

"Enlisted Perspective"

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James Roy

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CMSAF Roy: Thank you all. Please take your seats.

It's great to be here today. They asked me just a minute ago. What does it feel like, Chief? You're getting ready to go up on stage, what does that feel like? The only word that comes to mind is grateful. Quite frankly, grateful. Grateful that I had an opportunity to serve. Grateful that we've had about 30-some years of this. This is what Ms. Paula and I know. We are certainly humbled by the opportunity here as well.

There are a couple of folks I want to recognize before I get started this afternoon. Certainly the Secretary, Mr. Donley, thank you so much for being here. I certainly appreciate your leadership over my three years of doing this, but more so, Mr. Secretary, for your continued leadership of our great United States Air Force. Thank you so much, sir.

[Applause].

Of course General Wolfenbarger, thank you so much for being here as well, ma'am. She asked me a minute ago, Chief, I didn't know if this was a closed session nor not. I don't see other general officers in here. Ma'am, there's a lot of them behind you but thank you for being here.

I also want to recognize, I don't think they get enough recognition, and that's the second row right back here, all those Chiefs sitting in that second row. I call them the EBODs, the Enlisted Board of Directors. That's the body that has helped me over my tenure. Ms. Paula and I are certainly grateful for you and your spouses, your friendship most importantly, but also your leadership of our great United States Air Force and our Airmen. Thank you so much for being here as well.

[Applause].

I don't know, I don't see them out here. Normally there are a few of them in the audience. Former Chief Master Sergeants of the Air Force. I don't see if you're -- Gerald Murray, thank you for being here. There are a few that are here at the conference, and certainly Gerald I appreciate yours and the other formers that couldn't make it here today. When you're in positions like this you kind of have a small group of people you talk to. This body right here with the formers is that kind of body that I talk to and they give me sound advice every single time I come and

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ask. Gerald, thank you, and please continue to pass on to the others as well. I appreciate your friendship and your steadfast leadership of this great organization as well.

Folks, when they announce your retirement, what do you do? Then you're getting ready to go on stage. I'm going to veer off here a little bit on my normal path of what I would typically brief. Some people might ask, why are you going to do that, Chief? Well, I am still the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force and I can do that, so I'm going to do that.

This one is probably the hardest slide I'll ever have to go over, but it's one that needs to be said. It comes from the heart, but 30 years, if you look at this and you say wow, what's happened to us? If I could, this slide right here.

People ask all the time, why do you do what you do? This is why I do what I do. This is my family. Of course when I threw that picture at Caleb last night he said 'Dad, that's not me, that's got too many freckles.' [Laughter]. But just like my family, there are a lot of other Air Force families out there as well. I'm going to throw that throughout the slides here, but I just wanted to say thank you to Ms. Paula, and our boys. For 30 years -- If you don't know the story, Ms. Paula and I we kind of grew up together. We started dating in 10th grade. So it's easy when you -- [Applause]. It's all Ms. Paula. She's the one that's had to tolerate me. But it's been joyful. Ms. Paula, thank you so much.

There are some other families out there as well. It's the families that I want to talk about here a little bit today. If you look at this slide set you can see that when we talk about Airmen, air power, and America's Air Force, we often refer to kind of our heritage, where we came from. And we should. We should always, always reflect back on where we came from because that's the only way we're going to continue to grow. If you look at these pictures here, all the enlisted in this room certainly would know these pictures because it's taken right out of your PDG, Professional Development Guide. You know that thing that you study when you get ready to test? Each Airman out here certainly knows this.

But what you may not know is this bottom right hand corner over here. This is a point that I want to make. Master Sergeant Raymond Hurst. I met Master Sergeant Hurst, retired. I met him up at McGee Tyson a few months ago. We were over there checking out the different forms of PME available and I met this young man in the DFAC. I walked by him at first, he kind of kept looking at me, and I thought to myself, you know, I'm going to go over and talk to him for just a little bit.

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When I went over to talk to him, he stood up real firm. 'Chief, thank you so much for stopping by and talking to me.' And he started telling me his story. He retired in 1985. But then this other young man stood up next to him. He said he was the grandson of Master Sergeant Hurst and he was already tweeting it. He'd already taken a picture and he was already tweeting it.

Folks, it's these kinds of stories that we need to continue to tell as well. It's not just the ones that are written that we need to know. It's the ones that are unwritten that we need to focus on as well. As our Chief of Staff has said over and over again, in just the very short time that he's been the Chief of Staff, everybody has a story. Everybody does have a story. Just like Master Sergeant Hurst's grandson, everybody has a family as well and we need to tell that story as well.

You may be thinking what's the Chief going to talk about this young man here? Well, if you don't know, General Flowers began his career as an Airman Basic, many many years ago, obviously. But he began his career as an Airman Basic. Out of the Comptroller. He had a line number for Master Sergeant, and then he got his commission. Thirteen years after being in the United States Air Force. He went on and got his degree, like many of you do each and every day. You're out there doing CCF and other things. Got the degree, and he went on to get his commission. Who would ever have known that years later Major General Flowers would be the Air Force Comptroller? Wow. What a big deal. Everybody has that same opportunity. That's what makes us who we are today.

Oftentimes when I talk to other nations about their enlisted force, they always ask me the question and I can tell you this group up here will tell you this, they always ask well what makes you that professional force that you are? Here's one of those things that makes us this. These opportunities, just like Major General Flowers had. If you don't know, Major General Flowers ended up 46 years of service, serving as the longest-serving active duty Air Force member ever. What a young man. And if you don't know, he has a family too. In fact his son is Lieutenant Colonel Flowers. He may be in here today. He works for Lieutenant General Travis, the medical chief. What a story.

I want to tell you about another story. This one's a little more at home. Many of you probably heard me tell this story before. You may be asking yourself, gosh, Chief, on my second slide up there you showed me these black and white photos of all this heritage. Why don't you have a picture of Tech Sergeant Heard? Well, who is Tech Sergeant Heard, first of all? Technical Sergeant Heard was my very first supervisor. But

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Chief, in those black and white photos back there you don't have a picture of Tech Sergeant Heard? No, I don't. Because in the 1980's not everybody walked around with a camera in your back pocket. But let me tell you a little bit about Technical Sergeant Heard and wrap it into why this is important.

Tech Sergeant Nathan Heard was my first supervisor at MacDill Air Force Base in the early '80s. That's our unit patch. Tech Sergeant Heard, I will tell you, knew what it was to be a supervisor. I've said this story over and over again, but he knew Ms. Paula and Airman Basic Roy. He knew our story. He knew where we were coming from. He knew where we were living. In fact he guided us to where we were going to live. He got in our business. He stayed in our business every single day. He put me on the right equipment to make sure that I was succeeding in whatever challenges that would face me ahead. One would call that bold leadership. Ever heard that term before? Tech Sergeant Heard to me is all about that leadership, that bold leadership.

Let me tell you, when CDCs were due, it was 30 days. He didn't care whether it was January or if it was February, it was 30 days. And you better have it to him on time. And you knew that and you respected him for that. That's the type of leadership that we need in our Air Force today.

Then there's this young man. Dez, Tech Sergeant Deslauriers. My hero. He doesn't know that but I'm telling you publicly here today, Dez. I appreciate you. If you don't know the story, here in a few days will be the first year since Dez's incident in Afghanistan. Dez is here with us today, if you haven't seen him.

[Applause].

You might be saying what's this picture all about, Chief? The incident happened in September. He was in uniform about April. I asked Dez to go with me to my quality of life interview. Is that the proper way of saying that, Mr. Secretary? Query. How about testimony. Let's try that one. Testimony in front of Congress. I asked Dez to go with me because Dez showed me exactly what it was to be an Airman. It's that spirit. It's that spirit. When I asked Dez to go with me, Dez commented to me, and I don't know if you remember this Dez -- Dez made the comment to me, Chief, you realize this will be the first time I will be back in uniform, and he smiled when he said that. Dez, I am so proud of you, buddy. Thank you so much for what you continue to do for our Air Force and thank you for who you are today.

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[Applause].

Dez also has a family. Lisa and now Cameron. Cameron's going to turn one here the 8th of December this year. Wow, if you do the math, Dez and Lisa were in the hospital about the same time. You want to know what a family's about, talk to Lisa. If you can't pick up the spirit of what an Air Force family is, talk to Lisa. That's an Air Force family right there. Lisa was by his side every single day. Lisa, thank you so much. I don't know if I ever gave you one of these, but I'm going to come down there and I'm going to give you one of these coins, just to say thank you to you and Cameron.

[Applause].

Every Airman has a story.

Let's get on to the next subject, air power. When we look at air power, most people would kind of bring up photos like this and they'd say 'wow, that's some pretty interesting iron you've got up there, Chief.' I draw your attention up to your right-hand corner up there, to those two Airmen out there, probably maintainers out on the flight line getting ready to launch that B-2. What are they doing? Giving each other high-fives. That's the spirit of an Airman, right there.

Teamwork, esprit de corps. That's what it's about, right? It's not just about the iron. I would go on to say that it's also this thing right here, what we call deliberate development. If you were in here a couple of hours ago you heard from the Chairman. Chairman Dempsey mentioned this idea of deliberately developing people. In our words, Airmen. What does that mean?

He used a new term on us -- decisive edge. Have you heard that one before? That's pretty cool. And that's exactly what this gives us. I'll let you take a look at that for a minute, but there's a lot of stuff up there. I draw down into three different pillars, those being education, experience and training. When you look at this deliberate development model people like Terry West back here and Steve McDonald, and of course the EBOD, the enlisted force development panel, we looked at this thing and said how can we make this a little more graphical so we can kind of talk through this a little bit?

This is what we call the road map or just simply the map of deliberate development. You can see right from the ground of it, hopefully you can see it from that angle there, but it's based on our core values. Exactly what the Secretary talked on the first day -- integrity, service, and excellence. Everything we do is grounded in our core values.

Let's talk about those pillars for just a minute. Education. What about education? Do you realize here in just a few days we're going to celebrate the 400,000th CCAF degree? Wow. That's a big deal. Some young Senior Airman is going to receive that award. That is a big deal. You need to be very very proud of that because we are the only service that has a community college. That is a big deal. 1973, AFA helped us implement that, so thank you for that. We absolutely appreciate that.

There's also the other side of this that's getting ready to come out and hopefully you've had a chance to kind of pick up on some of this language. I know the EBOD helped us work through this and enlisted force development has as well, this panel. But this EPME Next subject. Hopefully you had an opportunity to read a little bit of this stuff. Let me talk about why EPME Next is so so important. Why is it so important? Quite frankly we had some gaps in our current PME system that we need to kind of clean up. When you have from the very first PME that we give Airmen, that being ALS, to the second level, NCO Academy, on average we have about a ten year gap in there. Anybody doing anything within ten years? Wow, first line supervisor. It's a big deal. They're busy. They are very busy. But we need to provide them with the institutional competencies much more regularly, much more on time, much earlier in somebody's career. That's exactly what EPME Next is going to do for us. We're excited about this. We don't have all the details worked out yet. We're continuing to work on that, but this is the wave of the future and this is the direction that we're getting ready to go to.

Training. What can you say about training? I've got a word for you. How about certifications? Certifications important to our Airmen today? Sure they are, in all different forms in all different ways. When you talk about FAA, they have certain requirements that somebody working on aircraft that are going to be flying in the air has to have. Are those things important to Airmen in the future? Absolutely.

A couple of things that we've done through CCAF, of course, but is this idea of certification. Giving an Airman certification. We have three currently that I'd like to talk about. One is being air frames and power generation; another one being ISD or instructional systems design; and of course our professional management certificate that over 6,000 Airmen have taken advantage of.

Are those things important to us? You bet they are. In fact our President recognized the importance of certification as well. They sent out some information on this. We're well ahead

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of that. We're doing it in three big ways and soon to come we will continue to expand that out.

In total there's been well over 7,000 Airmen that have taken advantage of this. This is going to help them not only in the United States Air Force, Airmen wearing the cloth of their nation, but also during their transition as well.

Experience. What do you say about experience? We talk about different forms of how an Airman gets experiences today. Let me take a little bit different angle to this. How about special duties? Is special duties important to us? Oh yes, it is. Can you tell me how many special duties we have out there across our Air Force? I'll give you an idea. It's about 24 different career fields or special duty lanes that we can go into. Why are special duties so important to us today? These things range from MTI, recruiter, first sergeants, Airmen dorm leaders, and a multitude of other things. Twenty-four in total. Why are these experiences so important to us?

Let me just divert just a little bit to say mainly it's because it's an Air Force requirement, for one. But also a way of helping to deliberately develop the Airmen of the future. A lot of people say, 'that's not good. If you go off and do this special duty that may not be good for my career.' It didn't hurt me. It didn't hurt me. Folks, your Air Force needs Airmen to do these special duties. And oh by the way, it's part of deliberate development as well.

What I've done is I've asked the Enlisted Force Development Panel to kind of look at this and how we select Airmen for these different positions. Jim Cody, in AETC, he will tell you that they've been working pretty hard at how they select both for MTIs and how they're going to select for tech school instructors. This is important duty and we're going to continue to do it.

Let's move on. You take those Airmen, you take that air power. What does that mean to you? Why is the Air Force symbol in between all these nine combatant commands? Why is that? You could wrap it around the edges and say you know, hey, it's all interagencies. There are all kinds of agencies there too that we supply, to provide that capability of airmanship into. I want to give you a little bit of an angle of why that may be important. I want to take it down one of these paths here, probably one that you know an awful lot about or most of you do because you've probably been deployed to this particular geographic area. But let me play that video.

[Video shown].

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Again, that's just one area. We could do like videos for many other combatant commands out there that do an awful lot as well. Maybe in a different angle of that, but certainly one that our Airmen are in the fight every single day. We certainly should be proud of them every day as well.

We're part of that joint team.

Let me talk a little bit more about America's Air Force. Some of you may know some of this stuff, some of you may not, but I'm going to enlighten you just a little bit here.

If you look at that photo up there on the top left hand side, that's at the United States Navy Senior Enlisted Academy. A very good friend of mine is standing off to the right hand side there, a guy by the name of MCPON West. MCPON's going to retire here at the end of the month, but what I want to point out to you more importantly is those two Airmen standing in the middle. We have Airmen every single day that are going to our joint PME opportunities out there, our sister service PME opportunities.

The reason I put the nominative process up there is one of the things we noted years ago and the EBOD helped me with this was you know, 'Chief, are we selecting the right people to go to these schools?' In other words, what's the payback from this? Well, there's about 66 of those slots a year out there to our sister services, and every one of our other services has these. We want to make sure that we're selecting the right people to go to these.

Tim Horn kind of put this out there last week. He developed this with the help of many others, but we now have a nominative process for selecting those Airmen to go to those opportunities, those 66 opportunities out there a year.

Here's the process. It's pretty simple. We're going to host a board. About 50 percent of the impact is going to come from your record. The other 50 percent is going to come from either the job that you're in today, or the job that you're getting ready to go to. If you're working with the Navy or maybe with the Army then you have a much higher opportunity or likelihood that you will go to one of these school houses. So this opportunity I think in the future, you're going to see a lot more dividends paid from that.

So the top right hand corner up there, partner nation EPME. Years ago we didn't do a whole lot of this other than maybe accept a lot of international partners into our schools, whether that be the Senior NCO Academy or the NCO Academy, and even into some of our ALSes in some of our geographic locations. But today

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as you can see this young tech sergeant up there, doesn't he blend in really well? Of course he does. I guarantee you this young tech sergeant gained an awful lot up there in Canada. That's where this picture was taken. We have three opportunities out there currently, different countries. One of them being in Canada obviously, that's where we send most of our coalition Airmen that are going out there to those coalition partner schools, but we also have opportunities in New Zealand. We also have opportunities in Singapore. We're about to open up the doors in South Africa. It's taken a long time but it's one that's very very important. If you look at the deliberate development of Airmen today, this is what it's going to take. It's going to take somebody with a joint background. It's going to take somebody with a coalition idea, somebody that understands this coalition much better than most of us did when we grew up. These are the opportunities these young men and women in our Air Force, unlike we had. We're going to have a selection process for it as well.

Then I draw you to the bottom left hand corner there. I would say that these two Airmen are pioneers in our Air Force. Why pioneers in our Air Force? 'That's a pretty strong word there, Chief.' It is a very strong word. Just like I said about coalition. I draw you attention to that bottom left hand page here only to bring out the names. Secretary of the Air Force International Affairs. This young Airman will be working with Ms. Heidi Grant and Major General Johnston. I think Manny, where are you? Manny Pineiro -- congratulations to you. We're looking forward to continuing to work with you. What this young man is going to do is work with our office, the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force and out there to USAFE and to PACAF and others, 12th Air Force and such, to work with partner nations on how we get this word out there, how we continue to work with our enlisted Airmen out there across the coalition force. So Manny congratulations to you. I'm proud of you. Like I told you, you're a pioneer in our Air Force and I look forward to working with you. Hooah.

[Applause].

Bottom right hand corner. LL, Legislative Affairs. I saw Major General Wolters right over here. Thank you, sir for joining us today. But I would bring your attention to Senior Master Sergeant Noel. She is, I know she's in here today because I got the word that she has to leave here and go to Georgetown. She's going to be one of our very first enlisted Fellows within LL. We have two positions. We'll rotate those. Senior Master Sergeant billets. They're going to go, just like every LL Fellow will do, they will go out to Georgetown which is where she's going to head out here in a minute for some education. Then

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they'll bring them back with the help of Major General Wolters they're going to put them out into one of the congressional offices, either Congress or Senate to work with the staffs over there.

Think about this for a minute. An enlisted Airman working over on the Hill. What a deal. Senior Master Sergeant Noel, are you in here? Can you stand up Melanie? Congratulations to you.

[Applause].

Pioneers in our Air Force. You're going to read about this in the history books, I guarantee you. Congratulations to you. I'm proud of you.

Inside of our Air Force we also have teams as well. I just want to point out a couple of things. Just like I say across the top up there, America's Air Force. We are one Air Force. But I want to bring home a couple of points to you, some things that you may not know about. This idea of community basing. If I were to ask ten of you out there, can you tell me anything about community basing? Most likely, you could not. But I'd tell you, if you're in the MAF or the CAF, the Mobility Air Forces or the Combat Air Forces, those two commands, you can probably tell me a little bit about this community basing because we have it at ten different locations across our Air Force. What this is, if you notice the picture there of Staff Sergeant Burton. By the way, Staff Sergeant Burton is an Air National Guardsman out of Vermont. But he is training two Airmen, active duty Airmen, on aircraft maintenance. 'Wow, that's kind of odd, Chief.' Sure, it's odd but it's effective. Think about this for a minute.

If you have a training requirement and you don't have somebody to do the training in one component, what do you do? You go to another component. You can see a whole list of them here. There are ten different locations that we're doing this at currently. We're only doing it in the maintenance community currently, but in the future over the next three years it's projected we're going to have about 12 more of these. In other career fields. Maybe, just maybe, in officer career fields as well. Right now it's in the enlisted career field. But these are opportunities, think about that. Think about those two young Airmen right there in that picture. Think about those two Airmen, when they're sitting up here on the EBOD, when they're Chief Master Sergeants. What perspective are they going to have about our United States Air Force? I guarantee it's going to be different than the one we have today. It's the right thing to do.

Within our Air Force we also have some unique capabilities that fit, as Lieutenant General Jackson said yesterday, for the

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hurricane hunters as Senior Airman Daniel's showing us here out of Keesler Air Force Base in Mississippi, for the hurricane hunters. Pretty aggressive hurricane season this year, and I guarantee you they were busy. This is a unique qualification that our Air Force Reserve does for us every single day.

One team.

I also want to bring in our defense industry, our partners. How we partner with the defense industry. A lot of people look at this photo, and I'm walking over to this side because I want to point somebody out here. You see this photo up here in the top left hand corner? The black and white one, of course. That Tech Sergeant there I think is Rick Parsons. Rick was a defender as well. No, it wasn't Rick. That was a little bit before Rick's time. But I want to bring your attention to those other two photos there. A lot of times people think we can use our industry, our partners to leverage some of this technology. If you look at the Raven that's getting ready to be thrown off there to do some drug interdiction or maybe some environmental work for us, whoever thought we'd be having a staff sergeant doing that out of the defender community?

Or if you look at the bottom picture there, when you look at the simulator. Yesterday the Chief of Staff stood up on this stage and he talked about the idea of flying airplanes. If we're not going to be able to fly airplanes, we don't have the money to fly them personally, you use simulators. We've got to be careful to make sure that we still get sim time. Remember him saying that? The same case here. Listen, we have simulators in some areas that we are doing amazing things with. Realistic training that our Airmen are going through every single day. If you look at the one down there at the bottom, that's a young Airman going through some training that I guarantee we don't want to do for real. If we do it for real, we've got problems. I'd much rather them go through that sim.

To the other side of the photo. EOD. These are just two examples. If you look here, what I'm trying to point out to you is this little robot down there. If we can put a little bit of space between the hazard and our Airmen, good for us. If you look at the top photo up there you can see another EOD Airman, maybe in another war, a little bit closer to the munition.

Folks, we've got to continue to partner with our defense industry. They provide us that equipment. We need to work with them to tell them what we need, those requirements that are out there.

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What else is new? Innovation. Wow, it's a beautiful thing. What is innovation? I talked about it the other evening, Monday evening. I talked about these young Airmen, we call them our 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year. How innovative they are, and what they do every single day. We have Airmen like that on every flight line, every back shop. We have them in every shop, in civil engineer, and you can list off the career fields, weather, whatever career field it is. I want to show you one more though. If you look at this Air Force link, this gives you a little bit different idea on maybe an innovative way of looking at things.

[Video shown].

Just another way that our innovative Airmen found to share news and information. By the way, that's live today. They were waiting for me to present it to you, but -- They called me Steve Jobs there for a minute, but I said no, no. Let's not go there. I know it's an iPad up there but don't even go there. But folks, we have young Airmen every single day that are in the fight, making these things happen.

What I would share with you on this one, if you notice real briefly on the top left hand corner of that iPad it had a little camera there with a little blip that said you could share a story, and you can go on there and share a story. As the Chief of Staff said, every Airman has a story. I would encourage you to go on there and share your Airmen's stories.

Folks, listen. Airmen, air power, America's Air Force. There's no doubt that we have many challenges ahead of us. No doubt. But the thing that we have that a lot of other forces do not have is you. We have very innovative Airmen that are inquisitive, educated, motivated, and ready to do tomorrow's mission. We've got the right Secretary, we've got the right Chief of Staff, we certainly have you, the leaders of our United States Air Force.

We're going to be okay. There are a lot of bumps to come, for sure. But we're going to be okay. The Chairman stood up here a minute ago and talked about kind of his view on where we're going to be and how things were going to change. We're going to be okay. In fact I think we're going to be even better than we are today. Because of you. You've got to set your mind to this. You can't be woe is us. You've got to continue to do what Airmen before you have done every single time we've been in this crunch. Think. Think. We educate you, we train you and educate you for a reason. You need those experiences so that you can think. We want you to think your way through this.

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Folks, it's been an absolute pleasure to be here with you today and I look forward to continuing to serve with you with our United States Air Force. God bless each and every one of you.

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