



USAF ACADEMY, COLORADO **ACADEMY SPIRIT**

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Academy officers advance

Congratulations to the following Academy officers recently selected for promotion:

Selected for colonel



John Abbatiello
 Keith Boyer
 Daniel Driscoll
 Steve Dutkus
 John Tomjack
 Randall White

Selected for lieutenant colonel



Nicola Adams

Selected for major



Nicole Cioni
 Gwendolyn Kaegy
 Dwayne Rolniak

Flexible leader

Gymnast earns the honor of serving as Cadet Wing commander.



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Horse play

Stubbs celebrates birthday bash with many excited guests.

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Glamour shots

Firstie selected as one of magazine's top 10 college role models.

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Missile retires after 37 years of Academy service

By Master Sgt. Dean Miller
 Academy Public Affairs

Dual responsibilities to represent those in the Long Blue Line — past and present — and a mission to inspire future officers, are obligations of cadets and graduates alike; they are also attributes of the various weapon systems on display at the Academy. For one such display, retirement day arrives Wednesday.

Standing in front of the Cadet Field House since its dedication ceremony, Dec. 9, 1971, the Minuteman III ICBM display has inspired thousands of Academy cadets over the years, many of whom perform strategic missile operations in America's missile fields today. The Academy's MMIII, still in the nation's official missile inventory and subject to Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START-I) monitoring, is being retired from permanent display here. Based on a possibility of collapse related to internal corrosion causing potential structural integrity problems — combined with high winds common to the area—the Cold War veteran is being removed as a safety precaution.

"It is fitting that the Minuteman III is prominently displayed at the Academy," said Director of Academy Communications Johnny Whitaker, whose office is also responsible for presentational static display aircraft on the Academy. "It represents a strategic weapon system that helps maintain our nation's security every night — a system that has been a vital deterrent of nuclear war and stalwart sentry of peace for decades.

See MISSILE, Page 15



Courtesy Photo

The Academy's Minuteman III display near the Cadet Field House will be disassembled next week.

AOG announces new CEO

The Association of Graduates of the U.S. Air Force Academy announced the selection of William L. Thompson, Class of 1973, as the organization's president and chief executive officer.

Known as "T" to classmates and friends, he brings years of experience to the AOG as an award-winning entrepreneur, airline pilot, community and government leader, tax attorney, and public speaker.

While working as a Delta Air Lines pilot, he owned several successful small businesses, and served on boards of directors of a number of diverse organizations, ranging from national charities to local

banks. Mr. Thompson served for 17 years as head of the Massachusetts Aeronautics Commission, under three governors from both political parties.

Service to organizations such as the American Cancer Society, Bank of America, Boeing, Boy Scouts of America, and 100 Black Men of Atlanta, Inc. further enhances his résumé.

According to Mr. Thompson, in looking at what other service academy alumni associations have accomplished, he has set his sights high.

"There is no reason why we can't organize our grads and friends of the AOG

and the Academy to surpass those excellent organizations in what they do for their members and their institutions. That's my goal going in," he said.

As a cadet, Mr. Thompson was a receiver on the 1971 Falcon team that went to the Sugar Bowl, and as a firstie he served on the Cadet Wing staff.

Thompson assumed the position Monday. He succeeds Gary Howe, Class of 1969, who served as CEO since the retirement of Jim Shaw, Class of 1967. Mr. Shaw left the position in March after more than 15 years of service to the organization.

Academy missile launches officer's career

By Master Sgt. Dean Miller
Academy Public Affairs

In the course of any Airman's career, opportunities to step-up to a leadership challenge present themselves. Experts on leadership believe these early events, and how they are handled, are key to developing character that often defines an individual. Class of 1973 graduate, Maj. (retired) Donald Rightmyer, is a classic example.

As a cadet, Rightmyer stepped up to many challenges. Often these would merge his two greatest passions: history, and air and space power. As a cadet, he was honored to bring the silver goblets of the Doolittle Raiders to their annual reunion in 1972 where he met Gen. Jimmy Doolittle and other surviving Raiders; it was an event that left a profound impression on the 21-year-old.

Cadet Rightmyer also chaired the Cadet Heritage Committee, a place where air power and history often merged. It was in this capacity he found himself on Dec. 9, 1971, center stage outside Clune Arena, side-by-side with then Academy Superintendent Lt. Gen. Albert P. Clark, and Brig. Gen. Salvatore E. Felices, then Strategic Air Command's deputy chief of staff for materiel. Rightmyer was named to represent the Cadet Wing at the dedication of the Academy's new Minuteman III ICBM display, a gift from SAC.

"I remember that day so clearly," said Mr. Rightmyer, retired since 1993. "That dedication just brought one more really important element of Air Force mission and heritage to the aircraft, the weapons, and statues already displayed at the Academy.

"These displays both preserved and demonstrated our heritage," said Mr. Rightmyer. "I thought it was so important when SAC gave us that missile, and I was privileged and honored to represent the Cadet Wing at the ceremony. It was one of many really remarkable things I got to do as a cadet."

Mr. Rightmyer, today a retired cold-warrior in his own right, is reflective as he contemplates the retirement of the Cold-War icon he helped dedicate. "There's a note of sadness as we see the aircraft and weapon systems we trained and served in being



Then Cadet Donald Rightmyer represented the Cadet Wing at the dedication of the Academy's new Minuteman III ICBM display, Dec. 9, 1971. Courtesy Photo

retired. But, there's also a huge feeling of accomplishment for the service these aircraft and missiles allowed us to provide to our nation's defense through our years of service in the U.S. Air Force," Mr. Rightmyer said.

"As we walked by the Minuteman III missile and various aircraft displays at the Academy on a daily basis, they reminded us of the rich heritage of air and space power which the Air Force has forged," Mr. Rightmyer said. "I'm very encouraged by the young men and women who have passed through the Academy since I graduated and continue in that same tradition of service to our country today."

From the Academy in 1973, 22nd Lt. Rightmyer, with a degree in military history, went on to serve as an F-4 navigator, flying in Korea,

England and Germany. He served as a historian in the Headquarters Air Force History Office and later served as an intelligence officer on the Soviet Awareness Briefing Team in Washington D.C. In 1983, he returned to flying, this time in F-111s at Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho. Later, Rightmyer served as editor, TAC Attack Magazine, Tactical Air Command's Safety Publication, as a war plans officer at 16th Air Force in Madrid, Spain, and as editor, Air Scoop, U.S. Air Forces in Europe's Safety publication, before his retirement in 1993.

Today, Mr. Rightmyer is a state government employee in the city of Frankfort, Ky., serving as editor, Kentucky Ancestors, a quarterly publication of the Kentucky Historical Society. He resides in Danville, Ky.

Missile

From Page 1

"It is also a weapon system entrusted to 115 Academy graduates deployed on strategic alert in our nation's missile fields right now," Mr. Whitaker said. "However, with cadets, faculty and visitors working, walking and parking near our missile display every day, we can't risk anyone's safety if there is even the slightest risk of collapse. Under advisement of experts from the National Museum of the Air Force and our Academy Memorial Board, our leadership has decided to retire our Minuteman."

Detailed inspections of static display missiles at various locations by the National Museum of the U.S.

Air Force at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base revealed numerous examples of internal corrosion. This was especially true on the Minuteman family of missiles where internal corrosion was concealed by the original special coatings and over-layers of paint.

"In the instance of the Academy display, it is very likely that significant concealed internal corrosion exists inside the missile shell. Despite the best of conservation efforts, missiles were never intended to remain exposed to the elements for decades and, therefore, it is a prudent decision at the Academy to retire the missile from display," said Terry Aitken, senior curator, National Museum of the U.S. Air Force, at Wright-Patterson AFB.

Once final preparations are made next week, Academy experts and contractors will disassemble the Minuteman III. The bulk of the missile frame and shell will be disposed of as scrap metal through the Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office. As disassembly proceeds, two hazardous materials suspected to be on the display will be removed.

"Contractors will properly dispose of a fungicide — impregnated cork coating on the missile — and a specialist from the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force will remove a 7.5 foot magnesium-thorium alloy component," said Academy Museum Specialist, Paul Martin. "Both materials require professional handling different from the routine disposal of scrap metal."

FRAUD, WASTE AND ABUSE

IF YOU KNOW OF ANY INSTANCES OF FRAUD, WASTE AND ABUSE, REPORT IT TO ONE OF THE HOTLINE NUMBERS

FRAUD: Intentional deception of the DoD such as bribes, gratuities or false claims

ACADEMY
1(719)333-3490
DSN: 333-3490

WASTE: Extravagant, careless or expenditure of government funds

AIR FORCE
1(800)538-8429
DSN: 425-1562

ABUSE: Intentional wrongful or improper use of government resources

DEPT. OF DEFENSE
1(800)424-9098
DSN: 664-8799