

2015 Air and Space Conference**Air Force Update With
Gen Mark Welsh III, Chief of Staff of the Air Force
September 15, 2015**

GENERAL WELSH: Thank you very much, and thank you all for being here today. Thank you for having this week and making this opportunity available to our Air Force for what is essentially a three-day celebration for us, a reunion and a time to make new friends and develop new partnerships, both business and pleasure. So thank you so much for all being here.

Can I get the first slide, please? Before I get started, I would like to take a minute and let us take a deep breath. Yesterday we had a memorial service for Captain Matt Roland and Staff Sergeant Sy Sibley, two brilliant Air Force operators who were killed here last month in the line of duty. About 1,000 people came to the funeral to pay their respects and to remind the people in this community that they're never alone. They'll always be there for each

other. I know it was an incredibly moving ceremony. Brad, I'm so sorry for you and the Command's loss. And for those of you who come from this community, I'm sorry for the loss of your brothers. These guys were in Afghanistan, moving in a vehicle, and someone dressed in a uniform of an Afghan policeman opened fire on that vehicle. The attacker was killed. Unfortunately, so were Matt and Sy. This is just a reminder that Operation Freedom's Sentinel is a dangerous, dangerous operation for the people who conduct it today. We haven't stopped fighting in Afghanistan. The threat is still real and great. Americans are still answering the nation's call and not coming home to their families. Would you mind taking just a moment of silence and put these two great Americans in your heart and please put their families in your thoughts? Thank you, folks.

There's some great people here today, a lot of great people in the front row, a lot of great people sitting around, a lot of great people in the back of the room. I've invited a couple of special

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guests I've got a chance to introduce you to that I think you're going to like meeting and what an incredible hour. So it's going to be an exciting time and it's not a chimp, so Frank Gorenc, you can relax!

Let me start by just saying that if I tried to thank all the really important people who are in the room for being here, it would take my entire stage time. So forgive me if I just go about it this way: Madame Secretary, thank you for leading us. Dave Goldfein, wherever you are, I'm know you're somewhere. Chief Cody, Jim, Matt, thank you guys for propping me up. Thanks to our Pacific Air Chiefs for being here, for your partnership, most importantly for your friendship. It's an honor to have you here. Thanks for inspiring us. Where'd you guys go? There you are. Thanks for your inspiration, guys. And to your spouses, thanks for tolerating. And to moms and dads, thanks for raising amazing, amazing young folks. It's an honor to have you here. And to all the rest of you, thanks for being part of the team. Next slide, please.

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You know what that means? Nobody's more excited about that than this guy. AFA could not have picked a better person for this top job than General (Ret.) Larry Spencer. Larry, congratulations. Thank you for a lifetime of serving airmen, and I know you'll continue to do that same thing in this job here at AFA. Most importantly, thank you for this opportunity. Thanks to you. Thanks to Chairman Van Cleef. Thanks to Mark Barrett. Thanks to the whole AFA team. Thanks to all our sponsors and thanks to all of our industrial partners who were here today and in the exhibit room downstairs for everything that you do for our Air Force and our nation all the time. It's really a thrill to be here with you, Larry, thanks. Next slide.

I showed this picture last year just to prove that Betty was, in fact, an angel. I show it to you this year just because I can, and it's a chance I don't get very often to say thank you to her. Unless you've been in this job or been the spouse of somebody in this job, I don't think you really understand how

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much goes into what she does for our efforts. The amount of travel she does, the amount of bases she visits, the amount of people she touches, the number of families who reach out to her when we're back home to ask her for advice on family health, family illnesses, health and fitness, just about anything you can imagine. She spends hours and hours doing it. She spends hours and hours preparing for trips, studying point papers. She writes trip reports on every trip and gives me recommendations on what the Air Force should do different based on good things she saw at Base X, Y, or Z. It is unbelievable how much work we get for no money. It's the best deal in the business world and no, you can't have her, whatever CEO is thinking that. Honey, I just want you to know how much I appreciate what you do. I could never thank you enough. Next slide, please.

This is a great picture, isn't it?

Lightning 1 and Lightning 2. You know, when Robert Crawford wrote the actual Air Force song back in '38, right before the Second World War started, that first

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lightning, the P-38 there on the right in this picture, was still on the drawing board. And after it was first put into flight ops in the early 1940s, one of the test pilots who flew it made the comment that he climbed like a homesick angel, which I thought was incredibly poetic for a fighter pilot. I know Hawk Carlisle wouldn't come up with that one. I often wonder actually looking back now, what would the founders of our Air Force think of today's Air Force. Would Jimmy Doolittle, would Carl Spaatz, would Hap Arnold be as proud of our airmen today as we are of them? I believe if they knew them they would be. Next slide.

Secretary Simonson and General Spaatz worked tirelessly to establish this independent Air Force. Would they look at us and see the same level of effort by today's Air Force leaders? Next slide.

Seventy years from now would a member of the United States Senate and an American hero himself take it upon himself to correct an error and ensure that an airman who had earned recognition by his government 70

years before was recognized for it? Second Lt. John Pedevillano was the youngest bombardier in the 306th Bomber group flying out of England in World War II. He was on his sixth mission. His group was going to rejoin point for their fighter escort when the escort didn't show. They'd been delayed. So they pushed ahead to the target anyway because that was their job. They were intercepted by about 50 German fighters who chewed up the formation pretty badly and chewed up Lt. Pedevillano's airplane pretty badly. They continued the bomb run because the airplane was still flying. Lt. Pedevillano found the target, drop bombs on the target, and subsequently was forced to crash land in Germany. He and the crew were captured. They were immediately marched 300 miles to a prison camp where they stayed for a little over a year before they were liberated. Seventy years later in July of this year, 70 years after he risked everything in defense of this nation, Senator John McCain and General Larry Spencer presented him with a Presidential Citation. Lt. Pedevillano's words at that presentation were

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remarkable because he was struggling between the pride of the recognition he'd been given and the humility as he tried to explain the loss of those who hadn't come home. Lt. John Pedevillano is with us today. Sir, would you please stand and let us show you our appreciation? Thank you, sir. Lt. Pedevillano knows that there is something special about this business we're in. It's the profession of arms. Sir, please have a seat. I don't want to wear you out too much standing here. You have to sing and dance for us later. There's just something special about this profession. There's something special about the people who share it. And there's something really special about the pride that consumes them.

I don't know where that pride comes from, but -- next slide -- but it starts in places like this and sometimes it's this simple. You don't even have to want to fly airplanes. You just want to be around them. You just want to be around the kind of people who are around them. You just want that excitement in the pit of your stomach with the rumble when they go

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by. Next slide.

Or maybe it's not the airplane that hits you at all. Maybe it's the airmen. Next slide.

And some of the places are earned, sir. Maybe it's the science of flight, or maybe it's the friendship that captures you. Staff Sgt. Manlove is teaching a young Afghan in Kandahar how to fold and fly a paper -- this is a group who could I hope he runs the Afghan Air Force and I hope he remembers to thank her. There are so many of us in here who were captured by this idea of flight and whether it was a Thunderbird or a Blue Angel show or a local air show and was just watching a civilian airliner thunder overhead at the end of the runway, something hooked you. It could have been a teacher blowing on a piece of paper, explaining the concept of lift. Many people get past that, get over it, and flying just becomes a way to move around the world. But for some people, many in this room, it becomes a passion. It becomes a commitment to a lifestyle and to a community who understands. Next slide.

So how's the Air Force doing? Let me just tell you what we've been doing since the last time I saw you. Next slide.

We're going to start our 24th consecutive year of combat operations. No air force has ever done that. We continued our incredible success story of space launch by the folks in Air Force Space Command and their partners in NRO. A great Air Force Space Command team continued to make sure that if you drop a precision weapon on the other side of the planet, it will hit where you're aiming. They continued to make sure the team's doing really ugly business in ugly places and talking to each other and their timing is always precise. The support is always there because young senior airmen and staff sergeants ensure your repeaters are making sure it's workable. They've done incredible things in offensive and defensive space control, most of which the people who do it can never tell you about it. But they're affecting every activity that occurs right now in the counterterrorism world. Next slide.

Our guys, our teams are unbelievable. Look at the number of images. I don't know how many hours of college football 1.6 million is, but it would be spectacular to try and watch that. Most of the original 65 combat air patrols per day. We have 35,000 eyes who do this 24/7, 365 and these affect every U.S. military activity on the globe. And our cyber team is growing and expanding their knowledge. They're expanding their activity. We've always had great technical expertise and now the world recognizes it, and we had a goal of 9,000 cyber operations this last year on top of defending you and your networks. Next slide.

Our mobility machine is awesome. Almost 200 million gallons of fuel pass by the U.S. refueling fleet, moving a million passengers, deployed airplanes and brought them home, 900 air medical evacuation missions for disease, injured, badly wounded in the states, overseas, around the world. We now have the capability developed by these people to actually do critical surgeries inflight. Can you imagine? Next

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slide.

We're still fighting. Everyone is a precision one, 99 percent hit very, very close to the target, if not in the back pocket of their target. Our airmen are unbelievably good at what they do. Next slide.

And this is one of the hidden gems. It's the 50,000 plus people we have doing command and control. Every command and control, targeting, air operations centers around the world, and I just had the real pleasure of visiting the Global Cyber Operations Center for the first time down in San Antonio here about two weeks ago. We now have airmen who have taken the concept of air operations centers, ISR, and put them out in global operations and we've applied it down in cyber and they're walking through the process of developing a way to allocate the resources to provide cyber support to forces from all services, all commands, all the time, all over the world. Three years ago this was a PowerPoint slide. Three weeks ago I got the briefing from the captain

running the show. Just remarkable. Next slide. Many of you helped build that, by the way, thank you.

The Secretary mentioned yesterday that we have a future operating concept. This is what the staff has been working on while the rest of the Air Force has been doing the nation's business. They've been doing a few other things, but this is one of them. The Air Force operating concept fits into a series of documents, and I don't want to talk through them all. I'll give you a very brief summary because it's important to understand where it fits. If you look at the top left on this slide, that's the Air Force vision statement, the world's greatest Air Force. This is an aspirational document. It's who we want to be. The document below it is global vision, global reach, and global power, for America. This is who we are. It's what we do. It's what our mission says. The products we provide -- the theater, commanders, and the national leaders. The Air Force operating concept is intended to give a look at what the Air Force could be in 2035, 20 years down the

road. It's a little more specific than this aspirational document because this is something we think is achievable, if we decide to go down the roads described in this document. It's potentially what the Air Force could look like. The intent of it is to reach toward that document in the top right, which is what we call the future because our top level is the strategic plan document. That's a 30-year look, which is a pull into the future. It's focused on R&D, science and technology, where we think the new technologies will emerge and will have the most impact on the Cold War, conflict scheme. What is the world going to look like 30 years from now? That's what that upper right document tells us. And that Air Force future operating concept is a step that's 20 years in that direction. And in the bottom right is the actual Air Force strategic master plan, which is our actual roadmap for getting there. Based on the money we have and what are we going to buy, develop, teach, educate, train, and recruit to reach that operating concept. Next slide.

We're going to put that future operating concept out this week when the Secretary gives the final go ahead. It's going to be available on lots of different formats. You can even get the app for your phone because I know you need more apps on your phones. It's coming out this week. Lots of questions we'll have down the road. We'd love to have a discussion about this. This is really kind of an internal challenge document. It's intended to make everyone think about where we should be 20 years from now and not get comfortable where we stand today. Next slide.

This is what we do, guys. It hasn't changed since 1947. It's important to remember that I think. We changed the words a little bit, but the missions really haven't changed at all. How we execute them will change overtime and I think the words in 2035 most likely will reflect that, but the fundamental missions are not going to change. I think the Chief of Staff in the Air Force number 35 or 40 is going to be standing right here, maybe as a hologram by then,

and telling you that the mission of the United States Air Force is going to stay the same for the next 20 years. Next slide. But I certainly hope that he doesn't tell you that the equipment is still the same.

Look what's happening in communications. Some people in this audience recognize that thing on the left. And the ones who do have no idea how to use the thing on the right. Next slide.

Computers are a little easier to carry back and forth from work. Next slide.

Cars run pretty good these days. We need to get the driver back. Next slide.

Man, oh man. Look at that Formula 1 racer on the left, the old goat, 124 miles an hour when it was full out, killed people routinely. The one on the right goes about 250. It weighs less than the one on the left and looks like an alien craft compared to that old racer, doesn't it? Look how far we've come. Next slide -- or not.

You've got to be kidding. We have got to modernize our Air Force. I'm just going to repeat

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that once. We must modernize our Air Force. Next slide.

The big 3 everybody knows about. We've been working hard to protect the funding for and the timelines on the F-35, the KC-46, and the Long-range Strike Bomber, whatever it ends up looking like. The Secretary's been very faithful in these programs. She's fought hard in the department to keep the funding for them, to keep them on track. And so far we've had great luck with that, but there are a whole lot of other things we have not funded. Next slide.

We've been given more things to fund that we had in money in the budget last year. There are things we need to fund. We need to make our space bays more resilient. There's no question about that. We need to reinvest in our nuclear infrastructure. We need to recapitalize our nuclear weapons systems. We have to do that. The money's got to come from somewhere. And we've got to invest more in the cyber domain. We've got to do it wisely and we've got to do it in a measured way and get it in the right places,

but we have to do this. Next slide.

But the stuff I'm about to walk through for the next four or five slides is the meat and potatoes of what we've been doing for the last 25 years, and in particular the last 15 years. This is the stuff that is on the front lines of the fight every single day. And I'm just going to talk equipment, so don't panic. We all know that the people are in it or around it or being supported by it or pulling it in. We've got to do the same thing with them. The rescue helicopter is a program that is tied to the fabric of our Air Force. We're going to send airmen across the line into harm's way. We have people, some great people, who are willing to go get them if something goes wrong. And they need to be equipped in a way that allows them to get home or maximizes their chances to get home. We have got to keep this program on track. Next slide.

The JSTARS has been a workhorse. We can't meet Combatant Commander requirements now because we can't keep enough of them flying because the airplanes are old. It costs a lot to operate. It's been a

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phenomenal system for us, but it's time to recapitalize this airframe. It just is. And we have people who are not in the Air Force and not in Combatant Commands arguing about is there a requirement for it. There is. Every combatant commander agrees with me. We have a program that will come in the budget this year. We're going to push hard to keep it on track and get this thing done. However this plays out, there are people here who we need help from to get there. Next slide.

The EC-130 is the same way. This has been a silent hero over the last 15 years. It's worked for counterterrorism activities, it worked for all kinds of things. Unbelievable talent in the crew force, front and backend. Unbelievably successful platform overtime, but we need the capabilities it carries on a different platform or on several different platforms and we've got to figure out how to do that. And if the answer is no, we can't get rid of any of them, then when they time out and they will, we're out of luck. That can't be the choice. Next slide.

The E-3 has been a superstar of coalition operations around the world and we have to start thinking about recapitalizing this airplane as well. Airborne Command and Control as a requirement is not going anywhere. We're got to figure out where this fits in the flow. We've got to start building a specific plan. We're planning on doing that this year and then seeing where we can fit it into the flow for funding. This is not a this-year problem, but it's coming sooner than you think. We have got to get ahead of the power curve. Next slide.

And then the T-X is essential for an Air Force. All these things need crews to fly them. We're not moving to a 100 percent unmanned force anytime in my lifetime or yours. We need the T-X. We have an IOC track right now that we think is very executable. It's in the budget. We're going to push hard. It's a 2024 IOC. Next slide.

This Sun Tzu was a pretty smart guy. If he had been born a couple of centuries later, he would have been an airman. You can tell by the stache,

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Madame Secretary. For years we have enjoyed a capability advantage over every other air force on the planet. That capability gap is closing and it's closing fast. I'm not crying wolf. I'm just telling the truth. A little bit more truth is that the demand for Air Force power is going up. The budget is not. And the flexibility we need to make the very hard decisions required to best spend money to modernize our force is getting harder to come by. Holding on to the things that made us great in the past is not the best way to make us great in the future. In fact, I can only think of one reason for standing still and that's you want somebody to catch you. We have got to modernize the Air Force. Next slide. And as we go about doing that, we should pay attention to this guy because he's pretty smart, too.

As we transition to the ideas having to do with acquisition and reform, it's harder ways of doing business. You heard the Secretary talk about this yesterday, and she has got some great initiatives I believe that she has built a plan and worked out. We

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have got to realize that if we're held to task because of past problems and all the parameters that are established for funding, timelines, and for program timelines that are based on some screw-up that happened 10 or 15 years ago, then we are never going to get better. We will fail in the future because we failed in the past and that makes no common sense. So we have to be smart about this, but we have all got to understand that if we want to have acquisition and reform, we are all going to have to accept some risk. And if we're not willing to do that, we are doomed. And I did not say do stupid things. I did say try new things. Next slide.

When we get into these modernization discussions, we tend to get derailed by really silly conversations at the start. How many times have you read something in a blog or on paper or have I heard somebody asking me, well, you guys don't really care about CAS. That's why you're making these hard decisions. You just don't care about CAS. Really? I'm kind of tired of hearing that. This is an airman.

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If nothing else, we take care of our own. But this airman's job is to take care of everybody else. Why don't we take care of him and the people he's protecting. This is Master Sgt. Sheridan. He's not just an airman. He's some kind of airman. Master Sgt. Sheridan is a combat controller. He was in a meeting in parking lot in Afghanistan when he started to notice puffs of smoke coming in over the wire. And the he heard gunshots, but he's not new to gunfire so he's thinking, I wonder what's going on? And then all of a sudden people round him started to drop and he realized it wasn't just people outside shooting, there was a guy in an Afghan police uniform or military uniform who was one of the bad guys and he was jumping up into the bed of the truck and sprayed weapons fire into a group of people in need. Now you can imagine the scene? Everybody's diving for cover. Everybody's screaming to get behind vehicles except for him. He attacks. And he starts off in about a 30-foot gun battle and closes rapidly, the bullets much closer than that, firing his rifle and his pistol until he

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eliminates the threat, which is a great euphemism isn't it, neutralizes the threat. He earned a Silver Star for that. He deserved it. He also wears a couple of Bronze Stars and five Army citations. First There is his motto and he has been, and we will never leave him hanging there ever. We'll be there or die trying. Every airman in this room believes that and you can all write it down. And Master Sgt. Sheridan is sitting right there. Sir, would you stand? Thank you.

Before D Day the Tactical Air Force flew about 4,000 to 5,000 air-ground sorties around the countryside in France to the beach in Normandy. After the 3rd Army broke out behind Normandy Beach and went running across France with George Patton out front. They flew 1,500 to 2,000 direct support sorties every day. This is the P-47 mentioned. This is the result. This is in Germany in World War II. We've been doing this a long time. My dad flew the P-47. Friends of his flew the P-51B. Other friends flew the A-1 and the F-8 in Korea. They flew in the A-7. He flew in

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the F-4 again and then we meet the great A-10 community, F-16s, F-15s, B-1s, AC-130s, MQ-1s, MQ-9s, B-52s occasionally. They're awesome. That's not going to change. For the last 70 years we've averaged 20,000 sorties a year. At one point, at what point, do we get a little bit of acknowledgment for that? We don't care about CAS? Next slide.

This is my son, Matt. He's a Marine Corps infantry officer. I don't care about close air support? Luckily I'm old and respectful now, and I told him that. I said you'd just better be glad that Matt isn't here because Matt is young and impetuous and tough as hell and he would kick your ass. Next slide.

We have to make sure that we don't get distracted by silly discussions. This airplane's going to be a great airplane. It's already performing well in some areas.

It's not supposed to be doing everything yet. We don't even have full operational capability

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until 2021. So anybody who says, well, it's not ready to do everything next week, well, no kidding. That's not the plan.

So let's not let ourselves get [Inaudible] by it. Let's not start too much [Inaudible] unless you have the facts right. If you do, let's talk. Everybody's voice is welcomed.

But let's make sure it's an informed voice. It's really important. There's a lot of people trying to keep things moving on programs like this and they get distracted every time.

Some argument comes up that doesn't have facts behind it, and we spend days, even weeks trying to make sure we correct the record and get things straight and answer all the questions and we've got a lot of work to do. Next slide.

Besides modernization, there's two other things that I think we absolutely must do. The first because we have to return to this idea that what makes an Air Force ready is realistic difficult full spectrum [Inaudible]. [Inaudible] as much as you possibly can.

Our Air Force became [Inaudible] when we adopted [Inaudible] and we have got to get back to that. And it's going to require lots of things. It's going to require investment in [Inaudible].

It's going to require investment in simulations. It's going to require investment in ideas. It's going to require things like looking at individual task training.

We've got so many software systems now that allow you to train inside the system to individual skills. And now we've got to think about hey, I can't take a software program unless you create a scenario inside an airplane or inside an vehicle and then add in the visual cues that would actually make you react in a real situation.

We have the technology. How else are we going to put them together? It's really not all that expensive and there are a lot of people here that can help, and they're ready, willing and able to help. We've just got to be willing to have the conversation. Next slide.

Hawk Carlisle has already been asked by me. Let's look at what Red Flag looks like 2030. Red Flag drove PhD level war-fighting thinking in our Air Force.

We've got to get back to something driving that, and Red Flag Cyber are the right answers. How we integrate these -- so when we go over to Red Flag or whatever we call it in 2030, the whole team is playing.

Space, Cyber, everybody -- blue airmen. So you've got a realistic picture of what this world's going to look like. How do we get there from here, because we're not close yet.

There's a path. There are people here who can help. This is something we are focused on. Next slide. And the other thing we have to focus on is this. We always have, but this is now key to the future.

The world is changing so fast. Technology, demographics, world situations, politics, everything is changing. You heard the secretary talk yesterday

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about strategic agility and this idea that we've got to be able to move quickly, we've got to be able to think quickly, we've got to be able to change direction when necessary.

They are remarkably talented and they can as long as we invest the money and the resources into education and training.

We cannot take a dime out of this effort. In fact, we should add to it. Next slide. And it's all focused around this idea of a Profession of Arms. We don't educate the training until we go downtown and work in the unions.

We educate and train so we can put you in the situations. And it's an ugly business, so you better get ready.

And everybody in our Air Force has something to do directly or indirectly to support you. Next slide. We opened up the Profession of Arms Center of Excellence at AETC.

This is the brainchild -- maybe the love child of Robin Rand and Mr. Jeff Smith who runs the

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center. The idea is to root everything in this idea of the profession of arms.

Our core values are our core values because they're essential in the profession of arms. The concept of respect is foundational to the profession of arms. Respect for each other, respect for the enemy, respect for everything, especially people.

PACE is already leading this charge. Their task is to connect every Air Force commissioning program, enlistment program, educational program, development program and give them the tools they need and the perspective they need to make better leaders.

Any of you ever seen some of their work? Let me give you one more example -- a new video that they just put out. Slide, please.

This is what PACE does. Integrity is not sainthood. Excellence is not perfection. Selflessness doesn't mean you don't matter.

These are the kind of things that we're putting out to commanders and supervisors all over the Air Force now so they can talk to their airmen about

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it. Our job is to make sure that conversation happens at every level.

The command chiefs in here, you guys got to help. People will listen to you. They've have this conversation with you.

Make sure PACE is getting the stuff that you need to the level you need it so you can have this conversation with your airmen. This is what keeps our Air Force running. Next slide.

If we get them all these tools, then people Jason Yaley, who's in here somewhere -- where are you? There you are. This is my special assistant, actually. Jason's an Air Force GS-15.

He's a young and incredibly talented guy. He's worked as a personal advisor to the US transportation command commander, vice chairman of the joint chiefs and now me because he's brilliant and he loves this Air Force as much as anybody who ever put a uniform on. His only fault is he's a Syracuse basketball fan. But PACE will give Jason the totals, so work with our civilians and those young airmen on

the job, and teach them about the culture, about the heritage, about the life inside the Air Force, about the passion you have to have to be successful.

He was born there, moved to the States and grew up here in Washington, D.C., one of the tough [Inaudible] as he described.

He may be the proudest airman I've met and that's saying something. He gave me a gift not long ago that he will never understand how much I appreciate it. He had trained about 15,000 people through military training.

He was good enough with the enlisted airmen they made him an officer candidate trainer. When I asked him what he really liked the most about that job, he said, "Well, the best part is that I earned, he stresses that he earned -- "I've earned 52 first salutes."

When I asked him about his life in Washington the first time we met, he mentioned how tough it had been. I said, "Well, did the Air Force change your life?"

And his answer was, "No. The Air Force saved my life." This is an American. Now you stand up and let people see you. Thanks a lot.

Christy Wise She's got an unbelievable smile, an unbelievable personality.

She was down in Florida, with her boyfriend back in April. Nothing dangerous about that. And a fishing boat.

The boat just kept coming. So as she starts waving to get their attention, and they're yelling and the boat just kept coming. And finally it ran over her.

And she had the presence of mind to get off the board, put her feet up against the bottom of the boat and push as hard as she could down, trying to miss the propeller. But it severed her right leg.

She just got a new blade leg last week -- Friday. She's going to run the four miles tonight. She's getting ready for the Army ten miler.

She is focused on remaining on active duty and returning to the cockpit. I'll do everything I

can to help. Our people are incredible. Christy Wise is incredible.

And if you've got a second later today meet her. Christy. Thank you, folks. Thanks a lot. Christy has a lot of friends.

Bring up Goldie so everybody can look at him. I had the pleasure of commissioning Goldie a while ago. And then promoting him to major -- he's moving quick. He wanders the halls, basically.

He's got because he's an unbelievable dog. If you get a chance to say hi to him, it'll almost put you to sleep. He is just a beautiful dog and he is unbelievably calm and he is unbelievably good for patients. So are the guys who trained him health care for the patients when is not there. This is an incredible team here. It does remarkable work for our folks.

Goldie's been doing this awhile, and you can see the whole gang up there at Walter Reed. The whole gang is really remarkable. If you get a chance to go Walter Reed while you're in town ever and go visit

them, I would recommend you do it and meet the team that trains him, the team that brings a little more to the people that actually help the patients learn how to handle dogs.

It's phenomenal. How many went to the dinner last night? We had the pleasure last night of enjoying it as we usually do, members of the unbelievable Air Force band.

They're all phenomenal. The whole thing is phenomenal. The talent level is just through the roof. The newest vocalist in the Air Force band is one of two lead vocalists [Inaudible].

Her name is Tech. Sgt. Nalani Quintello. She started singing at a young age, early teens. She started singing in nursing homes and everything because people like her.

She's funny, she's happy, she's got a beautiful voice so she's a very popular singer. So she had this dream of singing for a career.

American Idol. You got through that first couple rounds? And so she left the competition to

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take the position. So while fame was whispering in one ear, she chose the Air Force first.

And those of you that were there last night know what a gift we received. Her latest number is called American Airmen. And after this session ends we're going to play it so you can hear this young woman express her love of country, of service, of self in my mind, and her fellow airmen.

Nalani, please stand up and let us thank you for what you're doing. Thank you, folks. Here in the last 15 minutes we've kind of been reminded of the difference between idols and heroes.

And Nalani is going to be a hero for our Air Force. Next slide. Three friends jump on a train. It's a party heading to Paris. Slide. Three heroes come off a train.

I'm not going to recap the story. You guys have read it and seen it on TV. But I'll tell you this: If you haven't heard the detailed part of the story, if you haven't had the opportunity to go to YouTube and watch the Megan Kelly interview.

It's about 36 minutes long or so. It's worth every second. It's like three buddies sitting in their house on the couch talking to Megan Kelly. It's phenomenal.

And you'll finish watching it feeling better about this country.

His mom and his sister are here. Can you stand up for a minute? But the biggest impact Spencer's had he probably didn't realize yet.

And Mike's not a touchy feely guy. This is airmen feel about you. You made us proud. You made the service proud.

I have to explain something to everybody. We got a bunch of stuff in the papers. By the way, the awards ceremony with the Secretary of Defense is in a few days.

Put up the next slide, would you? What most people don't know is that Spencer promotes to senior airman soon Next one. Chief Cody is going to call you on the first of November and make sure your uniform looks like this. It's mostly one thing you've got to

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remember.

You put on that stripe and become a non-commissioned officer in the Air Force, you've got a whole bunch of people in this audience who are going to make sure you take that seriously.

It teaches you humility. You understand that all this stuff is fleeting. What matters is who you are down in there. I look forward to seeing you as an NCO.

It's important that we stop and remind ourselves that man has been fighting on land and sea for thousands and thousands and thousands of years. And our fight in the air is just beginning.

And while the wild blue yonder is at 12:00, and someday airmen will conquer air and space and cyberspace because that's what they do. And then we'll go for a new domain. We can stare in awe at the power and beauty of the United States Air Force. I actually look forward to this day. I can't wait to go there. Next slide.

I'm going to ask all the people to please

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come up here and join me on stage. Will you guys run the video for this?

Just close your eyes and look inside. You are the new frontier. I'm General Mark Welsh and these are my heroes.

Last year, we closed this session singing the Air Force song. And I have taken so much grief about that for the last 12 months. But I've decided to do it a little bit different this time.

We're going to run a video here in a second, and there'll be some music coming up and we'll sing along with that, okay? So you can run the video? Can I get a little help with the sound?

MALE SPEAKER: I think I can help you out. I brought a few people with me.

GENERAL WELSH: Thank you, Maestro.

GENERAL WELSH: In that case, one last -- air power. Thank you. I could hear you from here. Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Air Force, would you mind coming up and saying hi to these guys?

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