

## EDUCATION

# South senior selects AFA over Army

BY JON POMPIA  
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

To receive a nomination to one of this country's service academies is a high honor.

To have to choose between two is an opportunity only a select group of students experience.

When the Air Force Academy Class of 2021 begins studies in the fall, among the cadets will be Natalie White, a shining scholar athlete at South High School who selected an appointment to the Colorado Springs institution over one to the U.S. Military Academy (Army) in West Point.

White received the AFA appointment from U.S. Sen. Michael Bennet, D-Colo., and to West Point from Republican



Natalie White

U.S. Rep. Cory Gardner.

"I chose Air Force over Army because of the close proximity to home, as well as the aviation program," White explained. "Another huge factor was the education — Air Force academy cadets have an average

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32 ACT score while the Army's is 28. So the level of education in my opinion was higher.

"Both are amazing schools and I would've been honored to attend either."

Additionally, White said the opportunity to become an Air Force officer fulfills a goal that dates back to elementary school.

"This has been a dream of mine since I first learned about the academy from a friend in the sixth grade. Ever since then I have been working towards doing everything in my power to ensure that I would be competi-

tive for an appointment.

"So finally receiving one after a year of applying, writing essays, interviews and taking the ACT multiple times feels like such a relief, knowing my hard work paid off."

Over four years at South, White has amassed a sterling 4.8 grade-point average while taking only honors and Advanced Placement classes, "sometimes doubling up in sciences," she said.

Outside of the classroom, Natalie is a four-year varsity softball standout and has played on competitive traveling softball teams since the age of 12.

In a high school career filled with achievement, White cited being

elected student body president and serving on the Alumni Foundation board as a junior member for two years as special highlights. She is currently ranked second in her class.

The rigors and competitiveness that mark any service academy are well known to White, who believes four years at South have given her a strong foundation to excel at an institution in which only 1,000 cadets are selected annually from a pool of 12,000.

"With student council and being student body president keeping me busy and accustomed to leadership, I feel that I can now handle a greater workload," she explained. "And with the curriculum and AP (Advanced Place-

ment) classes offered to me at South, I am used to hours of studying and homework that lead to a lot of late nights, which will make the rigorous courses at the academy easier to handle.

"I know it won't be easy, but I can truly say I'm being pushed here at South so I feel more confident that I won't break by being pushed at the academy."

"Natalie is one of the most well-rounded students I have encountered during my 25 years in education," said South Principal Aaron Bravo. "She is someone who can be trusted and counted on — no matter what the situation. She sets the standard as to what a model citizen should be." [jpompia@chieftain.com](mailto:jpompia@chieftain.com)