



THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE
CHIEF OF STAFF, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC



MAY 20 2016

To the Airmen of the United States Air Force and their Families:

On May 30, 1868, mourners at Arlington National Cemetery honored over 20,000 Civil War soldiers as part of the first Decoration Day observance. Today, we know this observance as Memorial Day, and it serves as an opportunity to reflect on the sacrifices made by more than one million Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen who gave their lives to secure our freedom.

As we remember our Veterans, we express deep gratitude to those currently defending our liberty. Today's 660,000 military and civilian Airmen exemplify *Service before Self*—please know your sacrifices make a tremendous difference to our great Nation!

On this Memorial Day, as we honor those who gave “their last full measure of devotion” in service to our Nation, let us renew our commitment to military family survivors, as well as to our wounded warriors and their families. To all Airmen, serving at home or abroad, your sacrifices do not go unnoticed. We are grateful for your service and are privileged to stand with you, by you, and for you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Deborah Lee James".

Deborah Lee James
Secretary of the Air Force

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mark A. Welsh III".

Mark A. Welsh III
General, USAF
Chief of Staff