

Academy professor has more than one-mission mind

AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. — In today's fast-paced environment, it's something many military members are getting good at — doing two things at once, professionally speaking.

Maj. **Michael Gleason** is making his own case at the Air Force Academy, keeping more than a one-mission focus on his mind. About 75 percent of academy instructors are active duty Air Force officers, and this major also volunteers to remain operational and current in his Air Force specialty code as a space satellite operator. This makes him a dual-hatted instructor involved in academics and operations

Two days a month he leaves his job as a political science instructor to head to Schriever Air Force Base, Colo., to pull a shift “flying” satellites with the 6th Space Operations Squadron — a unit fully manned by reservists. In this job, he's in charge of a \$50 million Defense Meteorological Satellite Program satellite ensuring all its data is downloaded safely to the warfighter. Then he brings his experiences back to the academy classroom.

“By keeping one foot constantly in the operational world, I get to bring an operational mindset to my classrooms,” he said. “It's not just what the textbooks say but what's happening beyond that the cadets need to learn.”

Such a mindset fits perfectly into what academy leadership would like to see for its future faculty — a broader operational base of instructors.

“It's a win-win situation all around,” the major said. “It's a win for

my students as they learn more than what's in their books. It's a win for the academy as it gets an instructor staying current in the operational world. It's a win for the space ops world as it gets an experienced operator, and it's a win for me as I get to keep professional currency in my primary [specialty].”

So what do his students think about his operational experience?

“I find it helpful because there are

many different ways to be active in the Air Force other than just flying planes, and Major Gleason is concrete proof of that,” said Cadet Fourth Class **Jason Kallabat**, from the major's freshman level social science course.

As an instructor and a current space satellite operator, Major Gleason gives his students more than what's printed on textbook pages. And everyone seems to agree it's a winning combination.

— Capt. Christine L. Kunz

by Tech. Sgt. Ken Wright



A 1987 graduate of the Air Force Academy with nearly 17 years of service, Maj. Michael Gleason was on active duty for 12 years before doing a stint as a traditional reservist and a civilian for three years. When he realized he missed serving his country, he came back to active duty in 2002 to do what he loves — teach and fly satellites.