

**General Darren McDew**  
**"AMC Update"**  
**AFA - Air & Space Conference and Technology Exposition**  
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**General McDew:** I'm looking out here and most of you seem to be friendly. I appreciate that and value it. I am a bit nervous today because we have many luminaries in the room and I have people that have known me longer than I dare to admit. One of them is General Art Lichte who is sitting over there, not that I noticed. I believe General Duncan McNabb might be here as well. And if you don't understand how much that freaks me out, I just thought I'd admit that to you right up front.

I am humbled, excited and grateful, but first let me start with a thank you Scott, for the introduction and for the hospitality I've had since I've been here. This is an amazing forum and I am grateful to be here and I'm glad that the Air Force Association gathered all my friends together to come hear me talk. Not so much.

The attendees today are a tribute to the outstanding work of the professionals of AFA and what they have done throughout the years to support our Air Force and our nation's air power. Although we benefit from this type of forum, your advocacy and education programs are a constant and a powerful force for maintaining the world's finest Air Force well into the future.

I also appreciate the recognition of so many of our noble and notable Airmen. I got a chance this week to meet the 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year. What an amazing group of people. If you had any doubts in your mind about the future of our Air Force and the present, check them out. We have a great present and a great future indeed.

To the many distinguished guests here, and I've talked about a couple of them and I won't be able to take my eyes off of them as I try to speak, all of you, all the things you have done to make our Air Force what it is today, I say thank you very much.

To our industry experts, the things that you have done to provide our Airmen the great tools that they need and provide us the avenues to think going forward, I also want to thank you for that too.

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And to those of you who are simply in the audience because you are interested in air power and you have served your nation well and faithfully, a thank you to you.

You'll see a theme here in this presentation and the theme is very very simple. I know who I am at this advanced stage of my career. And I know who I am not. I am a humbled person to be here today amongst the luminaries I talked about and the 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year. I'm humbled to get the opportunity to lead Airmen in this great Air Force. I'm excited about our future. I am grateful to the many in this room and around the world who have lifted me up and allowed me to get here, and more grateful to the ones that could have crushed me along the way who didn't.

I do know who I am, and I had this thing that reminded me that I am a 50-some-odd year old man. And that I'm an Air Force senior citizen and I've got to remember where that puts me on the humility scale.

So last night there were a few folks that were walking around asking me questions and that gave me the opportunity to think a little higher of myself than I ought to have. Then out of the corner of my eyes, I'm talking to a group of Airmen, and up walks a very very lovely young lady. And she had an amazing twinkle in her eye and a beautiful bright smile. Now I do know I'm 50-some-odd years old and I didn't misread that but it was flattering.

So as she approached me I cleared a spot for her to approach and made sure that she got up there and she looked me deeply in the eyes with all the affection she could muster, and she said, Sir, I have been waiting to meet you and I can't wait for this opportunity because you look just like my father. [Laughter]. I know who I am and I know who I am not.

So why am I here today? I'm here to do the things that I'm particularly good at at this stage of my career. One of them is to thank you, and I've done a series of thank yous so far, and I

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do that as I go around the Air Force talking to our Airmen. I thank them for what they do and how they do it and for why they chose to do it.

The other thing is, I'm going to take the advantage right now that I have. I've been in the command now for four months as the Commander of Air Mobility Command, and I've got this completely wired now. So what I really want to do is brag a little bit about air mobility, rapid global mobility and brag about the Airmen that make it happen. So if you will just indulge me, I don't get these opportunities all that often, so indulge me for just a few minutes and we will do that.

I don't want to insult your intelligence, but AMC conducts airlift, air refueling, aeromedical evacuation and air mobility support. They can airlift almost anything, anywhere at any time; deliver fuel to another airplane while airborne anywhere in the world; carry our wounded warriors to safe medical care at a moment's notice, and they do it thousands of times a day and it takes thousands of people to make it happen and a lot of expertise, and it happens, and I can't say this enough, all around the world. For AMC there is no pivot. We're already there.

They maintain what we call the GAMSS or the Global Air Mobility Support Systems. GAMSS is a nice way of saying it and it tries to describe what they do and it doesn't come close to doing them justice for all the things that are part of it. Airmen don't just fly airplanes. They load, they fix, they maintain, they carefully plan down to the minute how we utilize those aircraft to do it safely and efficiently and effectively. They gather intel and weather and they support the missions. Then they track them all over the world and they deploy to fixed support locations and they also serve as on-call contingency response forces to cover everything else whenever needed. And they work every day to make AMC and our Air Force even better.

I've taken every opportunity as I visit AMC Airmen to see those amazing things myself and on some of those visits I've reflected on the words of a great American you might have heard of. He

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graduated a little bit before me from a small boys school in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia that's now a small co-ed school in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and that's a good thing, the Virginia Military Institute. And that great American is General George Catlett Marshall, VMI Class of '01. A little bit before me. He said, "It seemed to me that my main function was to protect the troops from my staff." I imagine that many may still see it that way, but I think that I and my staff try very hard to organize, train and equip those Airmen to get the things done they need to get done, and I think we're somewhat successful.

Every day Air Mobility Command supports U.S. joint, allied and coalition customers all over the world. We carry people and supplies and the equipment they need to accomplish their missions, and we are judged, rightfully so, by their time lines and how we meet their diverse needs and often their time-critical requirements for rapid global mobility.

Our Airmen see themselves in the recently released Air Force Strategy because I think, humbly so, everything we do is captured in the concept of strategic agility. They must be ready to meet any user's need in any part of the world, often with little to no notice. And even as we draw down, I think, from Operation Enduring Freedom, they remain globally engaged while constantly preparing to support the next crisis, and there seems to always be a next crisis.

Just like Senior Airman Cody Nunez, a C-17 loadmaster from Travis Air Force Base, California. You can see him in the center of the picture here, in the middle of the slide. During his third deployment he was on an aircraft preparing to depart from Entebbe, Uganda. Fully loaded and holding short of the hold line. They were about to take off and make their way back to Travis when they received a call that there were three critically wounded Sailors on board a CV-22 Osprey. The stopped, turned around, and the C-17 had to reconfigure as they got the call that they were now going to be an aeromedical evaluation platform. Airman Nunez was already reconfiguring the airplane as soon as he got the word. He had to now accommodate

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a wounded set of people, the critical medical teams, and guess what? They had a full load of cargo. So he had to make an assessment of what cargo could come off the airplane to make room for how many litter stations and then guess what happened on top of that? One of the patients went into a code right there on the airplane. So they had to clear even more room. And all of this under pressure. This is math in public, ladies and gentlemen, and this is a senior Airman in our United States Air Force.

The situation called for a bold leader to take that urgent and critical decision-making out of the chaos of what was happening on the back of that airplane. There was a Special Operations captain on board, and nothing against Special Operations or captains, but he was really getting in the way. It was that mobility professional in the back of that airplane that knew how to operate in the back of that airplane. You know the rest of the story, those three men, their lives were saved. That airplane, originally scheduled to take off sometime earlier got off only 40 minutes later, got most of the cargo on, all the patients, and all the critical care that was needed and got off and out of harm's way.

That's what Airmen do. That's what we've always done. And we're continuing a proud legacy of dedicated Airmen who in this case just happened to conduct mobility operations.

Twenty-two years ago AMC was formed by combining the capabilities from three different commands. I was in one of those three different commands. We brought rapid response of worldwide airlift and air refueling together under one single command responsible for that global mobility, and one of our Air Force's five core competencies. We control the entire air mobility fleet from the center of the cornfields of Illinois through the 18<sup>th</sup> Air Force and the 618<sup>th</sup> Air Operation Center, commonly known as the TACC. It gives us unbelievable flexibility to meet the dynamic needs of the customers we support everywhere around the world. And we can do all of our mission sets from that one location. And I think they do it exceptionally well.

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At the peak of the operations in Afghanistan we were running more than 1,000 sorties a day. It has slowed down somewhat, but at our slowed down pace we're still running about 600 sorties a day out of the cornfields of Illinois and doing it, I think they're doing it quite well.

I know some of you may have flown tankers and I'm going to use a phrase that will educate the rest of the people who may be not that familiar with the tanker operations. NKAWTG. Anybody know what that is? Nobody kicks ass without tanker gas . . . nobody.

Right now you're hearing on the news that Air Force strikes against insurgents in Iraq have ensured the protection of American citizens and facilities as well as protected civilians from brutal terrorist attacks. AMC tankers have flown 1,000 missions supporting those strike aircraft. At the same time, air mobility forces conducted life-saving humanitarian air drops to isolated and threatened civilian populations. Nobody kicks ass without tanker gas.

AMC Airmen do far more than just maintain and operate the aircraft flying the missions. They apply their invaluable mobility expertise across a wide range of network and the en-route locations as well. At this moment mobility Airmen are providing maintenance, aerial port handling, command and control at fixed locations around the world supporting operations in Iraq, of course, you're hearing about, and tons of other places. They increase velocity and make it possible to meet our nation's insatiable demand for air mobility. Many of those life-saving bundles airdropped in Iraq were packaged, prepared and flown by AMC en-route support Airmen already in place in Southwest Asia, giving our nation the ability to respond rapidly like none other.

AMC contingency response forces, another part of the GAMSS, are trained to provide an even wider range of support functions and are deployable to anywhere in the world in as little as 48 hours. Even without mobility forces on-site, we can build up capacity quickly due to that tailored, rapid response capability

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that the CRG gives us. The recent efforts of our CRG Airmen contributed directly to the success I supporting movements of coalition forces and counter-terrorism operations throughout Africa.

You don't have to go very far for many great examples of these fine Airmen.

One example was recently in Burundi. To respond to the Central African Republic, 800 women and men from Burundi's armed forces were supposed to be deployed to the Central African Republic. Our air mobility folks had been down there doing some partnership development with the Burundis a few months earlier. There had been about four engagements in a few months. When we went back to load them out, you would be amazed at how well prepared, and how wonderful that load-out was, even better than some of the customers we deal with here in the United States. And the pictures were awesome. I would love to tell you that that was easy, it was not. It's another fine mission that our Airmen do.

Strong international relations are a necessity not just for specific deployments, but the fact that every AMC mission, a typical one, crosses 11 different countries. Eleven different countries. And if we don't land there, we still need diplomatic overflight and we need it quickly when the need arises, so those relationships are vital as we work around the world.

In the case of an emergency evacuation, you can't wait. The people in the back needing medical care can't wait for you to develop a relationship. It must already be there and we rely on those Airmen to do it.

Another area we rely on help is our Civil Reserve Fleet. I can't imagine what we would have done over the last 13 years without the Civil Reserve Fleet and those people that will partners with us in times of trouble and in times of quiet. That's very very important. They have flown 90 percent of our personnel movement over the last 13 years. Ninety percent of the people movement comes from the CRAF.

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But even with strong international partnerships and strong CRAF support, AMC would be nothing, absolutely nothing without the highly trained experienced members of our Total Force. Absolutely nothing.

We couldn't pull off any of this without the Guard and Reserve. Period. Our heritage includes a long history of working side by side with the Guard and Reserve. Guard and Reserve Airmen have led, flown and fought alongside their Air Force Active Duty counterparts in every major conflict and relief operation our country has engaged in. We are proud of the seamless integration of the Total Force in AMC and we make it a priority. Not just because of me. It's been a priority for a long time. As a matter of fact, we go back to 1968 at Norton Air Force Base in California which was the first association. And 46 years later we have focused on strengthening and codifying that relationship and taking advantage of those unique strengths and perspectives that our Reserve Component brings to the fight.

Unit associations remain one of the most successful means of employing the Total Force. They allow the Active and Reserve components to use the same aircraft to train and operate air mobility missions. Having those Airmen collocated increases our access to trained personnel and aircraft, and we can get to them when we need them. It maximizes the continuity and experience that is inherent in our Reserve Component.

We get a chance to leverage the Total Force in all its goodness.

Now it always hasn't been easy because it requires commitment and a developing relationship over time. When the nation called we knew that the Airmen at every unit would answer. I don't lose a minute's sleep worrying about whether or not the Guard or Reserve will be there when we call.

When NATO established a no-fly zone over Libya to protect civilians from attack, multiple tanker units answered the call within hours. Tankers from across the U.S. were converging on an expeditionary location in Western Europe. Together they

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supported the coalition aircraft, enforcing a rapidly established no-fly zone. That deployed tanker unit earned the nickname the Calico Wing due to the variety of tail flashes that came together to support the effort. But that was the only visible difference between the Total Force Airmen working side by side with the Active Duty. Over the last two months those tankers supporting Air Force strike aircraft, conducting strikes in Iraq, have been operated by volunteers, many of them, across the ARC. They also deployed on short notice to operate alongside in all kinds of places in Southwest Asia and across the world. Our strong Total Force team requires active duty commitment as well.

Because of what our ARC does in their day jobs, when we commit to bringing them on to do a mission if the surge we've asked them to support doesn't materialize, we still honor that promise and we honor it because it's the right thing to do. And sometimes that means we sit down an Active Duty unit that had planned to fly to keep the promise to an ARC member who took time from his or her job to come in to do that mission. It's the right thing to do and we'll keep doing it.

Now not every situation will the Active Duty crew member who got sat down understand why that's important. And that's why the associations continue a better education for all of us, to understand the commitments the Guard and Reserve put through every day and understand the different statuses they work in. It think those associations are giving us that education going forward.

The commitment also means we can't just give the Guard and Reserve the old toys. The Guard and Reserve maintain the same level of readiness as their Active Duty peers and that's true in the United States Air Force. As such we include every Total Force location when we consider where to base mobility aircraft. Operational suitability, not act of status, drives many of our decisions. You can see that now in how we bed down airframes. About 150 years ago when I was a C-130 wing commander at Pope -- it feels like about 150 years ago -- I wanted desperately to have J models. I was flying the oldest airframes in the

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inventory -- E models -- four fans of freedom, baby -- and it was still fine, but in 1999 when we started to base the C-130J, where did we put it first? In the ARC. That was not a mistake. It would be five years later before the first Active Duty unit would get J models. It was the right call for the right reasons and I just had to sit down and shut up and color. I understand why it is now.

Today, and not many people understand this, 71 percent of our nation's C-130s and 60 percent of our KC-135 capability rest in the experienced hands of the Guard and Reserve. And again, I don't lose a moment's sleep wondering if that capability will be there when we call. In fact we may even increase those ratios going forward. For good reason.

Over the next few years the KC-46 Pegasus's will bring our nation and coalition partners what we think is a leap forward in tanker efficiency and capability. The first operational KC-46 will go to an Active Duty main operating base at McConnell Air Force Base in Kansas, and we will have an associate unit with the ARC there.

The second main operating base will be at Pease Air National Guard Base. We will rely on Guardsmen to write maintenance manuals, test and evaluate and crew this capability every step of the way.

So when an aircraft arrives to carry American troops to a deployment or back home, or when a tanker arrives in station on time, there's a good chance the Guard or Reserve made it happen. You'd never know it unless you got a glance at the patches on the crew's uniforms or if you waited long enough to see the slightly graying stubble come out at the end of the day, but know that everything AMC does relies on a strong Total Force team. We must do everything we can to hold onto the talented Airmen that we have throughout our entire system. Evolving the continuum of service concepts that have been talked about will make it easier to transition across Active Duty, Guard and Reserve through the course of a career, and possibly help us keep talent that we're losing right now on our team. The Total

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Force will always remain a vital part of the present and future, but let's try to find a way to make it an easy way to go back and forth in that continuum.

One of the most important parts of my job is keeping that entire Total Force team trained and ready to meet any challenge we face in the future. AMC provides flexible, adaptive, rapid mobility only because our Airmen are the best equipped and best trained in the world. We need to continue to keep them on that path. Despite the reality of, as you know, smaller budgets and fewer resources. Being highly disciplined and proficient gives us the agility that we require going forward and allows us to meet the demand of anywhere, any time. We cannot compromise that readiness and expect to support the mission effectively going forward. And we don't have the option to not be ready.

Purposeful targeted professional development builds our Airmen's ability to handle any threat our nation may face. It's one of the keys to overcoming an uncertain and unpredictable future. For years we relied on a transit center at Manas that you guys are familiar with and many of you have probably deployed there. We did that to support movement into and out of Afghanistan. When we were directed to relocate that transit center we didn't just drop anybody into the middle of that move. We put capable and experienced mobility Airmen there to lead a comprehensive transfer of a complex passenger processing activity to another airfield located nearly 2000 miles away. Those were highly trained Airmen who applied years of mobility expertise to make a logistics challenge a resounding success. We shouldn't belittle the experience it takes to do those kinds of things and I'm just here to brag a little bit about it this morning.

We rely in AMC on a number of programs to cultivate that mobility expertise, building not just AMC but future Air Force leaders. The Weapons School is just one and it's a program that builds skills that we truly value. Our WIC graduates are tactical experts capable of weaving air mobility into complex operational plans. They are invaluable at guiding tactics and employment as well as training our crew force to overcome the wide variety of threats that we face around the world. We

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augment that Airman development even further with additional programs that teach, develop and track the unique knowledge and experience that makes stronger leaders for tomorrow's Air Force.

We have a Phoenix Horizon program that was put in place by many of my predecessors, and those programs build skills and broader mastery of logistics and Air Force joint concepts and program graduates learn to manage worldwide mobility and they get deeper into what it means to be an Airman in a complex world. We're working to do a better job of communicating the value of these programs not just inside AMC but outside.

I believe other commands in the Air Force as a whole can benefit from the skills and leadership and the training that we provide our Airmen and I see it evidenced every day. The ultimately intent is to encourage Airmen to continuously make themselves better, to pursue personal and professional development with a goal of becoming not just a mobility but a highly effective Air Force leader.

As we train Airmen across the Total Force to develop their skills to lead at all levels and to work constantly to improve our Air Force, we must also provide them with the tools they require to succeed. Our Airmen's ability to meet the challenges depends on flexible, effective and efficient systems. And here's where I really need your help. I'm talking to all Airmen and government and industry and strategic thinkers, basically everyone in the audience today. To develop the systems we need to remain the world's finest Air Force we will rely, as always, since the beginning of our service, on innovation. We must unlock every capability inherent in the tools we already have or are soon to employ.

Earlier I mentioned the KC-46, the next step in our tanker recapitalization. Of course we continue to invest in our existing air frames. They will serve as the backbone of the tanker fleet for decades to come. However, as we bring the KC-46 online, we have an obligation to ensure we're not just employing it the same way we've always done so just because we're accustomed to doing it. We've already started to look at

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the first KC-46 boom operators. But is that all we're really looking for? Those crew members will do more than just operate the boom. They're going to do a lot more than that. And by the way, they're going to do that from a camera sitting in the front of the airplane. But what other duties will they perform? Are we limiting the position by applying a legacy label? I hope not. We've got to think broader than just boom operator in that weapon system and across many others. What new capabilities would a KC-46 bring that will surpass the way we employ tankers now? Will we always have the restrictions we have today on the KC-35 instantly applied to the KC-46? I do know that Word will do a very quick remove and replace, and it's very easy in the staff to get a new KC-46 document by going remove and replace with KC-135. I saw it when the C-17 was developed. If we're not careful we may face some of those same struggles and you may not have a hard-headed C-17 squadron commander who's willing to fight you. Now he's the AMC commander.

Let's take a step further. What will the next tanker look like? The Pegasus is what the Pegasus is. We've got Y and Z to come. If we, by the time we get to the landmark Z appropriation, what will we be looking to do? Should it be unmanned? Autonomous? Semi-autonomous? If 30 years into the future we're only looking to develop a newer version of the KC-46 maybe we're not looking at it the right way. It's time to unshackle our brains and look forward. Could we be on the verge of the first unmanned tanker platform? I think we could be.

We can't think of the new systems the way we thought of the old systems. We have to find affordable means to get better and more efficient. We still have to remain effective while we're being efficient though. It's the heart of strategic agility that we strive for and we must fight to maintain it. That's what makes the pushing of the envelope of science and technology exciting and those concepts so important.

AMC is pursuing that effort along with multiple fronts. We are already considering the future of that autonomy across our tanker and airlift platforms. We're also reorienting how we conduct airdrops that only have become more even important as

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operations in Iraq and Afghanistan continue. We must preserve our ability to deliver essential supplies quickly and reliably. We went from a large DZ the beginning of 9/11 to the side of a mountain just a few years ago, and it happened very quickly and our crew members adapted and our TTPs adapted. What will be our next adaptation?

Command and control also plays essential role in our worldwide mobility enterprise. It's a critical part of our daily operations. Nearly every mission we fly relies on a robust command and control network as well as the freedom to operate across the cyber domain.

The ability to contact aircraft gives us flexibility to overcome every emerging natural and manmade threat. It also allows us to immediately support higher priority missions. We call those in-system selects. I think we've gotten so good at in-system selects now that I'm trying to convince combatant commanders that we don't have to have airplanes sitting on the ground waiting for the response. We can in-system select and response.

If you couple those advances for how well we take care of wounded in our critical care missions, it results in one of our proudest highlights -- achieving the lowest "died of wounds" rate in the history of warfare. If we can get a wounded warrior with a pulse to a trauma center such as the one we had established in Balad, the survival rate is 98 percent. We've worked very hard to decrease the time it takes to get a wounded warrior to life-saving critical care.

First, we don't just task the suitable aircraft to speed evacuation. We also match it up with an on-board critical care team. These teams are prepositioned throughout the world and throughout the AOR for fast response and turn the aircraft into an airborne intensive care unit. We couldn't have thought of that years ago. We also put tactical critical care teams on helicopters as they're bringing the wounded to that next level of care. It's an amazing system and a testament to our medical professionals. As well as to all the service men and women working together to facilitate the fastest transport possible

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for our wounded warriors. We're proud to play a part in expediting them to care when they're needed. We must continue to explore every option to improve a system that's already very very good.

Just as innovation led to the creation of our service, so will it propel us forward into overcoming known and unknown challenges. We must encourage innovation from every possible source. First and foremost, from our Airmen. Our bold, courageous Air Force Leaders. We must listen to them, vet their ideas, and implement those great ideas everywhere we can. We must continue to develop and inspire today's young men and women who are also tomorrow's Air Force and civil leaders, to pursue careers in science and technology and engineering and math so they can contribute to the legacy of our American innovation. AFA's Cyber Patriot Program is just one example of how we can take an active role in guiding tomorrow's leaders towards STEM principles and achievements.

I was a young man that benefited from STEM programs and I didn't even know I could until someone whispered the word "engineer" in my ear once. I'd never known what it was. Sometimes it's that simple.

As our efforts in development and acquisition continue to secure our strategic ability for the future, the only constant that we can never rest -- I can't tell you where tomorrow's next crisis will be. We've not been very good at predicting it. But I can tell you that we need to be ready for it. The systems we employ must be ready to operate within increasingly congested and regulated airspace, meeting mission needs not only in the U.S. but across Europe. Those very same systems must also be able to operate across places like Africa where a lack of infrastructure and existing support facilities complicate our ability to move personnel and equipment quickly and efficiently. Those systems must be able to overcome the vast distances of the Pacific where our regional allies will continue to rely on our ability to execute rapid global mobility. Our Air Force exists due to bold, innovative, courageous Airmen standing up for the new ideas and challenging the status quo. As an organization

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changed by 13 years at war, we shouldn't be doing the same old thing the same old way. Innovative Airmen are the key to maintaining the unmatched Air Force our nation expects and deserves.

Going forward, I'm excited to work with you and mobility Airmen to boldly forge that future. Even after four months in command I'm still humbled by this incredible opportunity to serve. I was inspired to pursue in the Air Force by some of the earliest memories of my father and his own career -- I am an Air Force brat -- and service to our nation. The folks in our back yard were Airmen. My coaches were Airmen. One of my earliest memories of air mobility goes back to when I was about 12 years old. Social scientists will tell you that children are value programmed about 12 years old. Everything we experience up to that point can have a particularly significant impact on the type of person you become. Mine was watching Americans return from Vietnam. In the back of a C-141 I can remember watching a ceremony happening at Travis Air Force Base where men I didn't know before, who were obviously smaller than they were when they left, in less physical great condition than when they left, but excited as you can see in that picture, to be returning home. It was an emotional, powerful scene for me.

From the videos that I watched on my 91 inch black and white television, you can tell that many of those service members bore the signs of the nightmare from which they were returning. Some of them were wheelchair bound, most were injured. And in almost every case they were still emaciated or weak as a result of trials they had endured. But when the 141 opened the cargo door and lowered its ramp on American soil, which many of them had not seen for years of captivity, they immediately and collectively displayed one common desire. Each one of them wanted to move to the bottom of the ramp on their own power and render a salute to that uniformed American service member standing there to welcome them back home. I can remember each one of them painfully making that salute and many of them bending over to kiss the ground. Oblivious to the bands, the cheering crowds, they were just happy to be home.

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Regardless of their injuries, their pain, or their sheer overwhelming emotion of finally being able to return home after such harsh captivity, the first thing they wanted to do was to pay respect to their country.

Seeing that enduring pride, that unbroken spirit, and that dedication to nation and their service, and the principles that they pledged their lives to defend left a permanent mark on me and shapes the man who stands here before you today. They will never know the impact they had on me or the lifetime of service that they would propel me to dedicate myself to. But the example they set was extremely powerful.

As I think back on it now it gives me great pride to carry on that legacy of service and dedication that those men were upholding back when I was 12 years old. I never could have imagined I would be standing here today with the awesome opportunity to command Airmen who support soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen all around the world and safely carry them back home. Never could have dreamed it.

The day I took command I and my bride Evelyn recommitted to -- and some people who know me said you recommitted? I'm pretty well committed before -- but I and Evelyn decided to recommit to working even harder to remain worthy of the honor of leading the amazing Airmen that have been entrusted to us and the capabilities our nation needs. I strive every day to set a positive example for today's 12 years olds, and those returning service members like the ones set for me over 40 years ago.

So as I close, I will close as I began with a simple set of words that we cannot overdo. Every time I go around the country and around the world talking to Airmen, Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsmen, I have not found the audience that has been over-thanked. I've not found the people that have been fully appreciated for what they do. And if you work at it every single day of your life, as I've committed to do, you can't say these words enough but I'm going to say them to you this morning. Thank you very much.

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AMC Update - 9/16/14

**Moderator:** General McDew, thank you for being here. We appreciate that very much. We have just enough time for maybe one or two questions and it's not a full experience if you don't get to enjoy that. So --

**General McDew:** I can take on anything because I've got a beverage here apparently that is not sanctioned in this building.

**Moderator:** The first question is, what's the status of C-130 AMP? And if Congress thinks there's no alternative, how do you move forward since the C-130 is in such dire need of modernization across the fleet?

**General McDew:** Some of you may have read my bio. Some of you may not. Hidden in my bio is a line item where I was the Air Force Director of Public Affairs. If you've had media training there are things that are taught on how to handle a question like that one. One of them is to go back directly and answer the question, or the next option is to go to your three main points and deliver your three main points regardless of what the question is. There's a third technique that I developed when I was the Director of Public Affairs, and that's just to absolutely ignore the question. And to go back to the person who asked the question and maybe do something to get them off track. So sir, do you have a dog? [Laughter].

**Moderator:** I do not.

**General McDew:** You don't have a dog? If you were to get a dog, you'd be a completely different person. And if you look at the loyalty that comes with owning a dog, it is the foundation of this nation, and I would tell you sir, go get a dog. [Laughter].

**Moderator:** That was a great answer.

**General McDew:** So AMP. I will spend most of my day tomorrow on the Hill talking about AMP and the future of AMP. Here's the bottom line. I am absolutely agnostic to who does what to our

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aircraft. Our aircraft need to be the most ready airplanes we can have to meet the challenges we face going forward. In the fastest amount of time available. Anyone who can do it and provide us the flexibility we need, absolutely dead on. If there's a program out there -- and we have a program of record - - if that program can in fact do what it says it can do, amen. The current program does not provide all the things we will need going forward, and if the Congress doesn't give us some flexibility to add the things to that program then I would be disappointed. But other than that, I think we'll be okay in the long run, but we've got to have ready airplanes to fight the wars we need.

Get a dog.

**Moderator:** Thanks very much. We're standing between all these folks and lunch, so let me thank you again for being here.

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