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First AF pilot to get MIG-21 speaks Thursday

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First Air Force pilot to be credited with downing a MIG-21 aircraft will be guest speaker at the annual AFROTC Dining In on Thursday night at the Club Chateau east of Missoula.

The Keynoter is Maj. Paul J. Gilmore, who is stationed with the 29th Fighter Interceptor Squadron at Malmstrom Air Force Base near Great Falls.

Maj. Gilmore will discuss a number of the experiences highlighting his 16 years in the service. Dining In festivities begin at 6 p.m. The event is a tradition of the Arnold Air Society, an honorary student organization composed of prospective Air Force officers.

Besides officers involved in the AFROTC educational program at UM, other guests will include the student cadets as well as coeds who are members of Angel Flight, the women's auxiliary to Arnold Air.

In discussing Maj. Gilmore's feat of knocking the first MIG-21 from the sky over Southeast Asia in 1966, Capt. C. Wayne Pedersen, an assistant professor of aerospace studies at UM, said until that time many authorities had questioned whether or not the Air Force F-4C Phantom Jet, the plane flown by Maj. Gilmore, would be a real challenge to the Russian MIG-21.

"The Phantom Jet is still in use," Capt. Pedersen added, "so it must have proven its worth."

While in Vietnam, Maj. Gilmore, a native of Neosho County in Kansas, flew 129 missions, with more than 257 combat hours including 82 out-of-country missions.

Maj. Gilmore and his wife, Marjorie, and the couple's two sons, John and Michael, live at 4932-B Locust, Great Falls. Mrs. Gilmore's parents, Mr. and Mrs. John L. Hall, reside at Sun River, 20 miles west of Great Falls.