Equality Day Luncheon committee seeks volunteers to help plan this year’s luncheon in August.
  - For more information, call 333-5503.

- **Air Force Sergeants Association**
  - 5K run: Air Force Sergeants Association Falcon Chapter 1180 invites all cadets, retirees and active-duty service members to participate in a 5K run/walk at the Parcourse every third Wednesday following the monthly AFSA meetings, 3:30 p.m. at the Falcon Club.
  - Runners who participate in six runs will receive a free AFSA Club T-shirt.
  - Enlisted Airmen who are not AFSA members will receive a one-year membership after completing eight runs. Participants can sign in at the blue track located behind the fitness center.
  - For more information, call 333-8999 or 333-3026.

- **Retiree Office needs volunteers**
  - The Southern Colorado Retiree Activities Office needs volunteers to assist with various projects, including computer database work, newsletter creation and tax preparation.
  - To volunteer, call 556-7153 or email rao.peters@us.af.mil.

Instagram photo of the week

User @mollymitchelson sent in this photo of the Class of 2013 Graduation ticket and said “ready for happiest day of my life.” We look forward to highlighting your Instagram photos in upcoming editions of the Academy Spirit. If you would like to have your photo published, upload it to Instagram using #YourAcademy.
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