



News Release

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

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Wings of Blue to Open Air Expo 2001

CHARLESTON AIR FORCE BASE, S.C. -- The Wings of Blue, the U.S. Air Force Academy parachute team, will officially open Air Expo 2001 May 19 at Charleston AFB.

The team is composed of elite parachutists who have been highly successful in intercollegiate parachuting competitions. Competing annually in the National Collegiate Parachuting Championships, the team has won numerous titles. The Wings of Blue has also won numerous awards at regional parachute meets across the country.

Competitive parachuting isn't the only thing cadets do. Members of the Wings of Blue demonstrate their aerial skills before spectators at Air Force Academy football games, Air Force base open houses, and air shows and civic functions across the country. The team performs aerial maneuvers, both in freefall and while under canopy.

Parachute competitions and demonstrations are secondary to the team's primary role of training other cadets in basic freefall parachuting. Each team member is a qualified jumpmaster and instructor in Air Force Academy parachuting programs, which are supervised by an Air Force staff, training over 1,100 students each year.

All cadets who meet the physical requirements will have the opportunity to jump sometime after their freshman year. The freefall program at the Air Force Academy is an experience that many say will be remembered for a lifetime.

After intensive ground training, cadets learn firsthand how it feels to jump out of an airplane and free fall for 10 seconds before pulling their own ripcords. Cadets learn to handle stress and also discover how they would likely perform in a combat environment. Those who successfully complete five freefalls are awarded the coveted Parachute Badge and Rating. The Academy has the only parachute school in the Air Force authorized to grant these awards.

Other performing acts scheduled to appear at Air Expo 2001 include the U.S. Navy Blue Angels, U.S. Army Golden Knights, C-17 Globemaster III, F-117 Nighthawk Stealth Fighter, B-1B Lancer Bomber and F-16 Fighting Falcon, to name a few.

CAFB will open its gates for Air Expo 2001 at 9 a.m., and performances are scheduled to begin at 10 a.m.

For more information on Air Expo 2001, call 963-EXPO or visit www.charleston.af.mil or call Master Sgt Dan Murphy at

(843) 963-5582.

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