

# TOP GRAD

## U.S. Air Force captain stationed in Asia earns UF master's degree



Captain Knute Adcock (right) trains the Japanese Air Self Defense Force at Komatsu Air Base under supervision by Major General Ogada (left), wing commander. (Photos courtesy of Knute Adcock.)

By Linda Homewood

Forces of nature and the threat of terrorism are all in a day's work for UF forensic science graduate Capt. Sean Knute Wade Adcock, who had hopes of traveling to UF's August commencement from his active duty service in Okinawa, Japan. Instead, the "Top Grad" pilot found himself moving Air Force planes out of harm's way and delivering patients to destinations worldwide.

"It was easily one of the busiest weeks of my career: 37 hours in the air, six patients in six days — all critical or needing urgent care," Adcock said.

Typhoons skirting the Okinawa Islands on the heels of a heightened U.S. terrorist alert played roles

in keeping Adcock from attending his August graduation, but luckily did not detain him from passing with flying colors. In July, after completing two years of studies, Adcock had been able to make an important journey to the College of Pharmacy for three days of final exams to earn his master's degree in forensic serology and DNA analysis.

Adcock worked on his education through distance learning while serving in the U.S. Air Force in Okinawa, flying medical evacuation missions for service personnel and their dependents. The missions involve transporting patients to any hospital that specializes in the particular medical emergency — in Asia, Hawaii or the continental United States, Adcock said.

UF aerospace engineering alumnus Cmdr. Christopher A. Comeau, of the 909th Air Refueling Squadron at Kadena Air Force Base, acknowledged Adcock's eligibility for a promotion with the completion of his master's degree, crediting UF faculty for maintaining a high-quality distance ed program.

"As you might expect, he is one of my finest officers, distinguished recently among 500 of his peer officers

as being the best in the entire 18th Wing for the second quarter in 2006," Comeau said. "That helps me walk a bit prouder and rib my spouse — an FSU grad — a little harder."

Reared in Alaska, Adcock graduated in 1998 from the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado with a bachelor's degree in biology and a minor in Japanese. For the next five years, he was stationed at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa. After the Sept. 11 disaster, Adcock's unit worked on rotation, staying in a recreational vehicle at the airstrip for emergency response to homeland security. On one mission, Adcock recalled circling the Gator Bowl during a game that was only months after the national disaster.

In 2004, one year after his transfer to Okinawa, Adcock entered the UF forensic science program. In addition to flying the medical missions, Adcock is part of a unit that is responsible for mid-air refueling of U.S. and Japanese military jets. Never being in one place for long made finding quality education with distance access a necessity, Adcock said.

"UF and its easily accessible Web sites are what made it possible for me to continue my education from literally everywhere in the world," Adcock said. 