

# DISCOVERY

The Development of Combat Power and Efficiency

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BROOKS  
CITY-BASE  
A Technology and Business Center



Through the Many Facets of Aerospace Medicine

## Brooks scientists work with CDC, WHO on SARS virus

By Rudy Purificato

311th Human Systems Wing

Brooks scientists skilled in infectious disease detection are working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization to monitor and test the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome virus, commonly known as SARS.

While there have been no reported SARS cases involving Department of Defense personnel and no reported deaths in the U.S., the March outbreak that began in Asia has so far killed more than 230 people worldwide.

"We have an active surveillance program with all departments of the (U.S.) military and are prepared to receive samples of the virus," said Linda Canas, Epidemiology Surveillance Division's chief of Diagnostic Virology at the Air Force Institute for Environment, Safety and Occupational Health Risk Analysis.

"There are (currently) no diagnostic tests available (for SARS)," Canas said, noting that several laboratories worldwide are working on identifying the source of the virus.

However, the CDC is developing a test for SARS that will be released soon to the Brooks lab and other selected labs for research purposes, Canas said.

The Brooks site was selected because of its work with the CDC since

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Photo by Staff Sgt. Alfonso Ramirez Jr.

### A silent tribute

Brooks 2003 Fiesta Ambassadors Capt. Britt Barkley and 2nd Lt. Brooke Davis pay silent tribute to the Space Shuttle Columbia astronauts aboard the Brooks City-Base float during

the Texas Cavaliers River Parade. The astronauts, who trained at Brooks in preparation for their space flight, tragically perished aboard Columbia Feb. 1.

## Jessica Lynch recovery aided by Air Force systems developed at Brooks

By Rudy Purificato

311th Human Systems Wing

Air Force aeromedical evacuation equipment and the Department of Defense's patient care tracking systems developed at Brooks have contributed to the recovery of many U.S. casualties from Gulf War II, including that conflict's most celebrated Prisoner of War, Private First Class Jessica Lynch.

Lynch, the 19-year-old Army supply clerk from Palestine, W. Va., was captured March 23 in the southern Iraqi city of Nasiriyah after her unit, the 507th Ordnance Maintenance Company, was ambushed. She was rescued April 1 from an Iraqi hospital during a daring U.S. commando raid. Her subsequent aeromedical evacuation to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany and later to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in the U.S. was aided by the new Patient Support Pallet developed at Brooks and a patient care tracking system Air Force engineers here helped design, the TRANSCOM Regulating And Command & Control Evacuation System, called TRAC2ES.

"We're excited that the systems we helped develop worked so well. AMC (Air Mobility Command) is so pleased, they want to order another 39-50 PSP

**“ Just wanted you all to know that Jessica Lynch is headed home today to Walter Reed on board a C-17 with PSPs! I can't tell you how excited I am that this all really came together and it is working. They were also used to bring several urgent patients, including one badly burned one, into Kelly a couple of weeks ago! ”**

**Maj. Lisa DeDecker**

Air Expeditionary Concept Development Branch Chief and Military Consultant to the Surgeon General for Flight Nursing Scott Air Force Base, Ill.

ship sets. It's their number one unfunded requirement," said Col. Daniel Berry, Aeromedical/Medical Information Systems Division chief for the 311th Human Systems Program Office.

AMC, the SPO's major customers for PSPs, is sold on the reliability and efficiency of the new litter system used

to transport aeromedical evacuation patients in Air Force cargo aircraft reconfigured into air ambulances. In February 2002, the SPO delivered 25 PSP ship sets to AMC, which subsequently used them primarily on C-17 aircraft stationed worldwide. The PSP's mobility and design proved successful in the rapid and safe transport of patients during test flights.

Meanwhile, TRAC2ES succeeded as a computer-based worldwide patient and casualty movement system by giving health care providers critically important, real-time health and medical history data on American military personnel wounded or injured during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"Private Lynch's aerovac mission was directed using our TRAC2ES program," said Berry, noting that her medical condition was monitored by medical and command and control elements from the time she was rescued through her eventual evacuation stateside.

Lynch suffered from multiple injuries, including a head wound, spinal injury and fractures to her right arm, both legs and her right foot and ankle.

TRAC2ES was developed after the first Gulf War because the patient tracking system used during Operation Desert Storm was inefficient.

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# Memories from the mouths of heros — or are they?

*A senior noncommissioned officer reflects on his recent visit with veterans at the local VA hospital*

**By Senior Master Sgt. Mike Walljasper**

*311th Human Systems Wing*

Operation "Iraqi Freedom" has brought to the forefront and reminded us of several atrocities associated with war. Death and destruction are inevitable during a war, as well as our armed forces being taken prisoner of war. As the combat winds down in Iraq, some of my lasting memories from this conflict will be the discovery of Jessica Lynch and the seven soldiers recently found. I always try to keep my optimism, but I have to admit I assumed the worst in both these cases. The breaking news of their discovery lifted my spirits, and those of our nation.

The two or three week time frame of each of their captivities had to seem like an eternity. Most were injured and didn't receive proper medical attention. I assume they were closed off from the news going on around them, other than hearing the occasional blast. Nervous would be an understatement, as they were shuttled around without knowing their fate. It had to be the most intense weeks of their young lives. Can you imagine being in this situation for 42 months?

On a recent visit to Audie Murphy Memorial Veterans Administration Hospital, I visited with a patient who was a prisoner of war in Japan for 42 months during World War II. His name is Ted and he was kind enough to tell a few stories about his years in captivity.

Just prior to the war breaking out, Ted enlisted in the Army with a contingent heading to the Philippines. He didn't want to see much combat and his uncle, a World War I veteran, told him the Philippines was a safe bet.

If you're a student of history, you know what follows. Gen. MacArthur's famous "I shall return" statement as he boarded a U-Boat just prior to Japanese forces invading and capturing the Philippines. The troops left behind, including Ted, were taken POW by the Japanese and loaded on ships bound for Japan.

Once in Japan, the mass of POWs were split up and sent to prison camps throughout the country. All POWs, who were able, worked in Japanese factories or around their camp.

Ted worked for Mitsubishi until the new allied commander designated him as a "cook." When Ted asked the new commander why he had designated him a cook since he had no experience in culinary, the commander replied, "because you're from Texas."

The POWs diet consisted of rice balls and little else. Ted used ingenuity, plus a little thievery, to spice up their meals.

"The medal I received after my release was for nothing other than stealing things from the train yard right next to the camp," he said with a huge smile on his face.

Most of Ted's recollections are vivid and sound like they happened yesterday. He went on for more than an hour with 5 or 6 of us mesmerized by his tales.

To hear Ted tell his stories, it almost sounds like he had fun during his captivity. But then you reflect and you realize that Ted is one of those guys who makes the best of any situation.

In one of his more somber assessments, Ted



Courtesy photo

**Master Sgt. Susan Cushing** from the 311th Mission Support Group, and **Master Sgt. John Bean**, assigned to the U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine, spend a few minutes with a Navy veteran at the Audie Murphy Veterans Hospital during a recent visit by Brooks Top 3, and other Brooks personnel who accompanied them.

said that several fellow POWs "thought themselves to death."

He explained further saying, "they couldn't just live day by day, but kept looking down the road and couldn't bear what they saw."

Ted made up his mind early to take his predicament one day at a time. He and several other POWs adopted a philosophy to cooperate with the Japanese, or at least make them think they were.

Ted described it like this: "A couple of POWs standing over a mound of coal with shovels a flying. Now, there may only be one piece of coal in the scoop, but the shovels were flying," he chuckled.

Ted said many POWs had it much worse than he did. As you get to know Ted, you kind of suspect that throughout his life people have had it worse than he has because he doesn't let anything get the best of him. He said the Air Force did more damage to his fellow POWs than the Japanese. When the camp was discovered after the war, a low flying U.S. plane dropped 55 gallon drums filled with supplies to assist the POWs until the Marines could rescue them. As the drums fell out from the back, some landed on soldiers, breaking legs and such. I carefully reminded Ted that we didn't have an Air Force yet, and that was his Army brethren flying those planes. He mumbled something and all I could make out was "damn flyboys."

I could go on and on with stories that Ted told that day. There's one about him jokingly saying "Where the hell have you been!" to the Marines who came to the POWs rescue after the Japanese surrendered. Most of his stories included a large dose of humor and it struck me how there was no bitterness in the stories, but more of a reminder of unwavering American spirit.

Ted reflected for us the darkest day he experienced during his captivity — "watching 'old glory' being lowered at our camp," — referring to the Japanese overrunning their camp at the very beginning.

Ted says he's not a hero, but I'll let you be the judge.



## Commercial carriers wave fees, offer reservation refunds

The current pace of military operations has resulted in short-fuse changes in orders and deployments for many military personnel. Adjusting personal travel arrangements to accommodate new orders can be complex and time-consuming, but it doesn't need to break the budget.

Many airlines will waive the penalties associated with reservation changes made in response to military requirements. Some offer reduced fares to family members and caregivers traveling as a result of their military sponsor's deployment. However, in order to qualify for waivers or special fares, the service member will need to provide a hard copy document or printed email to verify that the changes are made in response to military requirements. A one-year test to evaluate the expansion of space available privileges for dependents traveling within CONUS may provide additional air travel options in the future. The test began April 1 and runs through April 1, 2004, and applies to active and retired military personnel and their families. Military families should also be aware that some commercial airlines recently changed policies on luggage weights and fees.

AMTRAK, the nation's largest passenger railway follows a liberal ticket refund policy for most canceled trips. In addition, all refund fees will be waived if the service member presents documentation showing that the change in plans was the result of military orders. The cost of making

short-fuse reservations on AMTRAK varies according to the route. AMTRAK recommends personnel and their families check with local ticket representatives or call 800-USA-RAIL for details and special offers.

In cases where the carrier does not waive fees or penalties, the Army Emergency Relief Society, Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society and the Air Force Aid Society can provide loans or grants to cover unexpected expenses. Relief societies suggest military personnel requiring emergency financial assistance call or visit the relief society office at their installation. All three organizations have reciprocal agreements with each other and the Coast Guard, so it doesn't matter which field office a service member uses. In the absence of a military installation, the American Red Cross and the USO can connect military personnel with the organizations. Relief societies consider all requests for emergency financial aid from active duty military personnel and family members, and National Guard and Reserve personnel on active duty and their family members on a case-by-case basis. The societies' first priority is the timely return of the service member to his or her duty station. However, the societies' mission and funding permit them to respond to almost any emergency.

Personnel affected by this policy should check with specific carriers for details on fees and refund policies.

## Air Force announces Thrift Savings Plan open season

AIR FORCE PERSONNEL CENTER — Civilian and military employees can sign up for or change current Thrift Savings Plan accounts through June 30.

"TSP is an easy, long-term retirement savings plan, that everyone should consider," said Maj. Alessandra Stokstad, chief of the contact center. "It's a great supplement to military and civilian retirement plans."

"Employees already contributing to the TSP are encouraged to review their TSP plan and account balances," said Janet Thomas of the center's civilian benefits and entitlements service team, "as the open season period is the best time to open an account or make changes to an existing one."

TSP offers investors the chance for lower taxes each year they contribute while not having to pay taxes on earnings until they reach retirement. Investment money is deposited directly from each paycheck

"You can take out loans and make withdrawals from your TSP account and you can keep your account even if you leave military or federal service," Thomas said.

The five TSP funds are: the Government Securities Investment (G) Fund; the Common Stock Index Investment (C) Fund; the Fixed Income Index Investment (F) Fund; the Small Capitalization Stock Index Investment (S) Fund; and the International Stock Index Investment (I) Fund.

"As with any individual retirement account, the sooner you begin contributing, the better," said Maj. Stokstad.

Account changes made on or before May 31 will take effect June 1 for both military and civilian personnel. Changes made on or after June 1 will become effective in the following pay period for civilians and the following month for military. Contribution allocations are made by calling the TSP automated ThriftLine at (504) 255-8777 or on the TSP web site at: [www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov).

## SARS

*Continued from Page 1*

1976 on the influenza surveillance program. Air Force scientists here have helped develop many flu vaccines for WHO and the CDC. The AFIERA lab's reputation as a world-class research facility was further enhanced in February 2003 when it was designated as a WHO Collaborating Laboratory.

"We knew in early March that SARS was a new virus, caused by a variant of the coronavirus," Canas said.

The coronavirus causes the common cold, she explained, but this fourth type or variant of the coronavirus is something that the scientific community has never seen before.

Early disease symptoms are flu-like, featuring head and body aches, general overall discomfort and a low-grade fever, the onset of which is 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit. Some victims have suffered from mild respiratory problems. According to the CDC, within two to seven days people infected with SARS develop a dry cough and have trouble breathing.

"If you suspect you may have SARS, immediately see a health care provider," said Canas, noting that people should remain calm. So far, many SARS victims have recovered.

According to recent WHO data on the outbreak, nearly 4,000 cases have been reported worldwide. Of these, approximately 1,600 victims have recovered. In the U.S., about 200 cases have been reported. The only known SARS fatalities in North America occurred in Canada where 12 out of 126 victims have died.

The CDC, WHO and the U.S. State Department have issued travel advisories for countries where the outbreak is most prevalent. U.S. citizens are advised to delay or postpone plans to visit the People's Republic of China and specifically Hong Kong; Singapore, Malaysia; and Hanoi, Vietnam.

"It seems the virus is spread by close contact with an infected person. However, people who are most at-risk are health care providers who are in direct contact with victims of the disease," Canas said, adding, "Hand washing is the single best thing you can do as a preventive measure for SARS."



## Transport

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Courtesy photo

**Members of the 311th Human Systems Program Office, on litters, team with maintenance personnel, in seats, from Altus Air Force Base, Ok., on board a KC-135 during a recent demonstration of the Patient Support Pallet. PSPs were developed at the SPO and have been used to transport 1,700 patients in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, including Private First Class Jessica Lynch, the former POW rescued from an Iraqi hospital April 1.**

According to the Air Force Surgeon General's Office, 50 percent of Desert Storm patients were initially sent to the wrong destination and 60 percent were "lost" in terms of their whereabouts within the aeromedical evacuation system.

Prior to Gulf War II, the SPO's TRAC2ES team procured, configured and deployed a new modified system to the Global Patient Movement Requirements Center at Scott Air Force Base, Ill., Berry explained. He said the system's new hardware increased user capacity by 300 percent and provided support to more than 250 simultaneous users. The SPO team also developed what-if strategies in support of wartime needs.

As a consequence of this work, combined with important PSP modifications the SPO team made more than 17,000 patient movements including

1,700 directly involved in Operation Iraqi Freedom, was successfully conducted to the U.S., Berry noted.

Berry's team has received many accolades from their customers. Among them is an April 12 e-mail from Maj. Lisa DeDecker, Air Expeditionary Concept Development Branch chief and military consultant to the Surgeon General for Flight Nursing at Scott AFB, who said, "Just wanted you all to know that Jessica Lynch is headed home today to Walter Reed on board a C-17 with PSPs! I can't tell you how excited I am that this all really came together and it is working. They were also used to bring several urgent patients, including a badly burned one, into Kelly a couple of weeks ago! Thanks to all for your huge effort and persistence in getting this rolling."

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## Vietnam-era fighter pilots hold first reunion at Brooks

By Rudy Purificato

311th Human Systems Wing

They flew nearly every type of military aircraft in the Air Force inventory after graduating in 1962 from flight training at Webb Air Force Base in Big Spring, Texas. April 12, they winged their way to Brooks for the first time during their inaugural reunion in San Antonio that brought together older warriors who hadn't seen each other in 40 years.

"The biggest group of us flew C-130s while others flew the F-100," said retired Lt. Col. Dave Sweeney, who helped organize the gathering of 29 reunion participants. About half of the 40 pilots who graduated from the primary and basic flight training school Class 62G completed Air Force careers. Many of them, however, became commercial airline pilots, Sweeney said.

The group visited Hangar 9 where they were briefed by an Air Force historian about Brooks Field and its contributions to aviation history. They also toured the U.S. Air Force Aeromedical Evacuation Annex and the Challenger Learning Center.

"We picked San Antonio (for the reunion) because it was centrally located," said Sweeney who helped contribute to Air Force history during the Cuban Missile Crisis shortly after he had graduated from flight school.

"I was flying (as an instructor) with a student at night (during a) cross country (flight) at Laughlin AFB in Del Rio, Texas, when over the radio I heard someone ask me if I saw any airplanes flying below me," recalled Sweeney.

His no response did not prompt an explanation from the requester until after he had landed.

"Suspected enemy planes had supposedly flown into the United States from Mexico," Sweeney said, noting that the intelligence report proved to be bogus.

What was not bogus was the tension and uncertainty of the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962 that brought the world to the brink of nuclear war.

Sweeney's father Col. Henry Sweeney



Photo by Rudy Purificato

**A member of the fighter pilot's 1962 reunion class from Webb Air force Base, Texas, admires a photo of Charles Lindbergh, a 1924 Brooks Field 'Flying Cadet', on a recent visit to Hangar 9 during the class' inaguaral reunion. The reunion was the first time many of the graduates had seen each other in more than 40 years.**

had earlier made aviation history in San Antonio and Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, by testing the first ejection seat.

"Dad was assigned to the U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine in 1952 when it was at Randolph AFB. He retired there in 1957," he said.

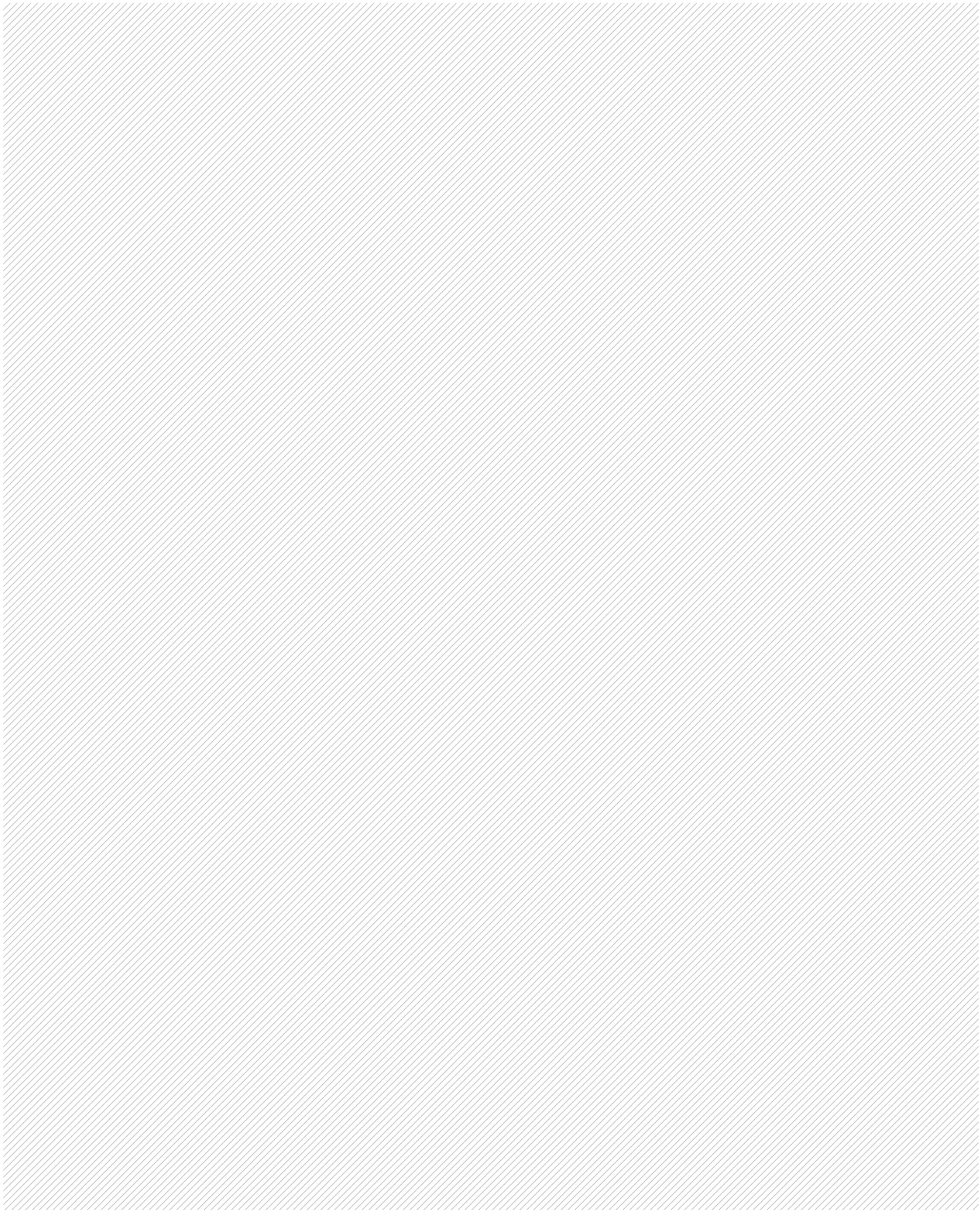
Sweeney's father had worked with several Air Force scientific legends including the late John Paul Stapp, former Brooks deputy chief scientist who as America's first "rocketman" pioneered acceleration research that led to the development of automotive passive restraints, such as seat belts and air bags.

The elder Sweeney, an aviation physiologist, volunteered many times for ejection seat experiments, much like his colleague Stapp who became the world's first "crash dummy" in rocketsled experiments at Holloman AFB, N. M.

"Dad got hurt internally during an ejection seat test at Wright-Patterson. He put too much of a charge (in) to propel the seat. He spent six months at the Mayo Clinic. He died in 1961," Sweeney said.

As a testament to his father's courage and contributions to Air Force aviation research, Stapp gave the Class 62G commencement address at Webb AFB, Sweeney said.

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## Brooks honors Columbia astronauts with tree planting, plaza dedication



*Photo by Senior Airman Brandy Bogart*

**Mark Peterson, with the Texas Forest Service, places one of seven trees honoring the fallen Columbia astronauts while 311th Human Systems Wing Commander Col. Tom Travis, Retired Brig. Gen. John Jernigan, District 3 Councilwoman Toni Moorehouse, retired astronaut John Blaha and seven pre-schoolers from the Child Development Center look on. The dedication ceremony was held on Arbor Day as part of the Earth Week activities at Brooks.**

**By Rudy Purificato**

*311th Human Systems Wing*

Brooks City-Base honored the space shuttle Columbia's astronauts Tuesday during Earth Day with a tree planting ceremony that officially marked the dedication of the Columbia Memorial Plaza.

The dedication ceremony was held inside Hangar 9 and concluded with the planting of seven varieties of oak trees, one each for the fallen astronauts, at a site adjacent to the Challenger Learning Center.

"It's very fitting that we pay tribute to the Columbia crew who represented America, planet Earth and the universe. It is fitting for Brooks that the commemoration site is next to the Challenger Learning Center," said keynote speaker and retired NASA astronaut John Blaha, chairman of the Brooks Aerospace Foundation.

Blaha said the base's contributions to America's space program makes it a logical and appropriate place to permanently honor the Columbia crew, one of whom he knew. "Willie McCool bought my house when I left Houston. He was a fine Air Force officer," Blaha said, noting that he did not know the other Columbia crew members. Blaha commanded the Columbia during a 1993 mission.

The retired astronaut recounted the Columbia mission that ended tragically Feb. 1, 2003.

"They (crew) had trained for the mission for two and half years. They executed a flawless two-week mission that expanded our knowledge of our planet and that of science. The Columbia re-entered Earth's atmosphere at Mach 25, or 25 times the speed of sound. At Mach 20 the accident occurred 250,000 feet over Texas and just 15 minutes from landing," Blaha said.

On a beautifully designed granite memorial marker displayed at the ceremony, the

Columbia's official mission patch is prominently featured. Below it reads: STS-107 Crew - Rick D. Husband, commander; William C. McCool, pilot; Michael P. Anderson, payload specialist; Kalpana Chawla, mission specialist; David M. Brown, mission specialist; Laurel B. Clark, mission specialist; Ilan Ramon, Israel, payload specialist. Below the crew list are President George W. Bush's words said on Feb. 1, 2003: "Mankind is led into the darkness beyond our world by the inspiration of discovery and the longing to understand. Our journey into space will go on."

The plaza project was jointly sponsored by the Brooks Development Authority, 311th Human Systems Wing, Brooks Aerospace Foundation, Brooks Heritage Foundation and the City of San Antonio.

Brooks Development Authority chairman Howard Peak said, "Today, we want to do more than just plant trees, as significant as it is. A few months ago the world lost the seven Columbia astronauts. Because of the war, we may have forgotten too quickly what they had accomplished as Earth scientists. We plant seven trees to commemorate their service to our country, the world and our universe."

Peak, former San Antonio mayor, read the first proclamation in BDA history that commemorated the 131st anniversary of Arbor Day. Seven pre-school children from the Brooks Child Development Center also participated in the Arbor Day celebration phase of the ceremony.

Mark Peterson, a Texas Forest Service regional urban forester for South Texas, participated as a ceremony speaker. He said that at one time in America Arbor Day was a school holiday. Peterson later congratulated Brooks for being designated by the National Arbor Day Foundation as "Tree City U.S.A." for the eighth consecutive year.



# ACTIONLINE

## 536-2222



The COMMANDER'S ACTION LINE is your opportunity to make Brooks a better place to live, work and play.

If you have a suggestion for improvement, a complaint or a problem that you have not been able to resolve through normal complaint channels or the chain of command, call the COMMANDER'S ACTION LINE, 536-2222.

Only items of general interest will be published, so please leave your name and number for a personal response.

The base agencies listed below can be contacted directly:

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| 311th Civil Engineer Squadron.....                     | 536-3861 |
| 311th Communications Squadron.....                     | 536-6571 |
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| Safety.....  | 536-2111 |
| Housing Maintenance.....                               | 533-4100 |
| Housing Office.....                                    | 536-1840 |
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| Brooks City-Base Marketing and Development Office..... | 536-5366 |



## Brooks Family Support Center activities

Call 536-2444  
for information

### Sponsor training

May 6, 8:30-9:30 a.m., Bldg. 537—

In accordance with Air Force Instruction 36-3011, sponsor training is mandatory for all first-time sponsors and those who have not sponsored within the past year. Others are welcome to attend to learn about tools and resources available for sponsors. Medicare, Bexar County Area Agency on Aging will be presented, as well as other topics in the health care field.

### Moving with kids

May 8, 8:30-10 a.m., Bldg. 537—

Your move can be a good one for the whole family. Children of different ages react differently to a move. Learn what to tell your children and how to get them involved.

### Key spouse training

May 9, 10 - 11 a.m., Bldg. 537—

Become a key spouse and volunteer to assist unit commanders with family moral and support in time of need. Receive your free spouses handbook for success and lunch. All key spouses must be interviewed and appointed in writing by unit leadership. Contact Tech. Sgt. Austin Peoples at 536-2444 for more information.

### Transition assistance

May 20-22, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., Bldg. 537—

Making the transition from the military to civilian sector can be a big undertaking. This seminar allows us to better serve separating and retiring members. Topics include job search preparation, resume writing, interviewing skills, veteran's benefits, and more. Members should attend at least 180 days prior to separation.

### Bundles for babies

June 11, 8 a.m. - noon, Bldg. 537—

Active duty Air Force couples with a newborn or expecting a child should plan on attending this Air Force Aid Society sponsored class. Get information about budgeting, basic baby care, infant development, effective parenting, car seat regulations and more.

### Consumer credit counseling

Thursdays, 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Bldg. 537—

Have you fallen deep into debt? Is it tough making payments? Are you near your credit limit and considering loans or bankruptcy? You can get out of debt with a debt management plan. Call 536-2444 to schedule an appointment with a credit counselor.



# Feature



Photos by Staff Sgt. Alfonso Ramirez Jr.

Tech. Sgt. and Mrs. Jonathan Hernandez pass through the sabre arch of the Brooks Honor Guard following their historic wedding ceremony in the Air Force Research Laboratory's centrifuge recently.

Once upon a time, on a base not very far from Brooks, a strong, handsome Air Force hero met a beautiful Filipino immigrant.

The Air Force hero, Tech. Sgt. Jonathan Hernandez, worked at Lackland Air Force Base, performing vehicle maintenance but also running training and tech support sections and ensuring safety in the work environment. In addition to his assigned duties, Hernandez volunteered as a subject for the centrifuge at Brooks, testing the limits of humans and equipment at high forces of gravity. He has endured 9G forces and hopes to go even higher.

"I want to do as much as possible (for the military)," Hernandez said. "I want to tell my grandchildren I (helped) my country."

Hernandez follows a long line of military tradition. His great grandfather and grandfather served in the Mexican army and his dad served in the U.S. military.

Hernandez's decision to join the military eventually led him to his bride and his unique wedding. Hernandez met his wife, now Milagros Hernandez, at the Lackland commissary where she works. Milagros occasionally accompanied the sergeant to his trials at the centrifuge. At first the two were friends, but soon love began to grow and the couple decided to wed.

Over time, Tech. Sgt. Hernandez participated in 34 centrifuge trials, the couple began to feel like a part of the centrifuge family.

"With the military it's a big family...this is my extended family here," the technical sergeant said.

Knowing how much the military and the centrifuge research meant to her future husband, Milagros suggested holding their wedding ceremony at the centrifuge on Brooks.

"It was my idea," she said. "We just wanted to be married."

Since neither bride nor groom had blood relatives nearby, the centrifuge folks set up preparing a wedding and reception for the couple. Retired Master Sgt. Durrell Bess, a minister with Eagle's Nest Christian Fellowship and contractor for the 311th Human Systems Program Office, immediately offered to perform the ceremony.

# A forceful wedding

By Rita Boland

Staff writer

"He's the greatest guy in the world," Tech. Sgt. Hernandez said of Bess.

Bess said this wedding meant more to him than most ceremonies because of his warm feelings for the couple.

And so, on a Thursday at 8 a.m., the couple wed in a research laboratory.

Members of the Air Force Research Laboratory's centrifuge put together a small reception with cake and punch, white roses and a wedding card. Friends, including three of Milagros's friends not associated with AFRL, stood near the wall of the round room that houses the centrifuge while others watched from windows above.

Bess and Tech Sgt. Hernandez entered the room and walked a semi-circle to the honor guard. Then the bride entered.

She wore a pale green gown with embroidered flowers, carrying a bouquet of pale peach and white roses, with small blue flowers between. Maj. Rob O'Connor walked Milagros around the aisle and to her husband.

"We just wanted to put something together for them," O'Connor said. "I thought it was great. It was an unusual setting. It'll give them something to remember."

Though the bride confessed she enjoyed the wedding and was grateful for all that had been done, she admitted that her wedding plans as a young girl were slightly different.

"I never thought about this," she said. "The things we do for love. It's incredible."

The couple's fairy tale continues as they close on their new home at the end of the month. They have no set honeymoon plans, Milagros went to work the afternoon of the ceremony, the couple hopes to go to — where else? — the Magic Kingdom, and other theme parks, at Disneyworld.

They do have set plans for their wedding weekend, though.

"(Friday) Disney on Ice," Tech. Sgt. Hernandez said.

And so the couple plans to live happily ever after — raising fat, happy babies.

The End.

Rita.Boland@brooks.af.mil



Retired Master Sgt. Durrell Bess, left, a minister with Eagle's Nest Christian Fellowship and contractor for the 311th Human Systems Program Office performs the wedding ceremony of Tech. Sgt. Jonathan and Milagros Hernandez in front of the Air Force Research Laboratory's centrifuge.





# NCO council offers camaraderie, networking

By Rita Boland

Staff Writer

The Noncommissioned Officers Council on Brooks offers staff sergeants and technical sergeants a chance to increase visibility, network, serve their base and community and come together with other airmen.

"It's all about camaraderie," said Staff Sgt. David Roberson, a media advisor for the organization.

"Everyone is so spread out and busy. It's a good way to come together," he said.

The NCOC also provides sergeants with leadership opportunities and a chance to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of NCOs.

"They can have a better feel of what NCOs do if they participate in NCOC," Roberson said. "It's the right thing to do. This is something you should want to do."

Tech. Sgt. Melissa Gillette, another media advisor for the NCO Council, agrees.

"We need to lead the way," Gillette said. "It's a responsibility."

The NCOC holds regular

meetings every third Thursday at the Brooks Club at 3 p.m. The organization also participates in and plans various events around base.

Twice a month, members of NCOC brief Brooks newcomers. They also host an occasional "Airmen's Day" when they take the Brooks airmen out for a day of fun. Last time, they went bowling.

The NCOC coordinates and manages all the quarterly and annual awards ceremonies and promotion ceremonies for staff sergeants.

"We emcee the monthly promotion ceremony," said Gillette. "The only way to get involved in those kinds of things is to go to the meetings."

The organization encourages supervisors to allow their sergeants to attend the meetings and events and find most supervisors willing to comply.

"It's that extra something different," Roberson said.

The NCOC recently completed a community service project, collecting \$300 worth of food and necessary home items for the Fisher House.

Upcoming projects include

**“ We need to lead the way. It's a responsibility. ”**

Tech. Sgt. Melissa Gillette  
NCOC Media Advisor

a funnel cake booth at the Brooks Base Picnic.

"We'll have Super Soakers to cool people off," Roberson said.

The NCOC also has participation plans for the Dining Out and the Enlisted Combat Dining-In in July.

Officers for the NCOC are: Staff Sgt. Agnes Bradt, president; Staff Sgt. Willie Rogers (deployed), vice president; Staff Sgt. Kimberly Parks, secretary; and Tech Sgt. Jimmy Scott, treasurer. Scott will PCS soon and Staff Sgt. Tammy Hintz will assume the position of treasurer.

Anyone interested in more information can contact an officer or visit the website at: [wwwsam.brooks.af.mil/web/ncoa/](http://wwwsam.brooks.af.mil/web/ncoa/).



Photo by Airman First Class Samantha Shieh

## Open ranks

Col. Tom Travis, commander of the 311th Human Systems Wing, back right, conducts an open ranks inspection of the Brooks Honor Guard with Command Chief Master Sgt. Richard Hollins and Honor Guard noncommissioned officer in charge Staff Sgt. Melissa Gonzalez for the first time as commander at Brooks. The inspection provided an opportunity to formally introduce the new commander. Following the inspection, Travis took time to share his views and appreciation for the Honor Guard. The Brooks Honor Guard is made up of O-3 and below and E-7 and below personnel from various units on base. The Honor Guard performs military funeral honors, community events, and various ceremonies, including weddings. Regular tenure on the honor guard is 18 months, but members are generally reluctant to leave the camaraderie of the elite group and extend their commitment. Interested parties should contact Staff Sgt. Melissa Gonzalez, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the Brooks Honor Guard, at 536-2635 for more information on becoming a member.



# Education notes

By Carolyn Croft-Foster  
Brooks Education Services Office 536-3617

## Maymester On-Base

Registration is underway for Maymester On-Base. This is a three-week semester for one class. The semester begins May 12 and ends June 1. On-Base classes include: Computer Literacy, American Government, Humanities, Introduction to Psychology and Speech. Call the Education Center for more information or to schedule an appointment with the Palo Alto representative.

## Evening testing available

Beginning in May, military members can take CLEP and DSST exams Wednesday evenings at the Brooks Education Services Office. Seating is limited. Call 536-3617 to reserve a seat.

## Spring CCAF graduates

The Aerospace Education Foundation's Pitsenbarger Award provides a one-time grant of up to \$400 to selected top enlisted personnel graduating from the Community College of the Air Force and planning to pursue a baccalaureate degree.

Pitsenbarger Awards are endowed by the AEF through corporate contributions and donations from the Air Force Association members and their chapters.

Spring graduates interested in applying should stop by Education Services in Bldg. 558, if they did not receive an application in the mail. Deadline is May 5. Call Education Services at 536-3617 for information and submission requirements.

## Six CLEP exams retired

The College Board is retiring six CLEP subject paper-based tests in June. The exams are: General Humanities, General Biology, General Chemistry, German, and Western Civilization I and II. Anyone wishing to take one of these exams must take it prior to June 30. The following exams will be retired Nov. 30: General English, General Mathematics, Accounting, American History I and II, and Spanish. Call the Education Center for more information or to reserve a seat.

## Air Force virtual education center

The Virtual Education Center is on-line. Servicemembers can view information about Air Force Education Centers and the Community College of the Air Force. CCAF students can also order CCAF transcripts from the site. To access the AFVEC go to the following Web site and establish an account at: <https://afvec.langley.af.mil>.

For more information call the Brooks Education Center at 536-3617.

## Discover on-line

The Discover Program is a career exploration program for individuals searching for a new career. This program can be used by military, civilians, and family members. For more information, please call 536-3617 to schedule an appointment to review the website and get started.

IDEA Show Us a Better Way

Plant your IDEAS and watch money start raining down

Submit your IDEA at <https://ideas.randolph.af.mil/>

IDEA Program Managers  
Ms Andrea Garcia, 4-3661  
MSgt Andre Marsh, 4-2945



# Brooks CDC Children's Fair an annual delight

By Rita Boland

Staff Writer

The smell of popcorn wafted through the air as uplifting sound of children's laughter filled the brightly colored play area. A clown made balloons as toddlers used wands to float bubbles toward the sky. Parents and their darlings smiled and giggled their way among food booths and carnival games, soaking up the warm sunshine while enjoying the refreshing kiss of the light breeze.

The Brooks Child Development Center's Children's Fair, held April 11, one of the most beautiful weather days of the year, delighted both parents and children and even the teachers.

"We love it," said Bertha Montoya, a teacher in the pre-toddler room. "We love to think of things for the (parents and children) to do. A lot of parents do come."

Jeannie Smith, the coordinator of this year's Children's Fair, the fourth one in as many years, spent a year putting the event together. Her hard work paid off.

"I think it's great," said Mona Wendzillo, whose child attends the CDC. "I didn't expect them to do something like this. I think they do a good job overall and you wouldn't expect less." Parents did more than just attend the fair, they also volunteered in droves. Parent volunteers helped to set-up and man the booths. Some volunteers don't even have children attending the CDC.

"My kids were here, now they're in school," said Staff Sgt. Carl Lewis of the 311th Mission Support Group and a volunteer for the fair. "I just try to participate in base child care functions. It builds continuity, it helps everyone."

The goal of the fair is to give parents, children and day care providers a chance to interact in a fun, informal manner.



*Photo by Senior Airman Brandy Bogart*

**Although the annual Children's Fair at the Brooks Child Development Center featured games, food and activities, the clown with the balloons was a hit.**

"It's excellent because (the children) have a chance to interact with the parents in the daycare environment and (teachers) get to interact with the parents and we get to know each other even better," said Maria Fuentes, head teacher of the pre-toddler room.

Many parents also appreciated the chance to become better acquainted with the teachers and to play games with their children. Games, food and admission were free of charge.

"It gives a chance for those of us who don't get to come (daily) to see what it's all about," said Lisa Jones whose son attends the center. Her husband generally drops off and picks up their boy.

As much fun as the teachers and parents had, the children probably enjoyed the fair most of all. Even having parents around didn't dampen their enthusiasm and excitement.

"I like the jumping castle," said Sianna, age 4. "The last time I was here I jumped on it and it was so fun."

When asked why she thought the CDC had the fair, Sianna said, "Just to make the kids have fun."

While everyone did have fun, the fair also provided a valuable service, free car seat inspections by the San Antonio Safe Kids Coalition. According to the officials from the organization, four out of five parents install the safety devices incorrectly, though one lady joked that five out of five were installed wrong. CDC employees plan to renew the festivities next year.

## Midweek mass

Midweek mass at the Brooks Chapel is held Thursdays at 11:30 a.m.

Mass is held each first Friday of the month and on holy days of obligation. Mass is open for the entire base Roman Catholic community. Call 536-3824 for details.



## Chapel schedule:

**Weekdays:**  
11:30 a.m. — Mass or Eucharistic service

**Wednesdays:**  
12 p.m. — Lifebuilders luncheon  
6 p.m. — Catholic choir rehearsals

**Thursdays:**  
7:30 p.m. Protestant choir rehearsal

**Sundays:**  
9 a.m. — Catholic Mass  
10:30 a.m. — Catholic religious education

9 a.m. — Protestant Sunday School, ages 3-adult  
10:30 a.m. — Protestant Worship, includes children's church

## Lifebuilder's series

The Lifebuilder's Lunchtime Series continues Wednesdays at noon at the Chapel Annex. Contact the Chapel staff for more information.

# Blood donations needed to support operations

## Wilford Hall Medical Center

Office of Public Affairs

With combat operations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Air Force's largest blood donor center, located at Lackland Air Force Base, is appealing to all active duty military, military dependents, retirees, civil service and Department of Defense contractors to donate now.

More than half of the blood currently being sent overseas by the Air Force is collected at Lackland's Blood Donor Center. With construction completed last fall, the new Air Force Blood Donor Center is located one block south of the Emergency Room entrance to Wilford Hall Medical Center in Bldg. 3425. Blood drives are also being conducted regularly at Randolph AFB and Brooks. Blood drives are shceduled at the Brooks Chapel May 3 and July 21. Call 292-8145 for detailed information and to schedule your donation at Lack-

land.

Although Type O Negative blood is desparately needed by the air Force but all donations are appreciated.

People who are not affiliated with the DoD are encouraged to support their community by donating at local community blood donor centers.

According to the South Texas Blood and Tissue Center, every three seconds someone needs blood, however, less than 5 percent of the eligible donor population gives blood.

Anyone 17 years or older, who weighs at least 110 pounds, and is in good general health may donate. Prospective donors must first complete a health history questionnaire and go through a screening process. If all the requirements are met, a unit of blood is drawn from the donor. Some health conditions or medications may temporarily or permanently prevent persons from donating blood.

Give the gift of life.



# BROOKS

## SPOTLIGHT

Things to do around Brooks

By Jan McMahon  
Brooks Services Marketing Office  
536-5475

### Health & Fitness Center

**Bldg. 940, 536-2188**

Replacement of the roof at the Health & Fitness Center is underway and will take approximately 60 days to complete. There are always minor inconveniences to renovations, including excessive noise and the odor of hot tar. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause our customers.

A Worldwide 5K Fun Run will be held May 21 at 11 a.m. Participants must be 18 years of age or older and sign-up with the Fitness center staff. Everyone completing the run will receive a T-shirt.

Karate is returning in May. Check with the staff for more information on this program.

### Base Library

**Bldg. 705, 536-2634**

Salads can be more than vegetables. The library hosts a salad buffet May 22 at 11 a.m. There is no charge to share your favorite recipe but participants are asked to bring a salad large enough to serve at least six people. Share a recipe or recipes with other guests by bringing copies to exchange. The library staff will make copies. Plates, utensils, napkins and beverages are provided. Recipe books will be on display. Call the staff to let them know you will be participating and encourage coworkers to participate. This is a great way to meet new people. Call the staff for more information.

The library will have new hours of operation beginning May 1 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday, closed Friday, Saturday and holidays, and open Sundays from 1:30 to 6 p.m.

### Premiere Designs

**Bldg. 705, 536-2120**

Various sizes of pre-cut wood and metal frames are available at great savings. All frames are sold as is. Many have small imperfections that do not distract from their beauty. This is a great opportunity to frame those photos that are just lying in drawers or filed away. Prices vary from \$5 to \$35 so now is the time to purchase several.

Let us print your business cards for you. We offer a one-week turnaround

time. Premiere Designs also now prints flyers. Call for more details.

### Brooks Club

**Bldg. 204, 536-3782**

Movie Nights are back at the Brooks Club. First-run movies are shown Wednesday evenings at 6 p.m. Call the staff or stop by for more details. See you at the movies.

Grab 'n Go Chicken is back by popular demand. Make dinner easy by calling the Brooks Club and ordering: two pieces for \$2.95; four pieces for \$4.75; six pieces for \$6.25; eight pieces for \$8.25; 10 pieces for \$10.25 or 16 pieces for \$14.75. The meal comes with all the trimmings. Place your order and pick up dinner 45 minutes later. It's that easy.

Tuesdays are Family Night from 4:30 to 7 p.m. at the Club. The entire family can enjoy dinner for \$4 for adults, \$2 for children 6-10 years and free for children 5 and younger. Children can watch the Cartoon Channel while you are eating.

Menus include a barbecue buffet May 6, fried chicken buffet May 13, May 20 is Oriental and a Mexican buffet is planned for May 27. In honor of Asian Pacific Month entertainment will be provided May 20 during dinner.

Enjoy a hot turkey sandwich with fries every Wednesday evening for only \$4.50.

Have you been to Prime & Wine Night yet? Visit the club on Friday nights for a fantastic meal for only \$12.95. Select from Prime & Wine, Shrimp & Wine, Chicken & Wine plus a Chef's Choice with wine each Friday. Plan on Friday night dinner at the Brooks Club. See you there.

The name has changed but the value is the same. Billie's Burger will now be known as the Boom Burger. This burger, and other food items, are served at the Boar's Head Pub in the Brooks Club Monday through Thursday from 4 to 8:30 p.m. and Friday from 4 to 10 pm. It consists of 1/2 pound charbroiled ground beef, cheddar cheese, sautéed mushrooms, onions and black olives served on a toasted bun, all topped with a special blended sauce and served with a side of fries and pickle spear— for only \$6.

Sidneys is now open only Friday evenings from 3 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. The Boar's Head Lounge at the Brooks Club will be open Mondays through Thursdays from 4 to 8:30 p.m. and Fridays from 4 to 10 p.m.

### Family Child Care

**Bldg. 510, 536-2041**

The Family Child Care Program currently has seven affiliated licensed childcare providers with vacancies for children age 6 weeks to 12 years of age. A list of childcare providers is available at the Family Child Care Office, the Child Development Center or the Youth Center. Childcare assistance is available Monday through Friday from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. at the Family Child Care Office. Call 536-2041 for additional information.

### Teen Center

**Bldg. 641, 536-3160**

Stop by the BXmarket parking lot Saturday, May 3 for a hot dog, chips and a soda for only \$2. Proceeds go to help support the Teen Center programs.



Barfield

# Q&A

**FULL NAME:**  
Master Sgt. James Michael Barfield

**DUTY TITLE, ORGANIZATION:**  
First Sergeant  
311th Mission Support Group

**WHAT IS MY JOB?**  
Take care of my troops

**BIRTHDAY:**  
Nov. 22, 1966

**HOMETOWN:**  
I don't have one, really.  
I was a military brat.

**FAMILY STATUS:**  
Single

**MOTTO:**  
Everyday is a new day,  
what's past has passed.

**INSPIRATIONS:**  
In the military it has to be Gen. George S. Patton, Jr. For guitar, it will always be Stevie Ray Vaughn and for life, J. Krishnamurti.

**HOBBIES:**  
Voracious reader, write short stories and wonder about things. Cooking and football.

**PET PEEVE:**  
I am sure I have many, I just can't think of any one at the moment. I am sure my pet peeves come in cycles like a mood ring.

**BOOK(S) AT BEDSIDE:**  
The 4th Way, by Ouspensky and Crazy Wisdom by Chogyam Rinpoche. They aren't really by my bedside, they're in my library of about 1,000 books.

**I JOINED THE MILITARY BECAUSE:**  
I've loved the military since I was 12. I was born into it and it's always been a part of my life.

**FIVE-YEAR GOAL:**  
I still want to be a First sergeant because I love it. I want to finish my Master's degree in military studies, become a 1st Dan in Aikido, and hopefully one day be able to play Stairway to Heaven note for note.

**ULTIMATE GOAL:**  
To live life to the fullest each and every day.

**IF I WON THE LOTTERY I'D:**  
take a month's leave and go to Egypt and Tibet.

**MY FAVORITE MUSIC:**  
is heavy metal, classic rock and blues.

**MY GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT:**  
making it through my teen years without killing myself.

**MY MOST PRIZED POSSESSION:**  
I have a lot of cool things. Things you gather over the years of your life, but nothing I would really say was a prized possession.

# Feature

## Brooks Personality PROFILE



# The second act in an American life

Photo by Staff Sgt Alfonso Ramirez, Jr.

**By Rita Boland**  
Staff Writer

Barfield spent sixth, seventh and eighth grades at Fort Sam Houston where his father was an Army first sergeant.

He said when he got lost during his first few days back in the area, he kept ending up at the Army post.

"All roads lead to Fort Sam," he said. "I turned around and saw my old house."

Though Barfield's road led him back to San Antonio, following his father's footsteps, he experienced some twists and turns along the way.

Barfield began his Air Force career as a F-14/F-16 crew chief working on the flight line. As he progressed in rank, he began to supervise the new enlistees and that role gradually progressed into his current position.

"I know that's exactly where it started," Barfield said. "You help the younger crew chiefs with little things that are big to them."

Barfield said he would drive a truck with the crew and often they would sit and wait, sometimes for hours, until the planes landed for maintenance.

"(We had) informal counseling sessions in the truck," Barfield said.

Now Barfield has formal and informal counseling sessions and he never sits for hours waiting.

"You're never off duty," he said.

Barfield keeps his pager on at all times, responding to messages as quickly as possible, despite the barrage of appointments he keeps throughout the day.

"I'd been to seven places by 10:30 this morning," he said. "You're on the go, then there's moments of nothing, but there's still something to do."

Despite the physical and mental drains of the job, Barfield relishes his position and the rewards it brings.

"You get satisfaction when people give you feedback or see their face when you're giving them an award," he said. "When the shirt comes for

good things, sometimes that blows their minds."

It might also surprise some of his troops to learn about Barfield's hobbies and past times. He loves to read and has always had a penchant for military history. After he met Gen. Omar Bradley, he wrote him a letter and Bradley wrote back about his war experiences.

"That got me into World War II," he said. "My dad used to bring people over and say 'listen to what this kid knows,'" Barfield said laughing.

His passion for war history and travel made joining the military an obvious choice.

"I always knew I was going to be in the military," Barfield said.

And he has traveled. Barfield estimates visiting 147 locations on various deployments. While stationed in Germany, he visited the Berlin wall before and after its fall and saw his first NFL game at Berlin Stadium.

"I'm a wanderer," Barfield said. "I've checked into all the religions of the world."

His religious education spawned a desire in Barfield to travel to a location he's never deployed to - Tibet. "I'm heavy into comparative religions and ancient history," he said.

Barfield also wants to visit Egypt to explore the pyramids.

"I've always wanted to go to Egypt and figure out those pyramids for myself," he said. "How come we can't build it? That's always fascinated me."

Until he makes his journey, though, Barfield feels content to figure out the problems of his airmen and find solutions to help those in need.

"It's a calling in life," he said. "It's kind of exciting. It's always changing."



# True dedication

By Rita Boland

Staff Writer

Practice makes perfect. Sometimes. But practicing with the wrong equipment or no equipment in the medical air evacuation field can mean life or death.

Realistic training environments with exact equipment in correct locations creates a course as close to perfection as possible. Students find these conditions in the Flight Nurse and Aeromedical Evacuation Technician program at the U.S. School of Aerospace Medicine.

"These mock-ups have to be as realistic as possible," said Capt. Richard Shea, a flight nurse instructor and crew chief of the C-9 mock-up. "Real world. These planes are just about as real world as you can get."

They didn't arrive that way, though. Shea, along with Staff Sgt. Mark DeCorte, an Aeromedical Evacuation Technician instructor and crew chief of the C-130, put in hundreds of man hours to fix-up the C-9, C-130 and C-141 training mock-ups owned by USAFSAM.

No one asked the men to put in the extra time; they do it completely on their own. The two don't even sacrifice any class or class preparation time to improve the aircraft.

"You would not believe the work," Shea said.

Shea and DeCorte estimate having spent at least 300 hours each building, wiring and painting the planes. In the process, they saved SAM almost \$30,000 in labor and part costs, mostly by getting parts and service donated or at discounted prices.

Though they show off their work to the many groups that tour the facilities each year, ranging from school children to generals, the motivation for their extra effort comes from the response of the students.

"They love it," Shea said. "We get glowing reviews. It's worth all the hours and hours."

The work gets more than just reviews, it gets results. Most of the personnel who go through the programs arrive in combat areas shortly after graduation. The equipment and created situations prepare the students for the job and stress of operating in theater.

"They've got to think about the whole mission," DeCorte said. "We're not teaching so much medical, we're teaching flight missions."

Missions include routine patient loading, unloading and care. They include reconfiguring an aircraft that carried cargo in to take patients out. It also includes emergencies.

"You practice emergencies because your response has to be very automatic," said Col. Rob Allen, Aeromedical Evacuation Branch Chief.

In order to provide proper training, Shea and DeCorte installed sound, smoke, fans, lights and even fake fire. DeCorte took a recorder onto a working aircraft to make a copy of



Photos by Staff Sgt. Alfonso Ramirez Jr.

Capt. Richard Shea, right, a flight nurse instructor, and Staff Sgt. Mark DeCorte, an aeromedical evacuation technician and instructor, both assigned to the U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine, reference training notes on proper procedures for handling an aircraft fire. Shea and DeCorte installed the fire and smoke training devices aboard the simulator aircraft used in training at the school.

the sounds for use in training. With the help of subwoofers, the sound makes the C-130 shake the plane, as the engines would rattle the machine in the air and the volume is just as loud as it would be on a real mission. The C-9 and C-141 also have simulated sound. To simulate a fire, the airmen installed smoke machines that can fill the cabins to the point of blackouts. In addition, a small fire goes up in one area and students must examine their checklist to follow proper procedures. The men put real fire extinguishers in all the places the tool would be found on a working plane.

"Before, they would hold up a piece of paper that said fire, the student would grab a fake fire extinguisher and say 'I'm putting out the fire,' and then crumple the paper," DeCorte said.

"It's in the details," Shea added.

Every piece of equipment found on a working aircraft is now found on the training mock-ups from oxygen tanks to crash axes. Even the knobs in the cockpit have been painted the correct colors as have all the latches and switches in the main body of the plane. Prior to the work of Shea and DeCorte, the instructors used the cockpit for a storage room.

"It should be second nature when an emergency pops up," Shea said. "They've got to think about the whole mission."

The aircrafts can also simulate a decompression emergency and fill with fog. Air conditioning and fans run during the mission to create the frigid conditions found at altitude. The men run everything by remote control.

"We create all the stresses we can," DeCorte said.

Shea and DeCorte also installed lights in correct places, like on the C-9 ramp and by all the planes' exits, as well as placing red lights along the ceiling of the C-130 to simulate a black-ops drop-off and pick-up. During that simulation, the instructors turn off all the lights except one, which shines on the American flag on the back of the C-130, a flag that



Capt. Richard Shea reconfigures the C-9 to accommodate patients as they would in a real-world aeromedical evacuation.

came from the casket of a fallen soldier. The original flag, taken down because of drooping due to humidity, draped the casket of Shea's Uncle; William Shea Jr., SSG, USA (WWII).

The men say the flag makes the students stop and think about the seriousness of their job.

Shea and DeCorte took different approaches on the various planes because each serves a different purpose. The C-130 flies into combat areas, dropping off supplies and troops and then picking up injured patients. These planes typically land and take off in 20 minutes, bring the patients to a location in a safe country. Crew must use adapters in the plugs and bring all necessary medical equipment to include liquid oxygen aboard before departure.

The C-9 transports patients only within a non-combat theater and doesn't leave that area.

"The C-9 is the Cadillac of air evacs," Shea said. "It has the absolute best environment for the patients."

The C-9 looks like most commercial airliners, but the seats can be

removed to make way for patient litters. The aircraft has household current, oxygen and suction equipment built in.

The C-141 flies inter-theater missions.

"They're bringing patients home from Iraq in these," DeCorte said.

They bring patients home, they save patients' lives and they boost morale. Despite the pain of injury, when combat troops know they're going home their spirits increase tremendously.

That's why Shea and DeCorte put in the extra hours, working weekends and holidays, making every detail exact. That's why they bring their children along to learn about the planes and help improve them. DeCorte has four children and a deployed wife.

That's why the flag flies over the entrance to the C-130, illuminated as a reminder that in this line of work, any field mistakes take Old Glory from flying high to crying arms.

Rita.Boland@brooks.af.mil



Capt. Richard Shea and Staff Sgt. Mark DeCorte exit the C-130 mock-up beneath a flag that once draped a servicemember's coffin. The flag was donated and hangs as a reminder to students that the training is vital.



## NEWS briefs

### Promotion ceremony

The next Brooks enlisted promotion ceremony is scheduled for April 30 at 3 p.m. in the Brooks Club, Bldg. 204. The ceremony recognizes April and May promotees for their promotion to the next higher grade. Come out and support the newest promotees.

### Civilian awards breakfast

The Civilian of the Quarter awards breakfast is scheduled for May 14 at 7:30 a.m. at the Brooks Club. Tickets must be purchased by May 8 and will not be available at the door. Contact Juanita Jasper at 536-5440 for more information.

### Tuskegee airmen banquet

The San Antonio Chapter, Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. will hold its 12th Annual Educational Awards Banquet May 10 at 6 p.m. at the Randolph Air Force Base Officers Club. In addition to presenting educational assistance awards, this year's event features Tuskegee Class 45-G graduate Dr. Granville Coggs as the guest speaker. Tickets are \$25. For more in-

formation or tickets, contact Rick Sinkfield at 536-4188.

### Spouses club flea market

The Brooks Spouses Club is sponsoring a Trash to Treasures Flea Market May 3 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. in front of the Thrift Shop. Spaces are available to rent for \$10 each and may be reserved by contacting Debbie Costantino at 333-8171.

### Orthodontic patients needed

The Tri-Service Orthodontic Residency Program at Dunn Dental Clinic at Lackland Air Force Base is seeking 10-18 year-old patients for treatment by the incoming class of residents. Patients need to be eligible active duty family member beneficiaries who are not on the Tricare Dental Plan, United Concordia, or who have already met their lifetime orthodontic benefit cap. Beneficiaries and family members of retired personnel in the local area are eligible for consideration, and are especially encour-

aged to come in. The clinic will begin scheduling appointments May 1. Contact 292-2579 for an evaluation appointment or more information.

### Sleep study subjects

The Chronobiology and Sleep Laboratory at Brooks needs volunteers to participate in a number of ongoing sleep research studies. Interested Air Force and civilian personnel who meet the necessary qualifications are eligible to receive compensation starting at \$10 per hour. Contact Laura Sanchez at 536-3616 for additional information, or visit the website at: [www.ntiinc.com](http://www.ntiinc.com) and link to "studies."

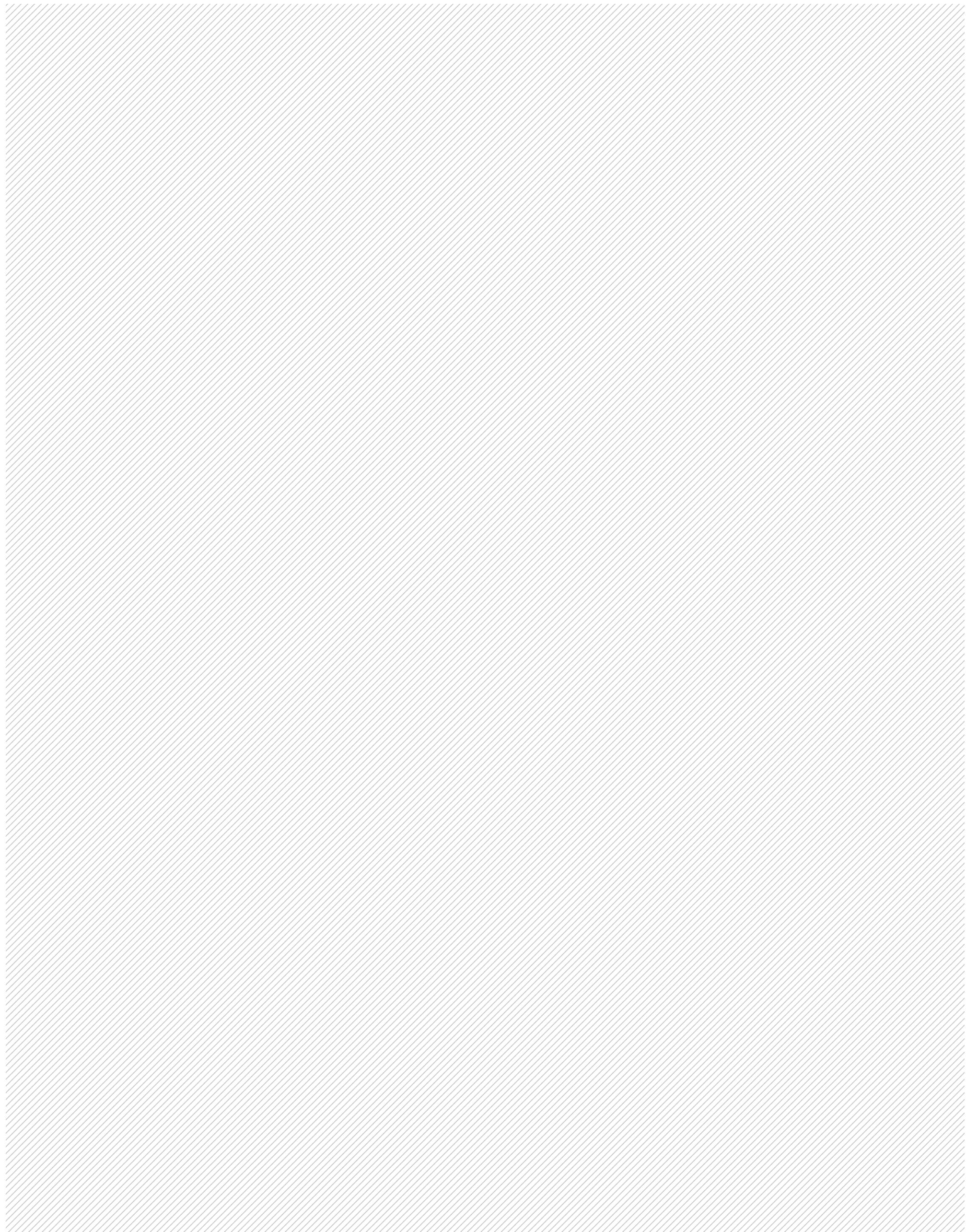
### Altitude test subjects

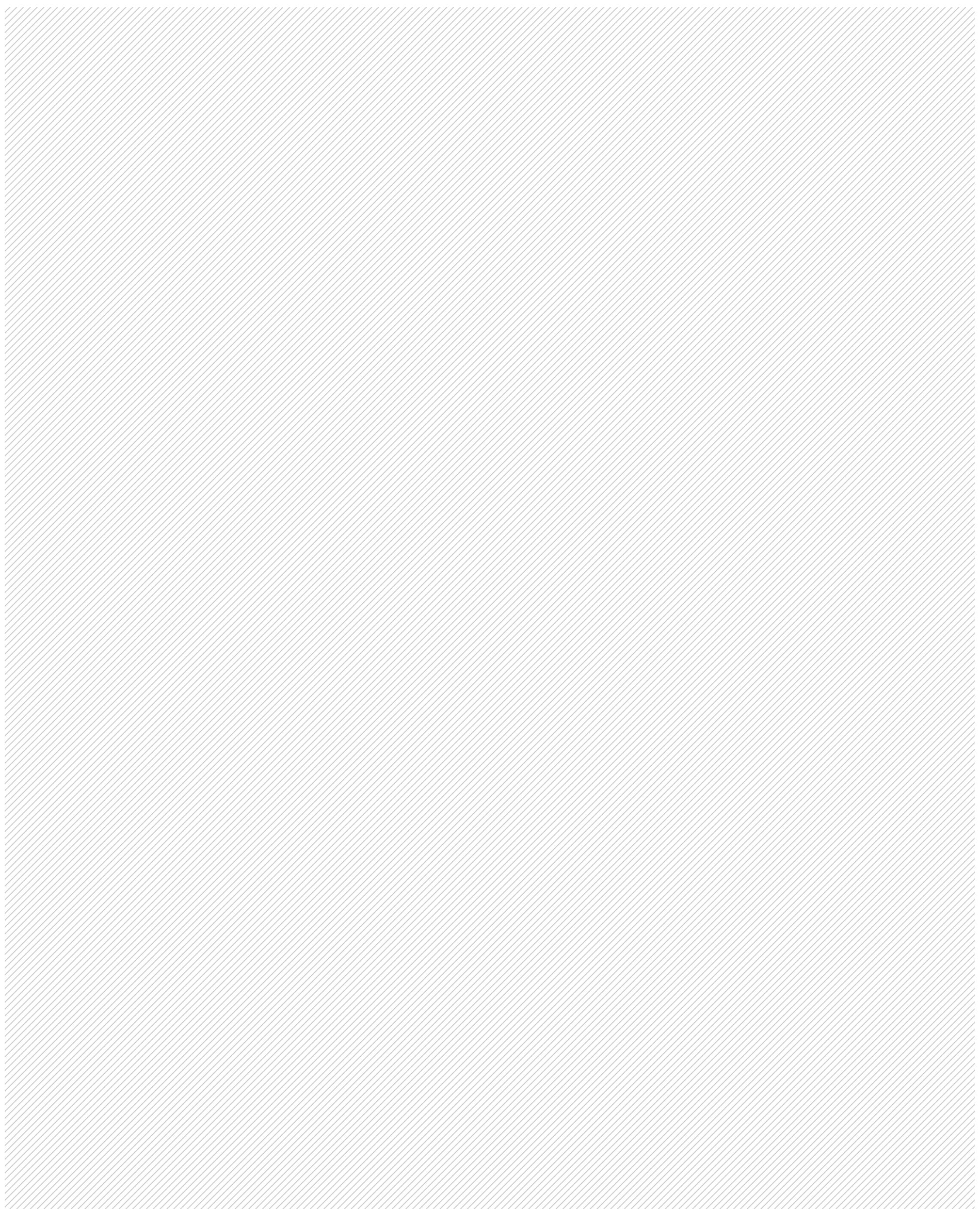
Altitude test subjects needed: Help provide F-22 pilots, high altitude parachute personnel, high altitude reconnaissance pilots and astronauts with adequate equipment and procedures to accomplish their missions without distraction or hazard resulting from exposure to altitude. Several research

protocols are being conducted at the High Altitude Protection Laboratory at Brooks to accomplish this mission. Hypobaric (altitude) chamber test subjects can earn \$150 per month for participating in at least one session per month. Each subject must meet Air Force body fat or height/weight standards, be a non-smoker for at least two years, be between 18 and 50 years of age, and be able to pass an appropriate physical exam. Contact Heather Alexander at 536-3440 or Jim Carlile at 536-3546 for more information.

### Centrifuge subjects

The Air Force Research Laboratory Biodynamics and Protection Division is in need of active duty volunteers between the ages of 18 and 50 years, able to pass the equivalent of a flying class exam, to participate in several studies, which help in the development of safe life support equipment, protocols and procedures for Air Force aircrew in wartime and peacetime environments. Subjects may earn \$150 hazardous duty pay per month. Contact Suzanne Flores at 536-6258 for details.







# Varsity softball duo a 'band of brothers'

By Rudy Purificato

311th Human Systems Wing

Opposing teams know them as the home run hitting "Bash Brothers." To their Brooks varsity softball squad teammates, they are closer than blood kin as a "band of brothers."

The bond that Marty Baugher and Joel Berry share began when they became instant friends in the first grade. They spent their formative years growing up together in the small Shenandoah Valley town of Elkton, Va., an idyllic place where everyone knew their neighbor.

"We're the best of friends, more like brothers," said Berry, who is a few months older than Baugher.

As kids, the pair was inseparable. Sleepovers at one another's homes were frequent, despite some shenanigans.

"I bet him he couldn't catch a skunk," Berry said. Baugher caught more than just the skunk. Recalls his friend, smiling, "He spent hours in my bathtub where my mom used tomato juice to get the smell off him."

Their paths briefly diverged at Spotswood High School where Baugher became an All-District linebacker. The then undersized Berry did not play high school sports other than lettering in golf. "He was a skinny kid, but a very good athlete," Baugher remembers. They were not teammates in school, but it didn't matter to them.

By the time they had graduated from high school, their friendship had matured into a deep and abiding kinship. So much so, that when Baugher de-



Photo by Rudy Purificato

The Brooks varsity men's softball team's "Bash Brothers," Marty Baugher, left, and Joel Berry, during a practice session. The two are among the team's home run leaders.

cided to join the Air Force following graduation in 1988, Berry enlisted as well.

"My initial goal was to go to a community college for two years and then transfer to Old Dominion. It didn't dawn on me to join the Air Force until a friend of ours told me he was joining. It was a spur of the moment thing," admits Baugher about his enlistment. It didn't take much coaxing by Baugher to talk Berry into joining the Air Force.

"We were at basic training together at Lackland (AFB), but in different squadrons," Berry recalls. Due to Baugher's delayed entry, Berry began his Air Force career 17 days ahead of his pal.

Both came into the Air Force 'open general,' meaning they had no preferred occupational specialty.

"I was assigned as an aeromedical technician. The tech school is at Brooks. Four weeks later, Marty was assigned as a bioenvironmental (en-

gineer) technician. That school is also at Brooks," exclaimed Berry.

Subsequent assignments for Berry at Langley AFB, Va. and Baugher at Andrews Air Force Base, Md., led to their weekend reunions back home in Elkton. Berry was eventually assigned to the U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine in January 1999. He currently serves as NCOIC of USAFSAM's Aeromedical Training Division.

Baugher seized the opportunity to be with his friend, knowing that they had, perhaps, one chance in their Air Force careers to be assigned to the same base.

"One of the reasons I took this job was to be with Joel. It's a special duty assignment," Baugher said of his job as NCOIC of the Industrial Hygiene Consultant Branch for the Air Force Institute for Environment, Safety and Occupational Health Risk Analysis.

Baugher arrived at Brooks in June 2001. Soon thereafter, both he and

Rob Collins, the fitness center's program director, said the softball playoffs are scheduled to start June 16. The base championship tournament will feature a double elimination format. The six teams competing this year include the reigning six-time base champion Air Force Institute for Environment, Safety and Occupational Health Risk Analysis led by player-coach Aaron Sinclair. Attempting to dethrone the AFIERA softball dynasty will be last year's league champs, the 311th Mission Support Group's I.C.E. (Intensity, Concentration and Execution), again led by coach Carl Lewis.

Other teams competing include the 68th Information Operations Squadron coached by Tracy Sullivan, the 311th Medical Squadron led by Rafael Pena, the 311th Security Forces Squadron coached by Jeff Blankenship, and the combined 311th Human Systems Contracting Office and 311th Human Systems Program Office led by Nick Pellerino.

The regular season ends June 11. Games are played Mondays and Wednesdays at 5:30 and 6:30 p.m.

athletic karaoke and CRUDE events as well as the least participatory punt, pass and kick event. Flag football was reintroduced in 2002 and the scoring system was revised and re-revised during two Squadron Challenges held in May and November. There are no plans this year to stage two separate Squadron Sports Days.

Rob Collins, the fitness center's new program director, said the deadline for organizations to register teams for the 14 Squadron Sports Day events is May 2.

The tentative schedule of events is 5K Run and golf at 8 a.m.; racquetball, volleyball, tennis and 3 on 3 basketball at 9 a.m.; one pitch softball, 4 on 4 flag football and horseshoes at 10 a.m.; the 100 meter dash at noon; the 4x100 relay at 12:45 p.m.; and ping pong, 8-ball pool and tug of war at 1 p.m.

The defending champion is the 311th Human Systems Program Office which won both Squadron Challenges in 2002.

## Intramural softball resumes league play

By Rudy Purificato

311th Human Systems Wing

The 2003 Brooks intramural softball season began Monday with the fewest number of teams participating in league play in years.

Due to a shrinking talent pool caused, in part, by deployments, this year's intramural season will feature a double round robin format in which six teams will compete.

Fitness center staff had proposed at a Sports Advisory Council meeting an extramural softball program as an option if not enough teams signed up for intramural play. Unfortunately, the lack of teams registering for intramural volleyball forced the cancellation of that sport.

## Squadron Challenge changes name, adds three events

By Rudy Purificato

311th Human Systems Wing

More accurately representing athletic competition, Squadron Challenge has been renamed Squadron Sports Day and will feature three new events when it is held May 16.

The Brooks Sports Advisory Council unanimously voted to change the name and add horseshoes, ping pong and 8-ball pool. The move marks the third consecutive year that changes were made in response to local interest and the base's compliance with the spirit and intent of the annual Air Force Fitness Month celebration in May.

Last year, council members voted to drop the non-

Berry were starters on the base varsity softball team.

No longer a skinny kid, Berry has since bulked up by 70 pounds through weight training and grew five inches in height. He is the team's left centerfielder and leading home run hitter batting third in the order. Baugher, a catcher-first baseman-third baseman, is also a right-handed long ball slugger. He bats fifth.

Both are fiercely competitive, as evidenced two years ago during the intramural softball base championship title game in which Berry played for USAFSAM while Baugher opposed him as a member of the AFIERA team. They taunted each other with a 'one upsmanship' hitting display.

Fate has played more of a role in their lives than just allowing them to finally become teammates. They both were promoted to master sergeant within a year of each other; both were selected as Senior NCOs of the 3rd Quarter 2002 at Brooks for their respective organizations; and their wives, whose first names begin with the letter "J" and married names end with the letter "B," both work for the federal government at Lackland AFB.

Incidentally, Berry and Baugher are the youngest siblings in their respective families and both are fathers of young daughters. Not surprisingly, their off-base homes are only a few minutes away from one another.

It is not hard to imagine, based on their history together, that both of them consider the varsity team they play for to be the best squad they have ever been on. No wonder, for this "band of brothers" is much more a family of players than the 1971 Pittsburgh Pirates who espoused player kinship in the team's theme song "We Are Family."

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## Intramural golf begins season 'handicapped'

By Rudy Purificato

311th Human Systems Wing

Brooks intramural golfers are experiencing a different kind of handicap this year as the historically high participation in this base sport has dropped to a "sub-par" level.

Only eight teams began vying for the 2003 league championship when the regular season started on April 16. Last year, 11 organizations participated in the league.

Despite the 311th Human Systems Wing, Contracting Office and the 311th Security Forces Squadron not fielding teams this year, there are plenty of rivalries to heat up the links.

The Air Force Institute for Environment, Safety and Occupational Health Risk Analysis, led by team captain Jim Ronyak, is the defending base champion. They will have their hands full again this year fending off several contenders including the 2002 league champs Services led by team captain Rudy Gonzales and the 311th Communications Squadron headed by team captain Thomas Ray. The Comm golf squad, perennial bridesmaids for the base title, was defeated by AFIERA in the championship round of the 2002 base tournament.

Other contenders participating this season include the Air Force Center for Environmental Excellence headed by James Wilde, the Air Force Research Laboratory led by Curtis Lawrence, the 311th Human Systems Program Office headed by Nick Pellerino, the U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine headed by Narada Walker and the 68th Information Operations Squadron led by team captain Tracy Sullivan.

The double round robin season is scheduled to end in July, followed by the playoffs. Only the top four teams will advance to the base championship tournament. Regular season intramural golf matches are held every Wednesday afternoon.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Anita Schroeder

### Military Night at the Missions

Col. John Bowley, 311th Mission Support Group commander, throws out the first pitch at a San Antonio Missions game during military appreciation night recently. The Brooks Honor Guard presented the colors for the event, and the U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine's Senior Master Sgt. Anne Rozkydal performed the national anthem.

## Registration open for 2003 USAF marathon

By Susan Murphy

Aeronautical Systems Center Public Affairs

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio (AFPN) — Registration is under way for the 2003 U.S. Air Force Marathon scheduled for Sept. 20 at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

Runner categories have changed slightly from past years. A 5K fun run and a 1/2 marathon have been added. There will no longer be a marathon team category. The marathon, four-person Ekiden-style relay team and wheelchair categories remain unchanged.

The Air Force Marathon, traditionally held the third Saturday of September, is open to all levels of marathoners, civilians and military, from all around the world.

More than 3,200 runners participated in the marathon representing nearly every state and six countries.

The first U.S. Air Force Marathon was held at Wright-Patterson AFB Sept. 20, 1997, to coincide with the Air Force's 50th anniversary. U.S.A. Track and Field, the governing body of long-distance running in the United States, certified the course in 1997. Air Force Marathon officials asked for certification in order to assure participants the course is exactly 26 miles, 385 yards.

Runners will receive a uniquely designed T-shirt and patch. Participants who finish the marathon within the eight-hour time limit will receive a medallion.

Reduced fees for early registration are available until June 30. Registration deadline is Sept. 4.

For more information, visit the marathon Web site at <http://afmarathon.wpafb.af.mil>, or call the marathon office at 800-467-1823.