

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force  
James A. Roy

Air Warfare Symposium

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**Moderator:** Our next speaker is the personal advisor to the Chief of Staff and the Secretary on all issues regarding the welfare, readiness, morale and proper utilization and progress of our enlisted force. He's the 16<sup>th</sup> Chief Master Sergeant appointed to the highest non-commissioned officer position we have. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James Roy.

**CMSAF Roy:** Good afternoon. It certainly is good to be here this afternoon and it's great to see a lot of airmen out in the audience. I've heard a couple of the briefs already this morning.

What I thought I'd do this afternoon, I'm going to change it up just a little bit. I want to talk a little bit about some of the stuff that Secretary Donley has spoken of, and then I'd like to just highlight a few airmen and kind of what our airmen are doing within our current operations.

To get started, as the Secretary presented earlier to you today, those four pillars or objectives within the QDR of where we're going in the future.

Prevailing in today's fight. Absolutely. We are a nation at war and on many different fronts. That is obviously our first priority. Preventing and deterring that conflict. Preparing for what will come in the future.

What I want to highlight today, though, I want to highlight kind of the last bullet there, the objective of preserving and enhancing that all volunteer force. As the Secretary said, that's kind of what puts this all together and how we are able to accomplish those missions. That's what I'm going to highlight today.

You might say how do you do this? We have an all volunteer force. We've had since about 1973 or so or a little bit later, that volunteer force has seen many wars. It has seen an awful lot of humanitarian assistance actions, and certainly it doesn't come without trial and

tribulations. But now we find ourselves in a situation where we're at war again, and how do you manage that?

First and foremost, you've got to continue to manage that operational tempo. As the Chief of Staff would say, we're all in. I'm going to highlight that here in just a few minutes with a few airmen that are doing some pretty unique tasks within the Central Command theater of operation.

Then obviously one of the areas of focus that we need to continue to remain looking at is that of our operational tempo. Specifically of those chronic, critical AFSCs out there that are always tasked, they're obviously the low density/high demand kind of task. Many would say gee, that's kind of easy to point out. That's your JTAC kind of folks. That's your PJs. But also on that list I think what would surprise many folks is our other AFSCs like contracting, like civil engineer. Those are some AFSCs we find ourselves today that we've got to continue to manage in a way that doesn't work our way into driving folks out of the force and keeping them within. Keeping them to the heightened level of training and such, and those are some of the things I'll talk about here later this afternoon.

To mention a couple of those all-in taskings, some of those jet taskings, as we call them, I'd like to highlight a few airmen here. These are airmen that are out on the battlefield, if you will.

This particular young man, Tech Sergeant Callaman is in Afghanistan on a PRT. Of the 12 PRTs that the United States leads within Afghanistan currently today, six of those are led by the United States Air Force with an awful lot of airmen within those PRTs.

I'll talk about training for those airmen here in the near future, but I'd like to just highlight this young man, that this is a civil engineer working with a provincial government, to help build the facilities, if you will, for that particular area of Afghanistan. And doing just a tremendous job.

Another airman I'd like to highlight is Staff Sergeant Norris. I highlight Sergeant Norris because, as you can read there, he's on what we call an ADT, Agricultural Developmental Team. Now some would say what does the Air Force have to do with agriculture development? Well, let me explain a couple of things here. I think this is some of the uniqueness that we find as you heard earlier with General McKinley is, our Guard and Reserve force out there have some unique capabilities that we need to tap into

sometimes. This young man had another AFSC but he found himself using a skill that he grew up with, that of farming. He's out of Kentucky. He grew up in farmland, if you will, and we found that we could utilize those skills within that particular agricultural developmental team.

These airmen are doing the things that we have asked them to do. Non-traditional? Sure. Important? Absolute. Those are some of the airmen that, quite frankly, we have in our Air Force that we need to continue to remain focused on. They're all in.

Another area that we need to focus on is obviously resetting the equipment. We've talked an awful lot, we'll continue to hear the fact that we need to recapitalize our aircraft, and we need to continue to do that. Obviously you can see a lot of years in the SWA, if you will. And we're going to be there for a lot longer time.

I would also point out to you that last bullet there, we need to continue to remain focused also on our agile combat support equipment as well.

Just as our airframes wear out, our agile combat support equipment wears out as well, and we need to continue to focus on that.

I highlight Staff Sergeant Hamilton. He's out of the reserve force at Keesler. This young airman is an airman out of the Flying Jennies, if you will. I've been associated with Keesler before, and I'd tell you it's a squadron, it's a unit that is very very proud of their heritage and their tradition. You can see there that even though, and I realize we're talking about a J model here, but look at the mission success rate. 99.7 percent success rate. Our airmen, regardless of the airframe, regardless of the iron, if you will, are keeping the mission going. Absolutely keeping the mission going. And they will continue to do that.

The next area I'd like to talk about is that of how we support our airmen and their families. As we highlight here and has been discussed a little bit in another forum, that of airman resiliency. It's one that is kind of new terminology to us, but yet it's one that we need to really focus on and I'll highlight that here in a second.

Then obviously that obligation that we have to all of our warriors, all of our airmen, and that of one of wounded warrior care. I highlight this young airman from out at Creech to talk a little bit about the resiliency program

within the United States Air Force and where we're going with this and the need for it.

I highlight the RPA pilots along with sensor operators. This young man out at Creech has flown well over 900 hours, has seen many many things. What we don't realize as an example, is that the types of things that they see on a daily basis. Just as an example. But what about those other airmen that I described earlier that are operating outside the wire? They are seeing some pretty amazing things that we need to make sure we are remaining focus on their needs. As General Fraser would say, we need to focus on before the bang, rather than after the bang.

What are we doing with our resiliency program? I'll tell you, we've looked around, and we continue to look around. The Army, for instance, has a Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program. Very unique, but I would say if you dig into it, we have similar programs within the United States Air Force. If you go to the Port Mortuary Ferry at Dover Air Force Base, you will find very very similar to that those four pillars that Comprehensive Soldier Fitness gets after. It's something that we need to look at.

One would say well maybe we need to look at this across the Air Force. Firstly, we need to look at those that need it. That's where we need to focus primarily at first. And I highlight Senior Airman Morris as one airman that most people would not think, well why would Airman Morris need it? He's in CONUS, he lives at Nellis Air Force Base, a pretty nice location to live at. So why would he need some type of resiliency program?

Having just visited Creech, along with Canon and Holloman, and visiting that whole operation, I will tell you I think our leadership in those particular areas have it right. When you walk into the duty section you feel as if you're in a Central Command theater of operation. You absolutely feel it. On the way out, you can feel that you're leaving that. We do that for a purpose. The purpose is, obviously, do we want that to be carried back home? We don't. We certainly don't. So resiliency program is something we need to continue to focus on and maybe enhance in the future.

The other thing is that commitment that we have to our wounded warriors. I highlight almost a local airman here from MacDill, many of you may know him. Many of you are from MacDill today. Staff Sergeant Light. Staff Sergeant Light is out of the 6<sup>th</sup> Communication Squadron at MacDill. Staff Sergeant Light was on a convoy that, the story goes back a little ways. He got ready to deploy and he fell ill

to something and his deployment was going to be called off. Wanting to deploy, feeling the need to deploy, he got himself well quick enough that he could go on this deployment. Soon after he got there, or soon to go home, I should say, he was within a month out of departing the area, he asked again to go on this particular mission. Unfortunately, he's the only one that survived. If you look at it, look at his bottom line, what he says to people -- It's an act of courage, but look at what he says. Stay positive. Stay positive about what we are, who we are. That right there is an airman that we have in our United States Air Force, and we need to continue to highlight airmen like that because that's airmen doing the mission absolutely every day. That sense of calling.

As I look into the future, what is it that our airmen need of the future? This is the way I would describe that.

As we develop those future leaders, I kind of look at it in three's. First of all, and you can see where I described it in those experiences that those airmen have had. Many many of our airmen, a lot of airmen, have combat experience very very early in their careers. Very early in their careers.

How do we take that experience that they get, what do we couple that with to have the best Air Force of the future?

In my view I think we take those experiences, continue to give them those experiences, along with training and education.

I talked a little earlier today about training with a group of airmen, and how some would perceive that training as an absolute must-do. I happen to subscribe to that. I wouldn't be standing here today if it wasn't for the training that's been afforded me over the years. It's not something you get at basic training and that stops there.

What I would submit is we need to continue to look at how we are doing joint training. We need to continue to look at how we're doing training with coalition partners.

I told you up front that I was going to talk a little bit about what kind of training we're providing to those airmen that we're sending outside of the wire. Let me talk a little bit about that.

We've just changed it around just a little bit. Some will hear it as CST training, others will hear the CAS training. It depends on the mission that you're going on.

For the CST training, just like those two airmen upfront that are going outside the wire, doing those jet taskings, that is Army funded training, done at an Army location. We call them power projection platforms. We do them in a few locations around the United States. 2<sup>nd</sup> Air Force has ownership of that. And as I've spoken with Major General Hertog and Chief Jordan about this, they're trying to look at trying to focus in on maybe just four to fix of those locations to make sure that we are absolutely focused on what we're doing there. What we found ourselves in the very beginning was, we were doing it wherever we could. What we need to understand as airmen is that we may be training 450 airmen at these locations, but the Army is training 4,500 soldiers. So we've got to be able to adapt to that as well.

I hear a lot of good at what's going on at these CST locations. It continues to improve. Continues to improve. That's a very very positive thing.

On CAS training, CAS training is done by, obviously it's paid for by the United States Air Force and it's conducted at our locations. Gurnsey, we have Fort Dix, joint base Dix, Maguire and Lakenhurst. We do it at these locations depending on the types of mission that our airmen are going to. Again, we've just changed it around. AETC has been looking at the core of it and making sure that we are absolute in what we're providing to our airmen, that it's what our airmen need.

So training, it's certainly something that we need to continue to remain focused on.

Education. I'll talk about this just for a minute. We had a very interesting conversation a few minutes ago in another forum, and I found something rather interesting about that. Chief, I don't know if you picked up on this. But we had a technical sergeant asking about a doctorate degree. That is our force today. That is our force today. I've met many technical sergeants that have a doctorate's degree. I have met many many airmen that come into our Air Force with a bachelor's degree. Air University just stood up, or stood up a while back, the associate, the bachelor's degree program as a way that we could convert or take those credits that we earn over time and convert those into a bachelor's degree. I believe it's up to 70 or so schools now, General Peck, if I'm not -- About 45 different schools that are doing this for us right now across our United States Air Force. That's a way that we get at this education. That's off duty education.

Let me talk a little bit about what some would call in-house, or PME. Here are some issues that we're looking at and seeking out, the Chief and I have spoken about this many times, about joint education. Very very important. It's important for our officer corps and it's also very very important for our enlisted corps, because that's the way we operate today. We operate within joint and coalition teams. We're looking at, I've just talked with the Marine Corps, it looks like we might get a few slots within their brand new course. And it looks like we may get a few Marines into our course which would be a first for a while. We want to try to get some airmen into the U.S. Army Sergeant Major Academy down at Fort Bliss. Hopefully we'll be able to do that this coming year. We send about 32 airmen a year, senior NCOs, to the United States Coast Guard Academy, and about the same number to the United States Navy Senior Academy. And that's a good thing.

What I would caveat that by saying is, what kind of assignments are we giving them afterwards? I think that's something we need to look at. Because we should be attaching it to something that they can use. We should be attaching it to that.

The next phase, and we've pretty much gone along those lines, we're pretty close to this now. We've sent a few airmen to the Singapore Warrant Officer Course. Unfortunately, they didn't get credit for it because we didn't get it accredited. However, the new and improved, what we've looked at is, what we're doing with Canada. Canada has just visited Air University. I was just up there not too long back. We have, let me set the tone for you. We've had for years Canadian students within our school system. Our Senior NCO Academy. We have an instructor at our United States Air Force Senior Academy. We also have an instructor, a Chief Master Sergeant, in their school. The thing we've not done yet is we've not sent any airmen to Canada yet. But I think we're pretty close. I think we can get there from here. In fact I talked earlier, I think we're pretty close in that Air University has already looked at their curriculum and said you know what? We can give credit for this for Senior NCO Academy because we're that close to it.

That's the way that we get at the future. Again, as we look at it, that's the way we do things today, within joint and coalition teams.

That's kind of how I see it in the future. Where we're going in the future. As highlighted, we have airmen that are doing just simply amazing things out there. We

need to continue to manage that operational tempo, especially for those chronic, critical AFSCs, and then obviously how we get to the future.

With that I'd like to turn it back to you for maybe a few questions. I see a couple of cards coming up. I think we've got a few minutes. I'd like to turn it back to you.

**Moderator:** Thank you, Chief Roy. We do have about seven or eight minutes for questions. But I think more than a few of us were sort of enlightened as we went through your slides there, and specifically if I may address, I think I wrote it down correctly, was the Agriculture Development Team.

Share with us please, we talked about how this fellow had this background before he came into the Air Force. How is it that you found him? How is it that it bubbled up and it actually happened that we were able to do such an innovative thing?

**CMSAF Roy:** It's a great question. I have to turn to the Guard and Reserve in how they did that. They set up a joint team. It wasn't just Air Force, it was also Army. Kentucky National Guard set out to do this ADT. He's one of the airmen that's on that team.

One of the things we look at, how do we pull that out of and document that somehow so that we have that knowledge, that that experience resides out there within our airmen.

**Moderator:** This is an interesting one. We're hearing rumors of the high failure rates of the new PT test. Is that true? Did we go overboard on the standards?

**CMSAF Roy:** I have not heard of a high failure rate, and I would find that very hard to believe since we're using the same standards we used last year.

**Moderator:** It's from that chubby fellow in the back.  
[Laughter].

**CMSAF Roy:** Let me describe where we're at with the fitness program.

The fitness program, we've looked at it, we were going to start 1 January with the brand new standard. We've decided that it would be best if we started 1 July. But during this time, right now, today, because we're going to test twice a year, between 1 January and June you will

test, and then after July through December you will do a test as well.

The first part of the year is going to be done with the old standard, but they should be giving you two scores. The two scores should be one, the one that's documented, and that is the one that is operated off from the old standard. The new one, the new standard, they should also give you that score so you kind of get a reference of where you're at. Again, in July we begin with the new standard.

I have not personally heard of a large failure rate within the new standard, if you will.

**Moderator:** So as you've traveled, you've used the word -- you didn't today, I don't think, but I've heard you use the words "deliberate development", so please share with the audience what that means and how it's employed.

**CMSAF Roy:** Again, I described a few points there on some of the education aspects and how we're educating our airmen. What do we do with these airmen afterwards? I'll give you another for instance. Another great thing we do with our enlisted airmen is we send about ten airmen a year to the AFUT program. We should look at, and we do to some degree, and we should continue to look at that. We should look at how we assign those airmen after they come out of that graduate level degree program. That's what I mean by deliberate development. What is it that our Air Force's needs are, and then what is it that, how do we continue to develop our airmen of the future?

Another example of that is out of some of our very very small AFSCs, I'll give you an idea of it. It's out of OSI. For the senior NCOs within OSI, they have developmental teams. That seems to work very well. Obviously they work within the operational means of the assignment process and how that works. But they take the input to what that airman has and then what types of positions that airman would be qualified and where they need to go in the future. That's the deliberate development of our airmen of the future. Just a couple of examples.

**Moderator:** I just want to share with you that there's obviously no interest in what you're talking about. They just keep coming in. But one last one. You have been doing some considerable traveling and speaking with airmen all over. You've done a lot of that. So what are some of the significant concerns that you've heard, and how do you plan on addressing them going forward?

**CMSAF Roy:** I think probably the one, if I would highlight one, I would say it's probably the combat skills training. That is one that I hear the most of. I spent 2.5 weeks in Central Command theater of operation, talked to an awful lot of airmen that are doing outside the wire, at the wire, and then inside the wire. Those airmen, obviously it needs to be tiered, if you will, and that's what we've kind of tried to do with our current training. That's the one item that I continue to hear about is that combat skills training and making sure that we are absolutely providing the right training for the right mission. Contrary to that, I usually get a question about well why do I have to go through all this training when I've got this mission set that I went to and all of a sudden I don't need it? Well as a leader, I say to that, I would much rather give you that training and you not need it, than you need it and us not give it to you. So we need to look at that kind of as a broad perspective. That's the one thing that I hear the most of.

**Moderator:** Chief, thanks so much.

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