



News Release

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

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CHARLESTON STAFF SERGEANT TO CARRY OLYMPIC TORCH

CHARLESTON AIR FORCE BASE, S.C. – Staff Sgt. Daniel Kary, 437th Transportation Squadron, was selected to carry the 2002 Olympic Torch through an area of downtown Charleston Thursday.

“My father nominated me through a Chevrolet and Coca-Cola program,” said Kary. “It was a 100-word essay on why the person he nominated embodies the Olympic spirit.”

The New Castle, Pa., resident received a package from Salt Lake City soon after his father nominated him. Inside was a letter explaining that he had been selected to carry the torch in Charleston. Kary said there was also a spot on the letter for him to accept or decline the once-in-a-lifetime chance.

“I said ‘yes’,” said Kary. “At first I thought ‘what have I ever done to deserve this.’ I felt like maybe I shouldn’t do it. After seeing some of the things I’ve done in print, I decided to go for it.”

According to the Salt Lake 2002 Web site, 11,500 torch bearers will have a hand in the torch’s journey from Athens, Greece, to Salt Lake City. The torch’s 65-day American trek started Tuesday in Atlanta. The torch will travel throughout different areas of the United States until it reaches Salt Lake City Feb. 8.

The torch will actually cover 13,500 miles by many different modes of transportation, including air, ship and dog sled, according to an Associated Press news release. Of those

13,500 miles, runners will complete 5,950. That means Kary's .2-mile stretch is a fair amount of distance for one person to carry the torch.

"You don't actually have to run it though," said Kary before the jog. "You can jog, walk, wheel, crawl; whatever it takes to get it done."

At press time, Kary said he wasn't sure the method he'd choose to cover the distance, but he was definitely ready to get it from his starting point to 75 Calhoun St.

"I won't know who I'm receiving it from, or who I'm passing it to until it actually happens," said Kary. "I know where I start and where I finish."

Kary has already reaped the benefits of being an Olympic Torch Bearer. He attended a convention in Seneca, S.C., three weeks ago, and a parade near Greenville, S.C., Saturday.

"We (50 torch bearers) were on a float in the Poinsettia Parade," said Kary. "That's Greenville's big Christmas parade. It was a great time. I got to meet a lot of the other runners from different areas of the state."

A package including an Olympic sweat suit, gloves, hat and shoes also arrived at Kary's house from Salt Lake City.

"We are only allowed to wear what they sent us," Kary said. "The shoes are incredible. They have some foam that melts when it gets warm so that it forms to your feet better."

Kary's parents also flew in to watch him in the ceremony.

"Man, it's wild," Kary said. "I never do things to try to win awards or be honored or anything, but it's great to be a part of this."

For more information about the Olympic Torch, go to www.saltlake2002.com.

(For more information, contact Capt. Beth Szucs at 963-5537 or Staff Sgt. Pamela Smith at 963-5589)