

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James Cody

AFA - Air and Space Technology Exposition

"Enlisted Perspective"

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CMSAF Cody: Good morning everybody.

First, Happy Birthday Air Force.

General Rice, General Moody, General Shot, thanks so much for coming, General Jackson, I'm sorry, and Athena, thanks for coming.

I appreciate the introduction. And yet again, as this week is kind of winding down and will culminate tonight with our ball, again, thanks to AFA and all they're doing for our Air Force in hosting this event.

General McNab sir, sorry I didn't catch you there. It's great to see you, sir.

A lot going on in our Air Force. I'll give you a little bit, it was probably about six and a half months ago I had the first opportunity to address AFA down at [inaudible] and I talked about some of the things I'll focus on. So I thought I would take this opportunity to kind of just give you an update of what we have been able to see over the last seven months. We've accomplished some really good stuff over the last seven months. We have a lot of things to do ahead of us. But we're actually in pretty good shape on a lot of the things that we were talking about and making some really good strides.

Anybody that's heard me speak before understands that this is what I like to talk about and that is about our Airmen, and they are our greatest asset. We're here with industry and there's a tremendous amount of technology down there and a lot of great work being done to bring capabilities to our nation and our Air Force. But without those Airmen, it just is stuff. It just really is stuff.

General Rice will love this speech because I have certainly a fond affiliation, but it's going to be a little bit of old home week for all of our enlisted folks as we build this next slide.

I can feel the chills right now that we all get as you look at those pictures, because it doesn't matter how long you wear this uniform, it takes about half a second to get back where it all began when you see those photos and you recognize what it really is all about and where it started for all of us.

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It's kind of magic. It's amazing what we do in [inaudible]. You get to talk to thousands of parents from across the world. Literally, you have to kind of recognize that. We bring in Airmen from across the United States, from across the globe. Many of them not even U.S. citizens. They come in to become citizens once they've joined our Air Force. They all have these great stories.

We're bringing in around 330-some-odd-thousand Airmen a year, give or take, as we make the final adjustments throughout the year. That's every week except for two weeks a year, 700 to 800 young men and women become [inaudible]. That happens every year after year after year. Over seven million men and women have crossed into the Blue at Lackland Air Force Base. It's a pretty significant thing to think about. That is why Airmen equal Air Power. You don't get the right Airmen, it doesn't get right anywhere down the line, and I do believe we're getting it right.

When you have that air power you get great Airmen and this is how we're winning the fight. I can tell you a few stories about some great Airmen that are out there getting it done. And it's important that you think about and tell these stories about our Airmen because it gives us that connection with each other, I think. It's really important. And understands that while you can see technology all around each of these Airmen, it's that Airman that's making it happen.

Up there in the top hand left you see [inaudible] Sierra Gilforce. She's a great young boom operator. She's flying on the KC-135, which is about 2.5 times her age. She's refueling a B-52 which is also about 2.5 times her age. She is second generation Air Force. Her dad in the Reserves there, Mark Conley, came in and enlisted in our Air Force in 1975. She grew up loving and wanting to fly. So she's doing it right now. She actually does want to fly someday for our Air Force and is working on that. But her dad said hey, you need to go in the Air Force. You need to go in as an enlisted person. And here's an opportunity for you to get there, see what flying in the Air Force is all about, see what the service is all about. She's doing a great job for us every single day.

You see Staff Sergeant Tristan St. Holmes there. I met him a couple of weeks ago, Athena and I. We met him up in Syracuse, New York. He was working on the Eastern Air Defense Sector. He and I got along right away because he speaks like I do. He speaks from the Northeast. It was pretty good. But let me tell you, when you sit there -- Do you ever watch some of these movies that they have out there and you see these snippets of Air Force people in action? Sometimes you'll see these real junior people in there, people will make a comment, that's not how it works.

You wouldn't see people of that junior rank making those types of decisions like in those movies. And the honest to God truth, you absolutely would. They were actually in these facilities, that's why they used those junior NCOs and senior NCOs because they went and did their research.

He's an Air Defense Coordinator. This guy up there is keeping America safe every single day. We are watching, this is the busiest airspace east of the Mississippi. That's what they're doing up there. Every single flight that is operating in the air, whether it's actually being in the system or out of the system, they're tracking that. As well as the coast line and every boat that moves. We know which ones we know about and we know which ones we don't know about and we need to find out about and we're connected throughout every department of the service right there in that facility. It's pretty amazing what our Airmen do every day to keep us safe. It really is.

Down in the bottom left, that's Staff Sergeant Justin Lassiter. We met him when we were at Kadena. So you see the boss and I sitting there. This guy is all charged about what he does for our Air Force. He's sitting there, he's a maintainer on helicopters. He's sitting there showing us how on the compression rotor blades there on that engine, how they're doing this blending of the blade. The person replacing all that, they get in there with a file and they have this tolerance and he sits there and he files that thing down, whether it was damaged just because of utilization, normal utilization, or some type of foreign object damage. He gets in there and literally we're saving hundreds of thousands of dollars on each engine as well as the time associated that it would take us to get a replacement engine into theater and into those weapon systems. Pretty amazing.

Then this bottom right, Senior Airman Andrew Candelaria. He's a great Airman. He's over in Afghanistan right now. He's helping us get this retrograde down there. We're really knee deep into that. When you talk about the stuff that we've got to get out of that theater and the period of time we've got left, the math really doesn't add up. It just doesn't. We have a lot of work to do in a very short period of time, and we'll probably step up to it in a different way and figure out some new ways.

So you look at that and you go that's probably about a thousand rolling stock every month and about 200 containers. By air alone. That's not all the stuff that's still moving out via ground. Just by air.

So you look and you say oh, that must be one of our [inaudible], one of our 2T2 type of guys doing that, right? He's on the back of a C-17. No, that's a maintainer pitching in to get it done

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every day because there's that much work to be done over there and that's the key to getting it done.

Those are just a few examples of what our Airmen [are doing].

Let me tell you about another guy that's helping us win the fight, right here. Tech Sergeant Chris Ferguson. Three years ago with 17 broken bones you wouldn't have thought that guy back in April would be sitting on the back of a CV-22 Osprey getting ready to go back in the air.

Let's play the video.

[Video shown].

This is a great -- [Applause].

I've had the opportunity to chat with him a few times and see how he's doing, where he's at. He doesn't talk about, there he is all busted up in that aircraft, all strapped in. He doesn't tell you about what took place just before they hit the ground. So he's sitting there in the back of that aircraft and he realizes all of sudden that ground's coming up pretty quick. So he makes his split second decision just before impact and he dives into the fuselage of the aircraft. He's literally airborne when they crash. He suffers the injuries that he talks about during the thing.

In the moments immediately after the crash he starts to get some level of consciousness, and I say some level because [inaudible] in and out. He looks out and he sees pieces of the fuselage. He sees the aircraft opened up. He has two thoughts. In his mind it seems like a lifetime, but it's just moments. This is literally microseconds of time as this is going through his mind but he said it seems like his lifetime. He had this subconscious thought. Do I lay here? Just lay here and wait? Or do I do what I was trained to do? He did what he was trained to do. What he doesn't talk about is the 16 Army Rangers that were in that craft with him, that were strapped in, that were waiting for somebody to tell them how to egress out of that aircraft and how to get to safety. So he started yelling gunner, gunner, because he knew they would understand that that meant. If he said flight [inaudible], they'd be like what does that mean? He started yelling to them, so he started making their way to where he was so they could egress out of the back of the aircraft. And he's all strapped in. He's not able to get himself out. So they make their way back to him, they grab him and take him out of the aircraft and they make it back out. What a tremendous story.

He's back in action. He did that flight back in April. Now he's in Amarillo working as -- He's helping us take delivery of our

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last order of the CV-22s. He's out there with five military members. So he knows this aircraft. He knows what we need it to be able to do and how it needs to perform, and he's out there making that happen every day. That's why we're winning the fight, Airmen just like that. Every single day.

We have some other great Airmen that have helped us win the fight, and they're still fighting. Some of you know some of these great Airmen. A lot of you know Des, Master Sergeant Joe Deslaoriate. A great story about Des. Back in 2011, literally three months after he married his love wife Lisa, he goes off downrange yet again as one of our EOD guys. He's out on what they would consider a mission that they've done hundreds of times before in an area they've walked back and forth in, they feel it's cleared to safety. He's on his way back to his vehicle and he steps on an IED and forever his life was changed. He lost both his legs, his left arm. He suffers from PTSD, traumatic brain injury. But what an inspiration to Airmen. Just two weeks ago he started working back at AFSOC Headquarters again. He's back down with his team mates. He's shaping the future in our Air Force, he's helping us win the fight. An amazing man. Truly.

Right next to him, Staff Sergeant Brian Williams. I'll talk about him in a minute.

These are some of the folks that have just recently come back. Senior Airman Taylor Savage. That's four days after she was in an IED explosion. She was out there in a movement, she's a med tech. She's on her way back in a movement. They hit an IED. She breaks both of her ankles, fractured pelvis, fractured spine, shrapnel to the face, ruptured ear drum. This is her four days later. What was amazing is Athena and I went up to visit her, we wanted to see how she was doing, she made us stand outside for 15 minutes so she could make herself up. She wanted to look good. [Laughter]. This is our Airmen. This is how they are. This is just right after this thing happens. They just couldn't believe how fast she was coming around after those type of injuries. She was there, we got to meet her mom and her brother's a Senior Airman in our Air Force. He's just a little bit of her, a little bit competitive, just a little bit. Her brother was there. He's an intel guy from Whiteman. She's back up here with us still recovering at Bethesda and doing great stuff.

Senior Airman Devon Butcher -- Just a point on Taylor. That was her first deployment. Out on her first deployment and this is what happens. This stuff is real and it's still going on. It really is.

Devon Butcher, one of our Special Tactics Airmen. He's out there on his first deployment. They're out there doing a sweep, they

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get some insurgents out there. They're trying to flesh out, gather some intel on it. All of a sudden they're getting hit with RPGs and he takes shrapnel. This guy's sitting on the plane, you see him trying to get up. Literally, he didn't want to come home. He wanted to stay there. Get me up, get me back in the fight with my team mates. I've got work to do here. This guy's not even fully qualified yet. We put him out in the field, he's getting training. He's qualified to be where we have him, but he's not the round that he will be in years to come, but he just wants to be in the fight. He really does.

I talked about Brian Williams down there, and you see him right there with his working dog Carly, so one of our defenders. About a year and a half ago he was hit by an IED when he was out on a mission out there. Brian's with us today. Brian, can I ask you to stand up? Just for a minute. Brian's kind of a shy guy. I asked Brian to stop over. Athena and I had the opportunity to meet him shortly after coming into the position and really got to know his story. He's made a remarkable recovery, he really has. In just the short time that I've known him and Athena has known him, he's really come a long, long way in his recovery and we're getting ready to send him back down to Base McGuire next month. He's going to go back into his unit and work with the dog handlers.

So Carly, we did a great story about Carly. Our former Secretary of the Air Force, Secretary Donley. Carly actually didn't sustain really injuries in the accident that would prevent him from continuing to serve. However, obviously, Brian and Carly have a very close relationship and have for a long time. So one of the things literally the last thing that Secretary Donley did prior to leaving the position, is he went over and he met with Brian and he brought Carly and retired Carly and gave him to Brian.

Carly is actually down there in New Jersey right now with Brian's fiancée Emily. She's a defender down there also, getting ready to receive him back and get him back to work. But a really remarkable story.

But it's important to know that this stuff didn't happen that long ago and it's still happening today. We have a lot going on in our Air Force, but we have Airmen in the fight. We're winning the fight but it comes at a cost. It truly comes at a cost.

How we take care of each other and how we strengthen the team is really important. How we know about our people, how we know these stories and sacrifices that they're making is really important. It comes down to this face to face communication that we absolutely have to have.

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IT's amazing to me that I had to come into this position to probably know some of those stories that I know. I should know them better. I'm a senior enlisted leader in our Air Force. I should know the sacrifice our Airmen are making in the service of their country.

We need to spend more time with each other. We need to know about each other's lives, the things that are important, the things that are affecting us.

As we move into the future the level of our resiliency will only increase in the strength that we have as we come together and know each other, respect each other, trust each other, understand what each of us are doing.

There are a lot of ways to get information out there. You heard the Chief talk about it so you know I have Facebook now and Twitter. I don't consider that my mechanism of communicating. I do use that and will use that, as the Chief will, as a method to inform you about what's going on in our Air Force, maybe share a story with you, but it's not the connection that I'm looking to have with you. This is the connection that I'm looking to have with you. The time we spend together.

So you have a great Airman out here talking with Airmen. Can we play the video?

[Video shown].

That goes out today to our Airmen. And again, this is really somewhat back to basics. We've done this. This isn't really a new idea. This is just an emphasis on the fact of we have got to get in front of each other and communicate. We have great examples of this taking place in our Air Force. Have, always will. This is really about putting it across our entire force. We have to do this.

I can give you great, great examples. It happens today when we mount our defense. It happens in many of our units where they bring people together every day to look each other in the eye, to talk about how we're winning the fight, strengthening the team, shaping the future.

So we're going to do this. We're going to monitor it. I think it's the right thing to do. I think our Air Force believes it's the right thing to do. So we'll get there, and this is how we'll continue to care for our Airmen because we'll know our Airmen as we spend time with them.

Next slide.

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Here's the deal, though. This is the reality. I talked about this at the aggregate when I first came into the position, and as you are in this position any period of time, you start to get a real appreciation for all that stuff that we're doing, all that really cool looking stuff that we're doing, there's a price tag associated with that and it's a significant prices tag. We are a stressed force, whether we want to accept that and acknowledge that or not, it's a fact. Because these things are taking place in our Air Force.

777 cases this year of sexual assault. Not that they took place this year, they did not. This is spanning back over ten years. Our focus on getting this problem corrected and moving forward is significant but nonetheless that is amongst us.

63 cases of confirmed suicides this year to date. There are many other pending final resolution.

224 cases of child abuse.

308 cases of domestic violence.

We clearly are not connected with these Airmen in the way that we need to be to help them through the challenges of life. It can sometimes [affect] things. We will do better. We're working on it.

Next slide.

We've got great Airmen that are doing just what we need them to do to overcome some of these challenges that we face as a force doing what we do for our nation.

The top left there is a group of women from Spangdahlem. They call themselves Spangdamen. Basically what they do, and this is, again, things don't need to be cosmic and it's not about money. If you look at everything in this slide, this is about people giving up their time to connect. So they get together as women in the military and they share common experiences. Challenges, goals, frustrations. All the things that go on in our lives. But there's a common bond amongst them. They're women Airmen. It's different.

That bottom left hand group is a group of men in Spangdahlem, and they call that the Roundtable. They get together and they talk about their challenges and the things that are going on in their lives and how they're working through that. They're gaining strength and support through each other. They utilize those venues as a release to some of their frustrations. But they get stronger when they do that.

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That top right side is a great kind of example of some things that we're doing for Airmen. This took place down at Joint Base Langley/Fort Eustis. They had a 90 day event that they call "We are Family". Over 90 days they did all these different types of events to connect Airmen in the work center, outside of the work center. They had retreats. They brought in different people to speak. They just had roundtable discussions in their offices about things that necessarily weren't all the day to day business that we're doing in support of our mission. They connected with each other. They began to appreciate each other in much different ways than they ever knew before, and some of them had worked together for years. In the period of that time they got to know each other in a more meaningful way. They have a stronger relationship today. They trust each other more today than they did prior to this event.

In the bottom right hand slide, I'll play a video, then I'll talk about it a little bit.

[Video shown].

We've all heard our Chief of Staff talk about how every Airman has a story. And this effort that really began at Incirlik where a group of folks came together and you heard their stories, it just [inaudible]. It kind of just gives you the kind of caption a little bit that if you really knew their stories, seeing them [inaudible], and he came home from school when he was 14 years old to find both his parents dead. He ended up in a refugee camp. Worked his way to the United States with military help. That action happened for him. He ends up deciding e wants to join our military, our Air Force. That's the kind of caliber of people that come in and serve.

Each one of those Airmen had a story. Some of them related to their work as an Airman; some of them related to their lives at home and the facts of how that impacts on people. Sharing those stories not only gave them strength and resiliency, it gave the people that heard their stories strength and resiliency, because we're not in this alone. It is really important that we emphasize this as we continue to try to care for our Airmen.

Next slide.

[Inaudible] for our Airmen is caring for our families. We are connected. We always will be connected. Again, I have the very broadest of definitions of family. It can be a spouse, a child, a parent, a friend, a wingman, a neighbor. It's where you go to gather your strength. It's all family. We are all family in this room, I truly believe that.

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But bringing our families into where we work is meaningful. It keeps them connected with us. That's not where Daddy goes, that's not where Mommy goes, it's what we do together. Because our families sacrifice and serve along with us.

A great little picture of a young man there visiting the EOD folks at Incirlik. When they brought them out, they're out there on the flight line getting to see the equipment. It's a normalization of their lives, in lives that truly aren't normal like everybody else's.

Then I've got to talk about our spouses and how amazing they are. General Newton certainly mentioned Athena, but I have to kind of call up Ms. Betty and Athena. And I know all the senior spouses that are out there that I've been exposed to and how much they do to try to bring our Air Force families together and strengthen them. Solidarity in what it is that we do. We cannot thank them enough. We cannot work hard enough to resource them and keep them connected and informed. Their strength is our strength. It truly, truly is.

Next slide.

When you care for Airmen and families, you have to have this discussion about work/life balance. Otherwise it's just a hollow discussion. It's all of it.

You heard General Welsh talk about this a little bit yesterday. I continuously talk about it when we get out. We're broke here, we're really broke here in some areas, and we really need to fix ourselves. It is not about doing more with less. The fact may be we do more with less, but it's not about the individual Airman doing more with less.

We might be able to accomplish more with less people, but it's not because we put it on our Airmen's back. It's because we do things smartly or we have different technology to exploit. But this concept of doing more, we have already exceeded our [credits] in this area as an Air Force. I'll go back to that slide where it says we must do better. We must do better.

These are just a couple of things that we're working on. We're trying to open up the aperture, they're not all inclusive. There are a lot of things going on in our Air Force. We're going to get our gyms accessible 24 hours a day anywhere we can in the Air Force. That helps with the resiliency of our Airmen. It helps them find some work/life balance where they don't feel they're jammed into a period of time where -- Because this is about resiliency as much as it's about anything else, and you've got to have that piece connected here.

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You talk about some single Airmen programs. Forever, I can look back nearly three decades and as you obtain more senior you started to be put in these positions where you were charged with doing things for our young Airmen. So you go to our Airmen and say what do you want? Arguably, nine out of ten times the person may say nothing. They're good. To be honest, most of our Airmen right up front say they're pretty good. Then of course we'll ask them 15 times and they'll make something up because they just want you to stop asking them. Okay, I'll give you something.

What we really try to do now is give them resources to say what would you do with the resources and step back. Instead of us trying to drive it, let them drive it. So they're out here at a range shooting; whatever they find for their location, what brings them some balance. It doesn't have to be that they go home to their family. Maybe they just go someplace and decompress. Get some balance in their life. Get some down time.

I love the picture of the Chief and his son down there. Why I say that, and why we want to put a senior leader in there is because it starts with senior leadership. Of course this is the enlisted perspective, that's [inaudible]. But if we don't get it right. If we don't go spend time with our families. If we don't cut out, what makes you think any of our Airmen are going to do it?

At the end of the day, it's the end of the day. There will be work to do tomorrow. I promise you, there will be work to do tomorrow and a lot of it. You come to work, you do what our Air Force needs you to do, you work hard. This isn't about going down range. This isn't about when the flag goes up and it's all going full bore. We know about that. We commit to that every single day. This is about when we're back here. It has to be reasonable. It has to be sustainable. We've got to get it right. I think we're working on that direction, I really do.

But until we have this work/life balance right, we're not going to fix a lot of the things we have. We're not going to truly be caring for our Airmen and families. We're not going to work on some of those things that we really need to root out of our midst. We're just not. We stress and push people beyond what is reasonable over time. And when things look different in the future and they will look different in the future, the very best of our Airmen will make different decisions, and it won't be to stay on this [inaudible] because it's unreasonable to do so.

So we're getting right with that. I do believe we're getting right with that. We're having this discussion. Lots of great efforts.

Next slide.

Let's talk about these folks. You know what? We had them up on stage last night. A pretty impressive picture, right? They make us all so proud. We talked about the 12 of them, but there's 10 people up there that actually [inaudible]. So we had a little bit of play in it, but I'm telling you they had a major play in it. We're talking about dads up there, we're talking about wives. We had a husband there representing his wife because she's deployed. That's what generates us. That's the power of families and that creates air power.

Next slide.

We've got to shape the future here. I'm going to ask real quick before I talk about this next slide for our [IVOD] and our advisors to stand up for just one second. I know the Chief did yesterday. But these senior enlisted leaders out here, and there's a lot more of them. They're not all here today, but they've been here all week. Thanks, Chiefs. They're shaping your future. I am really narrowed in and focused in on the deliberate development of our force and how we're going to make significant strides forward. We're going to not belabor so many things for so long. We've got a lot of smart people with a lot of good ideas, and there are a lot of people out there that we're learning from on how to move forward, and we're going to move forward. They're doing that. They've been here all week working feverishly over transforming the enlisted evaluation systems and making sure we fully appreciate and account for the impacts on promotion and assignments and what not because it's a big thing to do that, but they're working on it. This is significant. As well as many other issues.

Let me talk a little bit -- When you think about deliberate development, let me kind of add on this. It's deliberate development in the three areas that we have to look at as an Air Force. That's training, education and experience. We have to be deliberate in these areas. We have to be discerning in these areas. When you talk about the force of the future, you all heard about speculation and reality that we're going to be a smaller force. These investments become more important over time. We're not this big force with lots of people that might be able to do stuff. We have to know exactly what every member is capable of doing if we're going to be able to get to the effects that our nation is going to ask us to do.

So we need to be deliberate about it. On the enlisted side of the house that's not always been the case. We've kind of taken a broader approach and think we'll develop everybody, and some people will kind of fall out. We're going to be very deliberate about this. We're transforming PME. We are in the midst of

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that. We are right here just about a month away from instituting the first transition phase of this for the Senior NCO Academy.

What excites me the most about this, for the first time in the development of enlisted PME, we have developed something that is good for all components of our Air Force. The active, the Guard and the Reserve.

Previous models were not very conducive to everybody receiving the same type of education in the same manner. This blended approach will provide for that. It will ensure that our Airmen have the right skills, the right education at the right time in their careers. So we can leverage that into the future as the United States Air Force.

So I'm really excited about this. This is different. This is a big paradigm shift and very difficult for the senior folks in the room to get their head wrapped around because it's not what we're used to. We're used to brick and mortar. Go to class. You've got to sit in there. It's all about that. The reality is, there are much better ways to educate the force. They are absolutely more efficient and they are absolutely more effective in obtaining the end result that we're trying to get to.

So we're going to go there. You're going to learn more about this as we move forward.

Next slide.

Developmental special duty. Another process by which we're implementing a deliberate process by which we select people to do some very critical duties in our Air Force. We all make this Air Force happen. There is no one Airman in the United States Air Force more important than the other. But there are duties that impact every Airman more than others.

So when you look at these ten developmental special duties that we kind of pulled up out of the many special duties, we decided these are so critical to the force that we are going to look at how we put people into these positions. We have a large [inaudible] throughout the history of this duty and the process for relying on volunteers. Meaning we put ads out there, people raise their hand, they want to do it. Some of them want to do it for all the right reasons. Some of them want to do it because they want to live there. There were no bad reasons, to be honest, because we have provided for a system that said hey, if you want to do it, do it. We'll put you through the training process, but if you want to do it there's no real need for you to justify it other than to say you want to do it.

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That doesn't mean they were always the best Airmen to do the job. It doesn't mean we were putting them in those duties at the best time for their development as an Airman. So we've kind of looked at these at the staff, tech and master level of how we're going to look at these folks in the developmental phase of their careers. When is the right time to pull them out, and they have the right skills. And we're going to do it via a nominative process which is currently in execution. The first iteration of this.

The good news here is when you go to this nominative process, some might say well, that's just another word for non-volunteer. So let me kind of clear up the volunteer piece. Remember when you went to the MET station to volunteer? Okay, we're done there. Every four to six years you do the same thing again. You're a volunteer. You're sitting in this room, you're a volunteer. It's an all-volunteer force. You've told me you want to serve, right? You told the United States Air Force you wanted to serve in the capacity that we need you to serve.

If you had some type of contingency clause in there you'll have to show that to us, and if not, you need to step up to what we need you to do or you have to make another decision in life. But we need the best Airmen doing this because it's going to impact all Airmen across the enterprise.

But I'm telling you -- build to the next slide.

Here's an example of why this really does work. A lot of people don't know they have potential. A lot of people don't think about themselves in the way that we see them as an Air Force. People get really good at their job, they like their job, and they're happy to do that job. We kind of build the enlisted force that way because we're very technical. For the first 10 to 12 years it's really technical, so you get very associated with your technical skill in our Air Force. You're proud to be an Airman, but you're probably just as proud and sometimes more proud to do the job you do, and think less about being an Airman. This is about being an Airman and doing what you need to do.

This is Tech Sergeant [inaudible] Chan. I talked to the kid. I met him when I was over at Incirlik and he told me his story. It's kind of an interesting story because he's self-professed. I get to say this because he said it was okay. I wouldn't call him out. But he would describe himself, prior to this transformation, as a dirt bag Airman. Sewing his uniform up daily because he had rips in it. He'd sew it when he got home, but he didn't want to buy a new one. You know, at a given point the uniform was in the stage he said where really it was just all greasy, dirty. It kind of looked okay then because there wasn't any clean spots. But he was just kind of going along. He had

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this attitude. He said he had this kind of chip, that he couldn't really describe how it evolved over time, but basically what's in it for me? What are you doing for me, Air Force? What's in it for me?

But he met that master sergeant there in the middle when he went to ALS, and he kind of said, he sat down with me and said hey, what's going on here? He had a conversation with him. He said you're better than this. You can be a lot better Airman than you are. He talked through, and asked him what his goals were and what does he really want out of life? What does he want out of the service? What does he really want to do?

He kind of went through and this transformation started. Then they happened to join again -- So that took place at Nellis. They were both at Nellis together when he met him in ALS. So the tech sergeant, now master sergeant, was an ALS instructor at Nellis, and Tech Sergeant Chan went there. Then he ends up being stationed at Incirlik, and it just so happens now the Commandant is that tech sergeant that was his instructor. Hired him on the spot the very first time he meets him walking around the base.

Now this guy's got a great story. He's a sharp Airman. He's articulate. Remember that story teller initiative that we talked about? That's this guy. This is the guy that is behind that. We're doing that story tellers around our Air Force right now. Aviano, Ramstein, [inaudible]. They're getting one to do one [inaudible], and they just did one at Petersen and they're getting ready to do one at Canon here next month. This is a big deal. Think about the turn-around. This guy could have been left to his own devices. This Airman could have just been left, okay, end of enlistment, time to go on to something else. All it took was an NCO sitting down and looking at the potential that he had and he never knew he had it until somebody told him he had it. That's the power of our Airmen.

Next slide.

This is what it's all about. It's about our Airmen. It's about our families. This is how it gets done every single day. All about these Airmen, all about families. And that's it.

Thanks so much.

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