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Overcoming setbacks

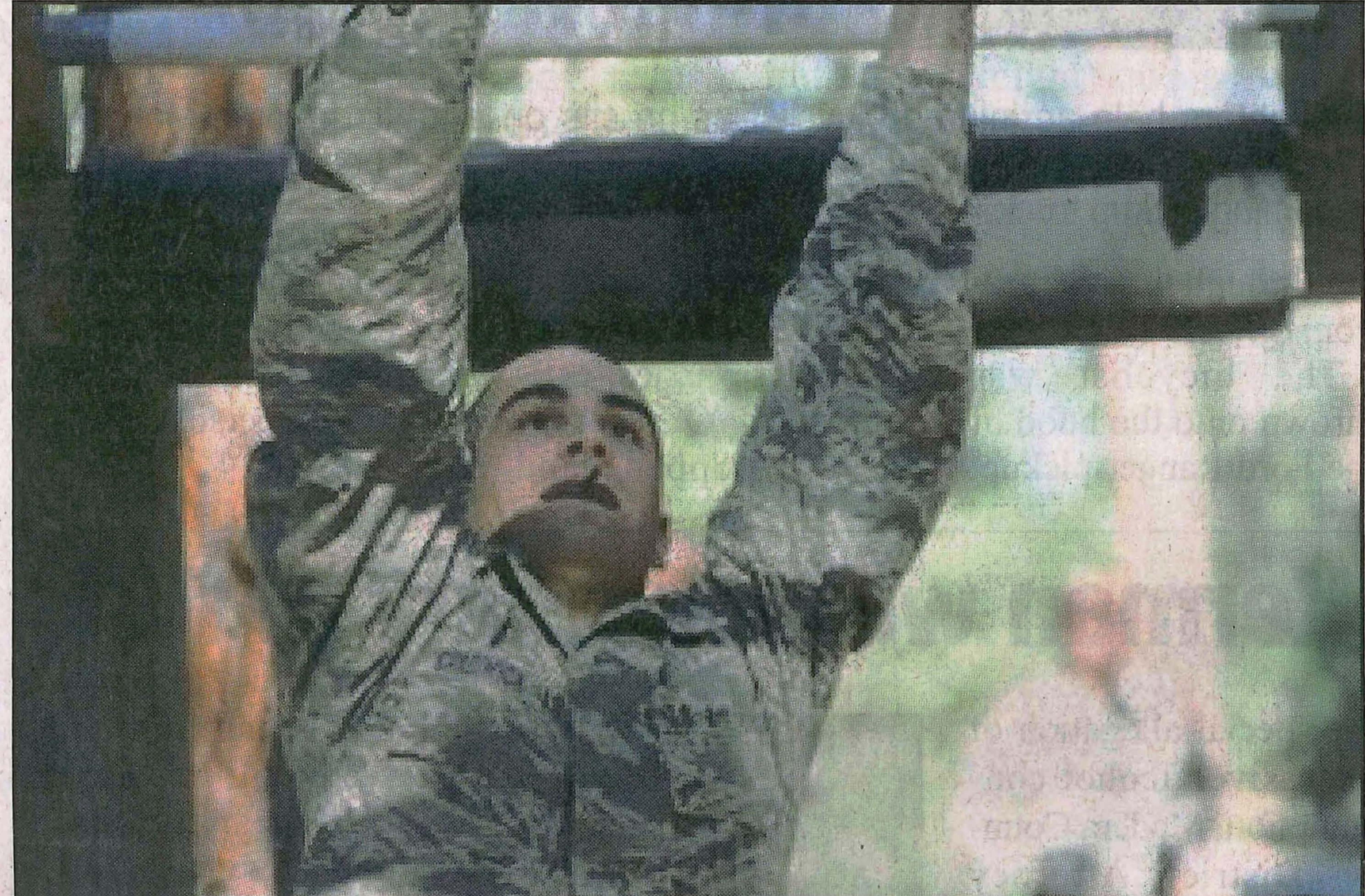
*Graduate
enters Air
Force Academy
on his 3rd try*

By Careen Wong

THE MADERA TRIBUNE

A Madera High School graduate finally earned an appointment to the United States Air Force Academy in his third attempt after many mishaps that delayed his dreams of becoming an astronaut and fighter pilot.

Samuel D. Chadwick, 20, graduated from SEE CHADWICK, PAGE A4



COURTESY OF THE CHADWICK FAMILY

Madera High School graduate Samuel Chadwick trains during the U.S. Air Forces basic cadet training, which he graduated from on Aug. 25.

Chadwick

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Madera High as one of the 17 valedictorians in 2012 and was a Boy Scouts of America Eagle Scout. During his high school years, he was a member of the marching band and the MadTown Robotics teams, winning competitive championships.

"Call it tenacity, determination or willpower, but no matter what you call it, Chadwick has 'the right stuff,'" said Chadwick's preparatory school academic advisor, Capt. Tom Vortmann.

During his senior year in high school, Chadwick earned scholarships to colleges on the West Coast including Fresno State's Lyles College of Engineering. But Chadwick chose not to attend non-military affiliated schools.

"The reason I decided to do that is because I want to provide a service to my country," Chadwick said. "I want to be a fighter pilot and an astronaut. That's why I looked into pursuing the military, specifically the Air Force."

Chadwick chose to go to the United States Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA) after earning a congressional nomination from Congressman Jeff

Denham and was appointed to USMMA. Three weeks before USMMA started, the school withdrew its appointment due to a medical issue.

"After that year I had to decide what to do for college and I found a preparatory school," Chadwick said.

Chadwick chose the Greystone Military Preparatory School at Schreiner University in Kerrville, Texas, where he met Capt. Vortmann.

"The prep school combines intense service academy preparations with a challenging university education for high school graduates committed to earning their appointments to one of the five Federal Service Academies," Vortmann said.

The five United States service academies are the Military, Naval, Air Force, Coast Guard and Merchant Marine academies.

At prep school, Chadwick led expeditions with his fellow "Greystoners" which included hiking, backpacking and treks that required superior outdoor and survival leadership skills, Vortmann said.

Chadwick completed 36 units during his freshman year and achieved a 4.0 GPA, earning him a membership into the Alpha Lambda Delta honor society and President's List.



COURTESY OF THE CHADWICK FAMILY

Samuel D. Chadwick, a Madera High class of 2012 graduate, has been appointed to the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Classes began this week.

His stellar performance at the school earned him a second nomination from Denham and Chadwick was appointed to the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA). Unfortunately, he met a "freak sporting accident," Vortmann said.

"On the last day of prep school, I broke my right arm and was medically disqualified," Chadwick said. "I spent eight months in surgical therapy, curing my arms back to working condition. I was finally medically cleared after eight months for my arm to return to normal function."

It was difficult for Chadwick to lose his appointment for the second time. However he contin-

ued pursuing his goals and said that persistence was crucial to him. He also constantly kept his goals in mind as motivation.

"[There's] a lot of personal drive," Chadwick said. "I want to be an astronaut by the age of five. I want to be a fighter pilot and those [goals] really drove me to apply so many times until I finally got in."

Because of the accident, Chadwick decided to return to Greystone as a sophomore and served as an executive officer — a liaison between the staff and students.

During his second year there, Chadwick received help from many people, which led to his third nomination by Congressman Jim Costa into USAFA in Colorado Springs.

He was recognized by the Schreiner University president and was awarded the Schreiner University Presidential Scholarship, which helped him earn a military academic appointment, Vortmann said.

He was also recognized by Ret. Lt. Gen. Jay W. Kelley from USAFA's Falcon Foundation, who helped him navigate through the complex process of entering USAFA including admissions, waivers and letters of assurance.

Retired Navy Com-

mander and executive director of Greystone David Bailey, and administration officer Brenda Bailey, helped him with his scholarship applications. Most importantly, however, they were his surrogate parents at Greystone, Vortmann said.

"There are many people that helped me along the way," Chadwick said. "As long as I can do my best when I'm here, it shows that their support is worth it and that's important to me."

In January 2014, Chadwick was medically cleared; he received his appointment into the USAFA Class of 2018 in April.

The trials Chadwick faced before becoming a cadet has matured and prepared him better for basic training, he said. He was able to anticipate what he was going to face in training and prepare himself.

"I've got a different perspective than my classmates who haven't been away from home," Chadwick said, referring

to his time in Greystone. "It's their first time out of the house, first time in college, first time taking more challenging academic courses. With a lot of those things, I've had a lot of experiences through prep school."

Chadwick left for basic cadet training on June 25 and graduated on Aug 25. He is currently attaining his Air Force Wings and participating in the Glider Program.

It is an exciting experience for Chadwick now that he is propelling himself forward, he said.

"I'm extremely proud and happy to be here," Chadwick said. "I feel honored because the school is paid for by the American people and I get to serve after I graduate."

Chadwick's parents, Mark and Gloria Chadwick, and his brother Daniel, visited him at the USAFA in Colorado Springs, Colorado, over Labor Day weekend for the academy's "Parent's Weekend" celebration. Classes began Tuesday.