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Lynner cited by Air Force

LYNN — S. Sgt. Robert L. LaPointe, son of Paul LaPointe of 63 Grover St., has been named one of the 12 outstanding airmen of the Air Force.

The program, established in 1956, honors the top men and women among the Air Force's active and reserve enlisted members. It is considered one of the most meaningful and significant recognition programs in the military service.

Sgt. LaPointe qualified for the Air Force honor by being named Military Airlift Command's outstanding airman of the year,



S. Sgt. Robert L. LaPointe

The sergeant is a pararescue recovery specialist and team leader at Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska, with the 71st Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (ARRS).

Last year he saved the lives of 20 people who had accidents in the remote Alaskan wilderness including a mountain climber at the 16,000 foot level of Mt. McKinley.

To prepare pararescuemen for the rigors of arctic rescue, the sergeant planned and led the Air Force's first successful training expedition to teach pararescuemen in avalanche survival and crevasse recovery techniques. He was team leader

for another McKinley climb which was also used to train pararescuemen in arctic survival and rescue procedures.

As a pararescue instructor, LaPointe trains pararescue specialists from the 71st ARRS in parachuting, emergency medical treatment, survival techniques, mountain search and rescue operations, scuba diving, and land search methods. In addition, he plans and tests combat rescue tactics. During combat, pararescuemen provide medical treatment, survival instruction and a means of escape and evasion. During peacetime medical and survival services are provided for victims of all types of disasters.

A combat veteran, the sergeant has served twice in Korea. He also has served in Vietnam, Maine and Alaska. During his more than eight years as an Air Force member, he has been a pararescue specialist, airborne fire fighter, combat aircrew member and a manned spacecraft recovery team member for Project Skylab.

A recognized survival expert in Alaska, the sergeant is constantly completing off-duty courses in survival, medical training, and mountaineering. In addition to taking courses, LaPointe also teaches others interested in survival methods. He has instructed in several off-duty first aid and survival courses to the Civil Air Patrol, Boy Scouts, Naval Reserve and civilian groups.

An articulate spokesman, he was a prime speaker during the 400-member Alaskan Paramedic Association Seminar. He also briefed members of the Japanese Embassy on survival and mountaineering for Japanese tourists here.

LaPointe is an advisor to the Anchorage Rescue Council and is a member of the Alaska Rescue Group. Last year he participated in

mountain rescue missions.

Highly decorated, the sergeant's awards and decorations include two awards of the Distinguished Flying Cross, eight awards of the Air Medal, the Air Force Commendation

Medal, the Combat Readiness Medal and the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry.

A 1969 graduate of Lynn Trade High, he has attended the Universities of Maine and Alaska.