

ACADEMY SPIRIT

U.S. AIR FORCE ACADEMY, COLORADO

VOL. 44 No. 15

APRIL 16, 2004

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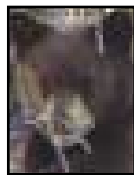
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Briefly

AFAF Update

Two weeks into the campaign and only 3.1 percent of active duty Academy personnel have taken part in the 2004 Air Force Assistance Fund, but at least they've been very generous.

Approximately \$13,044 has been contributed, according to Capt. Cicely Levingston, 2004 installation project officer. That number reflects 22.3 percent of the base goal of \$58,606.78.

The Academy's 2004 AFAF campaign—*Commitment to Caring*—runs through May 7. Contact unit keyworkers to get more information.

Mass destruction

A weapons of mass destruction exercise is planned here April 27. The exercise will test Academy agencies' ability to respond to mass casualty disaster scenarios and train personnel on key response procedures.

The field exercise is projected to last several hours. Parents should consider special child care arrangements.



Photo by David Armer

Shaking talons

Retired Navy Lt. Cmdr. Harold Webster meets one of the Academy's gyrfalcon mascots handled by Cadet 2nd Class Kim Herd, April 7 at the Falcon Mews. The Navy officer is responsible for introducing the raptor as the U.S. Air Force Academy mascot. For more information, see page 8.

Refill robots make medication access faster, safer for bases

By Tamara Wright
Academy Spirit staff

An automated system for processing prescriptions will increase patient safety and military pharmacy productivity in the Colorado Springs region, according to 10th Medical Group officials.

The Pikes Peak Joint Refill Processing Center opened here Tuesday and is the first of its kind in DoD. Highlighting the opening ceremonies was the \$1.7 million in robotics equipment responsible for refilling prescriptions called in from any of the five Colorado

Springs Military Treatment Facilities — Fort Carson, Peterson AFB, Schriever AFB, Cheyenne Mountain AS and the Academy. DoD beneficiaries in the Colorado Springs area receive approximately 1.3 million prescriptions annually from military pharmacies.

The refill processing center is manned weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. To get prescriptions filled and returned the next day, patients need to call their prescription refills in Monday through Thursday before 2 p.m. Orders are filled daily at the new facility and sent to convenient pickup points in the

■ See Robo Refill, page 6

Enlisted troops gain assignment options

Academy men, women can see more locations with Mandatory Mover

Compiled by Academy Spirit staff

Enlisted men and women assigned to the Academy can have a little more say in where they want to go after they complete their tour thanks to a new assignment process.

Enlisted assignments division officials at the Air Force Personnel Center, Randolph AFB, Texas, unveiled the CONUS Mandatory Mover program earlier this month. The new system is designed to

account for many special-duty jobs now being coded as maximum tour assignments in the continental United States.

The new process, starting in mid-April, also affects recruiters, military training instructors, military training leaders, technical training instructors, Air Education and Training Command's professional military education instructors and people assigned to joint/department agencies.

Airmen serving in these positions will compete for their next assignment using the Enlisted Quarterly Assignment Listing for Overseas Returnees/CONUS Mandatory Mover once they reach their cycle based on their maximum tour date.

■ See Enlisted, page 2

Evolution: Class of 2007 begins year's final phase

By Debbie Kubik
Academy Spirit staff

Members of the Academy's Class of 2007 began their journey toward the next milestone in their cadet experience Thursday.

An event titled *Iter Itineris ad Astra*, or "Journey to the Stars," marks an important milestone of Phase III training for fourth class cadets. The phrase incorporates the Class of 2007's motto, *ad Astra*.

Training during a cadet's first year is divided into three phases. Phase I was Basic Cadet Training. Phase II began with the acceptance parade and concluded with Operation PHOENIX in November. From there to graduation encompasses Phase III, which results in the awarding of the Prop and Wing insignia to class members in ceremonies Saturday.

"These events are designed to provide leadership, learning and team-building opportunities for all cadets," Commandant of Cadets Brig. Gen. John Weida said April 9. "This is not intended to be a 'culminating' event or resemble 'recognition' activities of years past. Rather, it is designed to incorporate lessons learned during all phases of each cadet's career and provide opportunities to demonstrate and evaluate them."

The annual events began with the commandant's address to the Cadet Wing Thursday. In this address, General Weida communicated his expectations for excellence, his emphasis on professionalism and the reasons behind the changes.

Tonight fourth class cadets meet a review board, administered by their cadet chain of command. The 10-minute review takes each cadet through an evaluation of dress and personal appearance, adherence to board procedures and ability to answer standardized questions. These boards are designed to give all cadets experience in administering as well as meeting Air Force-type selection boards.

Saturday morning begins with a room and personal appearance

■ See Tradition, page 2

Robo Refill

Springs-area pharmacies join forces for prescriptions

■ *Continued from page 1*

Colorado Springs area.

Army and Air Force employees from each of the military facilities use combined equipment and buying power to provide a cost-effective way of improving the overall patient experience at the pharmacies.

"This refill pharmacy gives us the capacity to serve all the military facilities in the Pikes Peak Region, so this will touch some 122,000 plus beneficiaries receiving care from the southern end of Colorado Springs at Fort Carson to the northern tip at the Air Force Academy," said Col. Douglas Robb, commander of the 10th Medical Group. "In the future, our strategic vision is to expand north to Buckley AFB, F.E. Warren AFB and to possibly serve as a reach back center to help support the war efforts in Iraq."

With a high demand for services and medication, the joint refill processing center is the answer for military pharmacies to keep up with the needs of their population, according to Col. Ardis Meier, Air Force Consultant to the Surgeon General on Pharmacy.

An eight to 10 member pharmacy team accompanies the center's two robot arms. The robots have the ability to fill in two hours what a busy pharmacist in an average drug store can fill in one day. With the new robotics equipment and automation, errors are reduced.

"Probably the most valuable feature of the robot and the software used in our prescription filling process is that it virtu-



Each of the two robotic arms need only two hours to fill as many prescriptions as a busy pharmacist can complete in one day.

ally eliminates drug-to-drug errors; which is the most common type of pharmacy dispensing error," said Lt. Col. David Johnson, 10th MDG Pharmacy Flight commander. Drug-to-drug errors refer to filling a medication request with something other than the medication prescribed or desired.

"We can save personnel by using the robot instead of dedicating 15 or 16 people doing refills daily at different medical facilities, we have reduced that number to 10 at the new site. So it allows us to divert those five or six people to improving patient care," Colonel Johnson said.

The process begins when patients call the prescription refill phone line. The prescriptions are placed into the Composite Healthcare Computer

System and sorted according to requested pick-up location.

"The robots use a barcode, linked to the National Drug Code number embedded on each prescription label that's processed through the system," said Master Sgt. Adrian Davis, 10th MDG Pharmacy superintendent. "This process is in use at the majority of the pharmacies on the Academy and Peterson AFB, and is the gold standard throughout the Air Force Medical Service."

Prescriptions not located in the cabinets accessed by the robotic arms are filled manually. Each manual item introduced into the robotic filling process must contain a barcode. The robotic system uses the barcode to validate that the item selected matches the medication requested on the refill. When a techni-



Supply levels are tracked via computer program to verify drugs are loaded into the correct storage bins.

cian fills prescriptions and the correct medicine is selected, the computer shows a blue screen. If the wrong medicine is selected the computer shows a red warning screen and does not allow the technician to proceed until the correct medication is selected.

"The system guarantees the patient will receive the proper medication, as ordered by the physician," Colonel Johnson said.

Once the refilling process is complete, the bottle is scanned as it comes out of the robot and from the manual fill stations to a final check that is done by a certified verifier. The prescription is bagged and put into color-coded bins.

"Refill prescriptions are then picked up by bonded courier the following morning for transport to each of the military treatment facilities," Colonel Johnson said.

To further ensure patients receive their proper medication, the pharmacists at the pick up location will scan the bar codes printed on the prescription label for final verification.

"While the project is a significant capital investment, the equipment will support a strongly expanded patient base now and for years to come," Colonel Meier said.

This is the first of four prescription processing centers approved by the Health Affairs and Surgeon General's office. Other locations for refill prescription processing centers will be Luke AFB, Ariz.; Nellis AFB, Nev.; and San Antonio, Texas.



▲ Peterson AFB's Staff Sgt. Lucinda Emerson and Fort Carson's Terry Weddle conduct quality checks of filled prescriptions. ► The Academy's Airman Jeremy Davis refills drug supply boxes for a robotic arm station.

