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**8th Air Force commander to speak at Tech graduation**

February 20, 2008  
By John Andrew Prime  
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Lt. Gen. Robert J. Elder, commander of the 8th Air Force at Barksdale Air Force Base, will deliver the address at Louisiana Tech's winter commencement March 1.

The talk will be at 2 p.m. that day in the Thomas Assembly Center on the Tech campus in Ruston.

Elder also is joint functional component commander for global strike and integration of the U.S. Strategic Command at Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska, and commands the Strategic Command's bomber and reconnaissance Task Force 204.

Les Guice, vice president for research and development, has worked with Elder during the past year in relation to the creation of Cyber Command, now forming at Barksdale on a provisional basis under the command of Maj. Gen. William Lord.

"I have a tremendous amount of admiration for the vision (Elder) has for the Cyber Command," Guice said. "He has been masterful at putting the pieces together for establishing a command like this. We're really grateful for the relationship Louisiana Tech and the Air Force have been able to establish over the past few months."

The 8th Air Force provides long-range global strike, cyber warfare, information operations, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, as well as battle management and expeditionary construction capabilities to theater combatant commanders.

The Joint Functional Component Command for Global Strike and Integration is responsible for integrated operational planning and execution for US Strategic Command global missions. Task Force 204 is responsible for monitoring all nuclear bomber, reconnaissance and cruise missile generation operations.

Elder's staff experience includes senior leadership positions with the Joint Staff, Air Staff, Air Combat Command and NATO. He has commanded an operational wing, group and squadron; commanded unit deployments to Southwest Asia, Europe and the Pacific; and held senior command positions in operations Southern Watch, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

Elder received his bachelor's degree in electrical engineering, master's degree in engineering and doctorate of engineering from the University of Detroit in Michigan. He is listed as a distinguished graduate from the Air Force and Staff College at Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama.

With more than 4,000 flight hours, Elder has received the Bronze Star Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters, the Legion of Merit with an oak leaf cluster, the Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters, the Air Force Commendation Medal with an oak leaf cluster and the Air Force Achievement Medal.

Commencement officially ends winter quarter activities at the university. Spring general registration and fee payment is set for March 4; spring classes begin March 5.

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