

# Cadet Summer Research Program

## Air Force Academy Cadet Exposed to “Real World” of Military Life

ALBERTA LADYMON • MARY-JO HALL

Cadet Isaac T. Bell arrived on May 15 this year at Fort Belvoir, Va., with one primary goal — to experience work as an active duty military member of the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) staff. Bell knew he would be assisting with research and participating in a variety of management and leadership curricula development activities, which is a routine part of the Research Internship Program.

Although he came to DAU to learn and gain on-the-job experience, somewhere along the way he became truly immersed in the military way of life, with all its hardships, loyalties, history, culture, and comradery.

He learned that military life is an *experience* and a close-knit *community*, not just a routine duty or job. Entering the world that supported acquisition professionals was fast-paced, multi-dimensional, and interesting. And in a culture saturated with acronyms and abbreviations, he also acquired a new vocabulary.

### Finding a Niche

Since his assignment was assisting faculty member Dr. Mary-jo Hall, he literally “reported” to the classroom. As it turned out, the class that Hall was teaching at 8 a.m. on his first day was a class on Strategic Direction — a topic directly related to his primary research project. Bell decided it made a lot of sense to actually attend the class as a student. From

that point on, he became not only Hall’s assistant, but also an adjunct member of the Advanced Program Management Course (APMC) 01-2-H.

For his primary research project, Bell served on a research team tasked with developing a measurement system for the Program Manager Community of Practice (PM CoP). Using the Balanced Scorecard approach, the team members designed the performance management system for DAU’s new PM CoP. They also used the storyboard technique to capture the design of the PM CoP.

As part of the experience, Bell immersed himself in the activities of Section H as though he were a full-fledged student, accompanying them on their trip to Capitol Hill and playing on their softball team for Sports Day. Adding to the “experience” part of the assignment, he helped his team win by hitting the only home run against the faculty team. Bell attended several other APMC classes and electives and, on a personal note, participated as reader for Air Force Col. Owen Gadeken’s retirement ceremony.

A highlight of the Research Internship was the opportunity to shadow senior officers in acquisition positions. Bell met Air Force Maj. Gen. Michael C. Mushala, Program Executive Officer (PEO) for Bombers and Fighters, and accompanied him to his Pentagon staff meeting. He then shadowed Air Force Maj. Ronald Jobo, also with PEO Fighters and Bombers, for the rest of the day.

Such experience allowed him to see how DAU’s mission supports the acquisition community.

### Life From the “Opposite Side of the Podium”

During the six-week assignment, Bell was heavily involved with a variety of activities supporting Hall and her work in the Program Management and Leadership (PML) Department. One of Bell’s central areas of focus during the assignment was the *PM SMARTbook* elective course. He participated in all facets of the course from designing classroom materials to developing a CD-ROM. The experience of assisting in the preparation of curriculum allowed him to see the academic environment from the “opposite side of the podium.”

Because his assignment was developmental, Bell also completed many of the leadership aspects of the PML curriculum, including a baseline assessment of his own leadership skills, and generating ideas for enhancing his ability to lead Cadets at the U.S. Air Force Academy. To learn more about himself, he completed and internalized the findings of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) personality assessment. He also attended the MBTI elective with Otto Kroeger, a nationally known organizational consultant and best selling author whose primary area of expertise is use of the MBTI.

Cadet Bell came to DAU with no exposure to the academic side of acquisition,

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**ISAAC T. BELL**  
*Cadet First Class*  
*U.S. Air Force Academy*



**B**orn in Knoxville, Tenn., Cadet Bell attended schools in Sullivan, Miss., and in Charlestown and Borden, Ind. In 1998, former Congressman Lee Hamilton appointed him to the U.S. Air Force Academy.

Bell is on the Superintendent's list for military, academic, and athletic proficiency. He is currently majoring in Management. The Department of Management at the U.S. Air Force Academy offers cadets the opportunity to earn an undergraduate degree in Management, and is accredited by the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). The Cadet Summer Research Program is designed to offer the best and brightest management majors the opportunity to apply what they learn in the classroom in the context of "real-world" organizational environments.

Bell's long-range career plans include completion of graduate school with a master's degree in Business Administration, followed by Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training and service as an active duty Air Force fighter pilot.

technology, and logistics. Hopefully, he left with a wealth of initial exposure to the skills that breed successful leaders, program managers, and program executive officers. Of the nine cadets DAU has sponsored since 1994, has DAU unknowingly hosted a Senior Acquisition Executive in the making? *One can only wonder.*

## **ABOUT THE CADET SUMMER RESEARCH PROGRAM (CSRP)**

**T**hree decades ago, David Packard, former Deputy Under Secretary of Defense and founder of the Defense Systems Management College (DSMC), envisioned the acquisition community would grow, expand, and mature, in part through acquisition research. To this end, laws that created DSMC, and later DAU, incorporated research as an integral part of the mission.

In keeping with the spirit of the laws establishing DAU-DSMC, the Research program sought ways to enhance the acquisition community of knowledge. One such effort started in 1994 with the initiation of the Cadet Summer Research Program, or CSRP. The program was named the "Cadet" program in honor of the inaugural participant from the U.S. Air Force Academy. The program had aspirations of expanding to the other Services, but this did not come to fruition.

Made possible through a research extension agreement established between DAU-DSMC and the U.S. Air Force Academy, the goal of the CSRP is to provide a unique opportunity where Academy students gain hands-on acquisition research experience during the summer. Program participants reside at DAU during the six-week program and are assigned to assist specific DAU-DSMC faculty members, who act as their mentors during the project.

Under the direction of their faculty mentors, the program participants are exposed to a variety of acquisition-related tasks, contribute to active DAU-DSMC acquisition research projects, and document their findings and experiences.

Cadet J. Jeremy Marsh was the first Cadet to enter the program in 1994. His article, "Liberators, Mustangs, and "Enola Gay" can be found at <http://www.dsmc.dsm.mil/pubs/pdf/pmpdf94/marsh.pdf> in the Sep-Oct 1994 issue of DSMC's *Program Manager* magazine. Since that time, eight other Cadets have participated in the program.

During the summer of 2000, Cadet Laurel Lee became the first Cadet to actively participate in researching and writing a complete chapter for a DAU Guidebook: *Impact of the Media and Mass Communication Technology on the National Security Decision Making Process*. Lee worked closely with Dr. Robert Burnes, Associate Director, School of Program Management Division, and Dr. Robert Delaney, an expert in the field of media relations. Throughout the course of her research, Lee developed questions prior to interviewing leading journalists from the *Washington Post*, NBC, Voice of America, and *The Daily News*; lobbyists; Congressional staffers and members of Congress; and key officials at the Pentagon.

**DoD organizations wishing to participate in the U.S. Air Force Academy Management Department's Cadet Summer Research Program can contact Air Force Capt. Mike Haynie at DSN 333-8387; Commercial 719-333-8387; or via email at [mike.haynie@usafa.af.mil](mailto:mike.haynie@usafa.af.mil). Selection for Summer 2002 will begin in the Fall of 2001.**