

Command Chief Master Sergeants Forum

CMSAF Rodney McKinley

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CMSAF McKinley: Good afternoon. We're very honored to be here and spend some time with you this afternoon. We have some great Chiefs up here that will be happy to take questions from you. Let me get right to it and introduce them.

To my far right from the Air National Guard is Chief Master Sergeant Dick Smith.

[Applause].

Air Combat Command, Chief Master Sergeant Steve Sullens.

[Applause].

U.S. Transportation Command, Chief Master Sergeant Kim McQuissen.

[Applause].

Space Command, Chief Master Sergeant Todd Small.

[Applause].

And from the Air Force Academy, Chief Master Sergeant Arvin Davis.

[Applause].

What we're going to do first, I've asked each one of them to take just a couple of brief moments and say a little bit about the commands they work in. First we're going to start with Chief Dick Smith.

Chief Smith: Thank you, Chief, and thank you to AFA for having this forum of command chiefs and hear the enlisted perspective of your total force Air Force.

I represent the Air National Guard. We in the Air National Guard have the same goals of the United States Air Force. We fly, fight and win, just like everybody else. We've had a great year. We've been very busy. We are partially through the fall-out or the implementation of all the BRAC issues that were announced in 2005 as we've re-missioned a lot of units. In addition to the BRAC

initiatives we've had new missions in the Air National Guard through the Air Force TFI, Total Force Initiatives. We now have Predator units, intel units, space units in the Air National Guard that are new to us.

In any event, we've along with the Reserves made that transformation from a strategic reserve created after World War II in 1947, where we were the bench or the team that would be called in in the 9th inning of the game with the great war with whoever, the Soviet Union or World War III. We're no longer that strategic reserve. We're very operational and the fact that we have a daily mission with the Reserves day in and day out in this great Air Force.

I'm pleased to announce that for the first time in five years the Air National Guard has met its end strength. We're now about 450 members over. We've made it through the BRAC initiatives, through the manpower reset that we had, and we're very very healthy.

Our retention rate remains about 92 percent annualized this year in the Air National Guard, so we're very pleased as we transform the Guard. We continue to respond and do our commitment on the war on terror. And our homeland defense mission that we also have as Guardsmen is to protect the homeland through things like Gustav, Ike, and the storms that we've had. So we've been very busy in the last four weeks with the storms that have hit the Gulf region, sending in Army and Air National Guardsmen to take care of our own American citizens.

With that I'll pass the mike on to Chief Sullens.

Chief Sullens: Thanks. I'll be a lot more brief.
[Laughter].

First of all, I've had an epiphany sitting here, because it's the first time I've seen myself on TV while I'm talking back here in the back. Between the screen and the lights I've come to realize just how bald I am.
[Laughter]. I'm up here suffering a little bit, being a humble person.

Air Combat Command. The nuclear enterprise, we heard the Chief talk about that. That's squarely in the ACC duty jar. UASes, big deal there. Recovering from weapons transfer. We don't call it a base incident, we don't attach a base to it any more, we just call it an unauthorized weapons transfer to allow some healing to occur. We've got most of that in our rear view mirror.

Good news in our command. Through the efforts of our Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force and our new Chief, we were cut a check for something like \$100-plus million for dormitories for the next year. That's a big deal to us. If you were to visit Minot, as an example, a place where we have trouble getting people to go serve in the first place, 15 of the 17 dorms up there are tier one, which means we really shouldn't even have people living in there. The walls are crumbling, average age of 48. So to get that check cut here over the summer was a really big deal to us.

Similarly, just last week we were given \$4.5 million for quality of life. We're proud to report that between CDCs and fitness centers and libraries and dining halls and DFACS and places in between, that \$4.5 million will be very well spent. I think that's a tremendously positive signal from our Chief in terms of a way ahead in balancing recapitalization with our people.

I'll tell a quick story about AFA membership. I joined when I was a mid-grade NCO, three years. Really didn't care for what I saw so I let my membership lapse and didn't renew it until about a year ago after a very spirited discussion with my friend Mr. Largent. I'll say with a degree of honest that he was right, I was wrong, so I'm a member again and will continue to be so, especially having now come and watched this absolutely wonderful event and the great balance of enlisted and commissioned, which was kind of my rub before in terms of focus and priorities. So that's a good thing.

On the deployment front I'll tell you that Scott Dearduff has done some wonderful work and procured a piece of equipment that looks remarkably like a uniform, but it's a piece of equipment called ABSG that is fire resistant, that our folks, our Airmen that work outside the wire will be issued this. And when they go out and do dangerous missions they'll be much better protected. That's again, a great piece of work by our Air Staff and getting that funded around the uniform lines, again, as a piece of equipment. By this fall, the holidays, we will have our Airmen better protected to go outside the wire to the tune of about \$17,000 as a whack.

With that, Chief, we'll turn it over to TRANSCOM.

Chief McQuissen: Chief Sullens may be concerned about his lack of hair. Mine is a lack of height when you stick a guy as vertically challenged as me between these three guys that are all six-foot plus. It gives me a new appreciation for phone books. [Laughter].

On behalf of the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines of TRANSCOM, I'd like to thank the AFA and Chief McKinley for giving us the opportunity to have this forum.

In TRANSCOM a lot of the focus is on OEF/OIF operations as it should be. But in TRANSCOM we also have a large involvement in Gustav, Ike, Hannah. At this time we're even landing C-17s and 130s on the South Pole to support Operation Deep Freeze where we provide support to the National Science Foundation.

So although TRANSCOM is a transportation-focused command, we have a large, large reliance on the Air Force, and not just the active duty. The Guard, the Reserve provide an incredible capability that, to be quite honest, we would not be successful in if we didn't have that. Thousands of MRAPs are now in the hands of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines throughout the theater because of the opportunities that Air Mobility Command has provided us in moving those very large vehicles.

Also in the medevac business, where not only do we do it in OEF and OIF, but we've even moved close to a thousand critical care and patients out of the south in the Gulf regions to more stable environments due to hurricane relief. None of that would be possible without the incredible capability that the medevac system provides for us.

So in a nutshell, on behalf of the 152,000 members of TRANSCOM, I'd like to thank each and every one of you for what you do every day that gives us the opportunity to execute the mission of our combatant commander and new commander General Duncan McNabb.

I'll pass this to Chief Small.

Chief Small: Good afternoon everyone. On behalf of General C. Bob Kehler, the commander of Air Force Space Command, and the 39,000 members of our command I'd like to thank the Air Force Association for the opportunity to be here this afternoon with my colleagues.

Earlier we heard the Chief of Staff talk about a promise made. I can certainly tell you in Air Force Space Command along with our partners in Air Combat Command, it's a promise kept when it comes to the nuclear enterprise. We recognize that the Airmen who are entrusted with the most lethal warfighting capability are called to a higher standard and we move every day and strive every day to live up to that.

In my seven months in the command I've traveled widely. I've been in missile silos and missile alert facilities. I can tell you that the Airmen of Air Force Space Command, just like the Airmen across our great Air Force, are as capable and as credible and as faithful as any Airman who's worn this uniform - past and present. So on behalf of them, thank you for the opportunity to be here.

We are focused on the nuclear enterprise. We are working dozens of initiatives to prepare it for today's challenges and for the challenges of tomorrow. And not just the nuclear enterprise. In Air Force Space Command obviously we're charged with the global effects of the space warfight as well, and we have some incredibly complex systems, equipment and hardware which do technologically impressive things every single day. But the reality is, no matter how great the equipment or how fancy the technology, no mission in Air Force Space Command happens and happens effectively without the leadership of our Airmen.

Like Chief Sullens, we are very focused on the quality of life in Air Force Space Command. Just this morning General Kehler approved the execution of \$2.4 million in our child development centers, in our dormitories which includes our missile alert facilities, because as you know, perhaps you don't know, many of our Airmen spend days on end in those facilities. So we consider those long term places for their service. So we're focused on those, just as we're focused on the dormitories, as well as the quality of life. General Kehler in Air Force Space Command is very focused on the quality of life. Like you, I suspect, he believes that we don't make a single decision that impacts our quality of life, but it's a series of small decisions over a long period of time that begin to impact that. So just today, executing \$2.4 million on quality of life, and this year alone \$12 million in our dormitories to take best care of our Airmen. So we're focused on the fight and we're focused on our Airmen and we're focused on our families.

I look forward to your questions and thanks again for the opportunity to be here. I'll turn it over to my colleague, Chief Davis.

Chief Davis: Good afternoon. Don't check your ears, that is a South Carolina accent and it doesn't get any better.

I have a unique opportunity as the Command Chief for Air Force Academy. I've looked back on it many years and

go a lot of things that happened at the Air Force Academy tend to stretch out across our Air Force. So you'll see my boss, General Regni, has really concentrated his last few years on making sure that we teach each of our cadets as they grow up to be second lieutenants, that we treat each other with respect and dignity, and that we serve our Air Force and our country with honor and character, and to make sure that we lead the same way.

For us, we have the largest class that we've had in quite a while, 4400 cadets right now. They're in their second month of classes. I can tell you that this is the most diverse class that we've had in quite a few years, especially when you look at gender and race. So definitely it's something that we're looking forward to doing throughout the year.

Similar things we have that some of the other commands have, a little smaller of course, but we've started back our powered flight which is still on the uprise. We started back with our SERI training for all of our cadets. Again, with the help of our active duty experts out there who have come in there and shown our cadet cadre how we're supposed to do that.

Again, our mobility machine is cranking up. I think we're about four-fold. The rest of the commands have already been there. But I think up to this date we've had about 700 have deployed so far around the globe. But again, we're having a mobility machine that we're working on to make sure that they're trained correctly and have the right equipment before they deploy out there.

Finally, we also look at quality of life. Again, you would imagine with the Air Force Academy that we haven't neglected some of the infrastructure, both on the cadet side and both on the support personnel side as well. Fortunately for us, we've got the funding to make our Air Force, your Air Force Academy something you can be proud of. So we're excited about that. A lot of construction that will be going on.

Again, I look forward to your questions as well.

CMSAF McKinley: We want to thank AFA for giving us this opportunity to spend time with you this afternoon. The game rules are kind of like this. You can ask questions of anybody up here in particular or the whole panel. Really, no question is out of bounds as we really feel that we can answer any question you can throw at us. The thing is, if you ask a question you're going to get

some honest answers and you may not like the answer. But you'll get an answer.

So who wants to go first?

Question: Chief McKinley, I'm Jim Dill. Today, more importantly, I'm the father of a former staff sergeant in the United States Air Force public affairs.

A couple of years ago she had a chance to go on convoys with the U.S. Army and was not well prepared for that convoy. She survived it and was awarded a Combat Action Badge for it, but ever since then I've been watching with interest the Air Force progress towards establishing a schoolhouse to prepare people like my daughter for that kind of duty. I was really disappointed recently to learn that you've backed out of that. The public release on it had, well this is the reason we're not going, and it listed multiple opportunities to get some training, but I've got to tell you, it didn't sound to me like it was focused training. It was like "this will do", and I don't believe "this will do" training will work for our Airmen in combat.

CMSAF McKinley: Sir, thank you very much for that question. Actually it's not "this will do" type of training. We look at this very very carefully. And you're absolutely correct. A few years ago we were sending some deploying in those type of missions and probably some, not all, were getting the correct type of training before they went. But I guarantee you right now we are making sure that every Airman is properly organized, trained and equipped. We have Camp Bullis down in San Antonio that is providing the convoy training, and believe me, this is updated training. It's multi-service goes there. We get 24 hour notice if we find something going on in the desert. We come back and we improve the training the very next day. We have at Maguire, Fort Dix, also training. Plus we have 19 hours at every wing location. So things have improved greatly over the last couple of years.

When we look at what you call the CBAT, Common Battlefield Airman Training, we looked at doing that and we look at why do we need to do that? It's about training our Airmen. We are filling all the requirements to our Airmen training right now before they go. The feedback from the other services has just been absolutely tremendous. The cost of standing up that CBAT was about \$275 million. About 1,000 people running about 50-some AFSCs through this. That was a tremendous cost to the Air Force to do some training where it has been determined we are already doing that training.

So we're meeting all the requirements of the COCOMs right now, the people that we send forward and did not feel there was a need to stand up a brand new school the size of what we had planned to do, although we do have kind of a side, a much smaller that we're still going to be doing probably down there in San Antonio at Lackland Air Force Base.

So bottom line, sir, is our Airmen are getting fully trained. We're very confident that we are not going to send any Airman in harm's way without the training required to make them successful and safe wherever they're going.

I'll pass this on to Chief Steve Sullens from Air Combat Command and see if he has any additional comments on this.

Chief Sullens: Sure. Marty, right? Staff sergeant, one each. She was actually a public affairs NCO working in the recruiting service and ended up going forward to do this very hazardous duty. That's a chip off your old block, sir, as a retired Airman yourself.

I will tell you that we adjust fire based on the feedback we receive from the leaders that come home, and I will just look you in the eye, sir, and make you a promise that we've come a long way since Marty deployed down-range in terms of preparation of our Airmen for the battlefield. Are we perfect? No. Do we need to spend a quarter of a billion dollars in the immediate future to improve four percent or three percent or X percent? I would probably have to tell you no, sir, we have other more pressing needs just now. I'm very comfortable with the balance that we have struck right now.

I applaud you for raising such a fine American, and I applaud your service, sir.

I've got to tell a little story about the Colonel. I ran into him at Tinker not too long ago, and he's the leader of the AFA chapter out there. They've created a physical fitness award that's presented at the quarterly wing awards, actually I guess it's Team Tinker Awards. You come out there and present a physical fitness award, leadership award, and I applaud that, sir because that too is making a difference at a time when we need it most. We have a PT program that's struggling, both in terms of execution and credibility, and every little bit of that helps, particularly with somebody with your fitness sight picture coming out there and doing that.

We're getting better, sir, in all the right areas, and thanks for asking that question.

Chief McQuissen: Not to beat a dead horse, but as representing one of the combatant commands I can tell you that of all the services we deal with on a daily basis, the Air Force has been the most responsive when it comes to adjusting fire with regard to prepping folks for the battlefield. This has been an environment where we learn something new every day and I will tell you that with the involvement of myself and the other combatant command chiefs and command sergeant majors and sergeant majors, we've been getting great response from the Air Force on how to better prepare Airmen. Every AEF rotation that goes out is much better prepared and they learn a great deal from everyone that returns. So to echo the comments of both of the Chiefs, they're doing exactly what we need them to do.

Question: I'm Kevin Billings. Chief, one of the things that we are beginning to look at, and I've got my team looking at, is transition. Everybody is well aware this is the first wartime transition in 40 years. As we look at all the issues across the Air Force, what are the things that each of you would want me to tell my successor that we should be doing, that we shouldn't be doing, and how would you suggest, really, in terms of how we prepare for transition, what are the things that are most important to Airmen that don't get taught, and don't get passed along in transition that we can do a better job at?

CMSAF McKinley: Let's start with Chief Davis and come from that direction down there.

Chief Davis: Transition between administrations.

I guess one of the things I try to tell the folks at the Air Force Academy along with the cadets is don't worry about that. We've got things that are going on at higher levels that eventually we will get down to them and let everyone know how we're going to go forward in the Air Force. But we know we've got amazing Airmen doing their jobs every day.

I think a lot of the stuff that we're talking about at the most senior levels and the things that will change with the administrations, other than some of the things that the Chief talked about today with the nuclear enterprise and those types of things, our Airmen are going to continue to do those same jobs.

So what I like to continue to tell them is, continue to concentrate on doing your job, continue to concentrate on doing it the right way. If you're cutting corners, know that here in a little bit we're going to be talking to you a little bit about cutting those corners. But just like for me, even for my level, I need to focus on the things that I control. Right now for me, as the Command Chief of the Air Force Academy, I can kind of work toward making sure that we continue to graduate those officers of character. That will continue to go, at least in my personal opinion. So I try not personally to get caught up in that. That's my view.

Chief Small: I would agree with the Chief. Transparency is the key for us who wear the uniform. From administration to administration, we serve and defend.

What I would ask for though is your advocacy on behalf of those who wear the uniform and the resources needed to get the job done. And remind those who come in of what you found out, I'm confident, that the Soldier, Sailor, Airman, Marine, Coast Guardsman who wear the uniform today are absolutely committed to achieving the objectives, executing the missions which we're assigned, regardless of the administration. Resourcing is key to getting that done. Leadership, backing, advocacy and support are keys to our success in the military.

Chief McQuissen: An interesting thing with transition is that we that wear the uniform don't have a whole lot of involvement with that. We serve the Commander in Chief and whomever that is, we will follow the orders that we're given. But one of the things that we do need to do is when we use organizations like AFA, and the Air Force Sergeants Association and other professional organizations that provide us a voice on things like what we feel is important for the care and feeding of our forces, for the benefits that our folks that wear the uniform receive, it's very important that we exercise that. And of course, as well, exercising our right to vote. There's still a large majority of folks that wear a uniform that don't exercise that right.

So as we transition from one administration to another, regardless of who takes over after our current Commander in Chief, we will continue to fly, fight and win and support those battles.

Chief Smith: I agree with Chief Davis. There's probably very little direct impact on our Airmen when the administration changes. There is indirect impact, though, as to the role that the administration plays in choosing

our leaders and the way they fund us and the policies that they give us. We accept those policies and those funding limitations and so forth because we're professional Airmen.

In addition, in the National Guard, as we have a transition into federal power, many of our governors are up for election too. So as a governor changes in all of our 54 states and territories they bring in new adjutant generals and we have the same kind of effect on a state level.

Our Air National Guard is made up of 54 separate air forces that work for 54 TAGs and governors. So in some cases we will have the double whammy when it hits us after election day.

But I think for our Airmen, our Airmen are committed to doing the nation's work with the United States government and whoever the administration is they will do a very professional job.

Chief Sullens: It's a great question, Kevin. Deep, deep stuff right there.

Three thoughts. One, this thing called vote. We don't do that enough, those of us who wear the uniform, get smart on the issues and actually vote who our CEO, Commander in Chief is going to be. So the first thing I'd ask you to do is help control our own destiny and get smart on the issues as they pertain to you and your loved ones, and vote accordingly. Get that number up above 30 percent, which is historically the rate we vote that wear the military uniform.

Chief McQuissen hit on the professional orgs, so point two is communicate with them and your elected official once the vote comes back. Once they're in office, communicate with them and write to them directly or through professional orgs. Membership always helps. The larger the number, the bigger the voice. Communicate your needs and desires and priorities once the elections are finalized.

The last thing is the piece we owe you from up front here, and that's to communicate the emerging priorities once the new administration comes in and starts telling us how things are going to roll for the next four years. I think there's some goodness on the horizon in that regard.

I think your new Chief of Staff and your new SECAF, acting, maybe longer, are accessible. They're visible. They're going out of their way to make it a priority to

come stand before you, look you in the eye and give you their unabashed thoughts direct to your ears, and I think that spells goodness. I'll use the word refreshing in that particular regard. So I see that at the top. I know my boss, General Corley, feels similarly and goes out of his way to do that face to face leadership versus the e-mail thing that's become so easy here of late.

So three things - vote, communicate with elected officials, and communicate the emerging priorities.

Question: Chief, this is for all the Chiefs. I'm just interested to see what your thoughts are on our current Air Force fitness program, whether or not you believe it works, what metrics have been out to show that we've actually improved, and to what extent do we have our people actually being removed from the service for failing to meet PT requirements? Does it have teeth, I guess is where I'm going.

CMSAF McKinley: Sir, how about if I just take that one.

The metrics that we have, I think our metrics for the PT program are really pretty good but there's always an opportunity to look at those and see if there's ways we can improve them.

I think that yes, we do have some Airmen that have been held accountable; and yes, some have even been discharged from the Air Force for failing the PT program.

We also have, all across the Air Force we have a large amount of Airmen that have really gotten in tune with being more physically fit. You go to the fitness centers and the usage is up by a large amount. You see Airmen running in their PT gear along the side of the streets and everything else. So you see a large number of Airmen that are really into the Air Force as far as being physically fit. They're proud of everything. But I see we've still got work to do. I know this is one area that General Schwartz is going to take on to make sure that across the whole Air Force that we have more accountability in physical fitness, that there's no brother-in-law deals that no matter what rank you are you're going to have to be held accountable for your own PT score. I know this past Friday my whole office, we went out and we did the PT test together and I think, sometimes I think what we need to do is put more back into the hands of commanders and first sergeants. I think we leave way too much up to the PTL and God bless them, they're doing the best they can, but we put too much on the PTL and when you're talking about someone's career,

whether officer or enlisted, where you can have a referral EPR or OPR, this is important stuff. We've got to get it right.

But more than that, physical fitness is about combat capability. The better physically fit we are the more combat capable we are. If you are wounded in combat, the better chance of survival. Also it has a big impact on TriCare and the amount of money we spend to keep the force fit. And if we have a healthy lifestyle, not only physical fitness but how much you eat, probably the best exercise you can do every day is three pushups, and that's just pushing away from the table. [Laughter]. But good diet, good physical fitness, rest. Don't use tobacco. And if you do drink, drink very responsibly. So it's about maintaining a healthy lifestyle. If you take that and transfer that from the active duty member to the family, it also is going to make for a healthier family lifestyle and also bring TriCare costs down.

So I personally think we've got a long way to go in the PT program because I think we have some accountability we need to get in out there. We need more teeth into the program. I absolutely agree on that. I think doing the PT test once a year is not enough. I think we need to put it in the hands of commanders that they can do it random and they can test their people whenever they feel it's necessary. That's really not there right now.

I think there's a good opportunity here to kind of look at the whole program and see what we need to do to improve, and I would expect that would be coming pretty much around the corner before too long. I know General Newton, General Roudebush they're working on this right now. We have a good program that needs to be retooled and put a little bit more teeth into it, more accountability. At the end of the day we're going to continue to improve the overall physical fitness of our Airmen.

Anybody else have any comments on that up here?

I think we got it.

Question: That was one of my questions. Major Moore, ACSC student.

The second question I had, we've talked a lot about the war on waste. I'm a maintenance officer. A lot of my officers, my senior NCOs spend about 50 to 60 percent of their time writing and rewriting decorations. We won't even talk about the other administrative stuff, just the physical act of writing the decoration. Is there an

initiative out there to maybe move away from writing a decoration? You can probably poll most of the folks in this room and most of our decorations are probably sitting under a bed or somewhere, not hanging on the wall. I'm not saying do away with the award, but maybe get away from spending so much time writing and rewriting the decorations. Is there another process that we can go to?

CMSAF McKinley: What is your recommendation?

Question: The recommendation would be maybe get away from actually writing it. You still go through the process, the supervisor says this guy meets the standards of getting a decoration, whatever it may be. Whether it's the chief, the OIC, squadron commander. Hey, this guy can get a decoration. Let him go over there and buy one. Why do we have to go through writing out a decoration?

CMSAF McKinley: I have my definite thoughts on this but I want to leave it up to any of the Chiefs on the table.

Chief McQuissen: First off, ma'am, remember what decorations are. They're focused on outstanding achievement, outstanding performance, and these are things that need to be documented. Although the citation may wind up underneath somebody's bed, it is a matter of record that will affect their military career for the rest of the time that they wear a uniform. And for some folks, even post-military.

So I think it's important that not only are the achievements of the individual documented, but documented in a way that gives a clear-cut description of what their accomplishments were during that time period.

In my personal view we too often tie decorations to either promotion points or some other career advantage when at the end of the day the young guy, one of our 12 Outstanding Airmen who's wearing a Silver Star on his chest probably wasn't thinking about the amount of points it was going to take for a decoration when this young man accomplished the feat that he did.

I think we do the individual a disservice if we do not document and we do not make it something that to some may seem like an administrative burden, but to the individual who is receiving that, and to their family, and to the sacrifices that they've made, it's very important to document.

Question: If I may, Chief, isn't it documented in the EPR already? You can't write a decoration unless it's already in the EPR.

Chief McQuissen: True, Ma'am. Is the EPR going to be something that's going to be hanging on his wall when he's 50 years old or 60 years old? Probably not.

Question: But he still has the medal to show for it. Just a thought. That is something that we spend quite a bit of time rewriting decorations.

Chief McQuissen: Understand.

Chief Sullens: I'll agree with you, ma'am, we do waste time in the process of decoration processing. I'd ask you to think about a couple of things as you go on to command and the higher levels of responsibility in our Air Force. The processing of a decoration is a leadership issue, and if you were to poll 80 wings across our Air Force you would probably find at least 80 different ways that decorations are routed and processed. I would ask you to consider this. When it comes to supporting your front line supervisor, who is the person that submitted the member for the award, unless it's unsafe, illegal, immoral, or prejudicial to good order and discipline, we probably ought to support that supervisor. But instead we get in this bidding process or rebidding process at each level as it comes up to the group or wing to be approved. The more that we can establish that trust and faith with that first line supervisor and give them the authority to lead at their level, the better off we're going to be. And if we start doing that, I think the cutting of the processing time will take care of itself.

[Applause].

CMSAF McKinley: I just wanted to add something short on that.

I think when we talk about our priorities and General Schwartz even mentioned it today, to take care of Airmen and their families, I think one part of taking care of Airmen is doing decorations when decorations are important. I think it's time management to make sure that you take the time and you properly recognize your Airmen. Whether that is good conduct or bad conduct, but you've got to spend time to mentor and continue to try to develop your Airmen to be the best they can be. But when you have an Airman performing above and beyond, my goodness, take the time, write the decoration, make sure the process is the best it possibly can, even right smack dab in the middle of World

War II, you had General Patton writing decorations himself and this is right smack dab in the middle of a war. So it's part of our heritage, it's very important, and we can't get to the point where we say it's taking too much time, let's eliminate that, because those are really, really important. It's not about where it's hung or whatever. Really, the importance of a decoration is when you bring that person in front of a crowd and you read the citation, it's not just for that person but for the other people in the audience to recognize what a member of their unit has done, which will also sometimes propel them on to do greater things.

So we can always work on the process to make it not so painful and time constraints on that, but we should never think about not properly recognizing our Airmen.

Question: Chiefs, first of all, thanks for spending your time with us this afternoon.

My question regards the Guard and Reserve. When mobilizing Reservists and Guardsmen today under your commands, what are some of the unique challenges you're facing, especially with the enlisted corps, and how are you addressing those?

Chief Smith: One of the biggest challenges we have is also one of the things we take pride in too. That's the relationship we have with our civilian employers. Seventy percent of the Air National Guard is drill status and I think the Reserves may be a little bit higher than that. But drill status means they work some place else, they sell insurance, they work at a factory, they're a patrolman. And getting off from work for an AEF deployment for four months of 179 days is difficult.

The other issue that we have right now in the Guard, and I assume the Reserves do too, Chief MacIntosh, is the fact that we send those folks in a volunteer status or a mobilized status. We've been very fortunate in both the Guard and Reserve in filling all of our commitments with volunteers. It says that on the order then, too. That's what the member shows his employer and obviously shows his spouse or her spouse. It creates not uncertainty, but it creates a bit of hardship sometimes with the employer and with the family that you volunteered again. Although those positions are there and we have to fill them and if we don't fill them we're going to mobilize the people, we've not had a lack of volunteers. But that's one of the things that we're working with with our orders folks is to get the word "volunteer" off the order, whether they were mobilized or volunteer.

But I would say that the support of families and the fact that our families are detached from military bases is also a big issue for us. Many of our members live 100, 200 miles away from their Guard base and there may not be an active duty installation of any kind even in their state. So the support mechanism for the family members as they leave for four to six months on an AEF deployment is in some cases not there or it's non-existent from the fact that you're not right outside the base like we have in the active duty where there's a network, there's facilities at the base, there's professional family readiness folks that take care of the spouse and the children while the member's deployed.

So those are some of the issues that we deal with. I know this Thursday night we have our national ESGR dinner which is the Employer Support of Guard and Reserve. It's a pretty big deal for us as we honor all the employers nationwide that have members in all seven reserve components that have been deploying now, at least on the Air side on the Air Guard and Air Reserve side now for 18 years, since 1990. We've been deploying along with the Air Force since the first Gulf War and continued our service with Northern Watch and Southern Watch and into Bosnia, Kosovo, and then the current missions that we have today.

As I said earlier, through all this our retention has remained strong. Although we sometimes look at the issues that face us and think these are bad and these can have an effect on our retention, these can have an effect on our member, the relationships they have with their family, our retention remains strong. We're keeping our members.

So that's what comes to mind, the support of families and the support of our employers.

Chief McQuissen: If I could touch on one thing. Recently with Hurricanes Gustav, Hannah and Ike, we in TRANSCOM have been very very reliant on the Guard and Reserve. One of the challenges that we faced recently is that we're at the end of a fiscal year and the money to pay some of these Guardsmen and Reservists who wanted to volunteer was not there. So we have been discussing in TRANSCOM the need to maybe put some money aside to be used in events like Gustav or an Ike that could allow us to be able to provide financially.

What I'd like to do though, is give a big pat on the back to many of the Guard and Reserve members who would just show up at TRANSCOM during this event and not even be interested in whether they were on orders or not. They

just wanted to jump into the fight, they wanted to do what they could to help alleviate some of the challenges that we were facing.

I will tell you, to Chief Smith and all of the folks in the Guard and Reserve, Chief MacIntosh, we wouldn't be able to get our jobs done if it wasn't for the folks that the Guard and Reserve provides to do that mission every day. So thank you.

Chief Smith: I have a follow-up comment, too. My first comments were about mobilization for the federal mission, but Chief McQuissen brought up a good point on our state missions that we do for like Gustav and Ike.

As we mobilize our Guardsmen we have three pay categories basically to put our folks in. Title 10, which most of you are all in, it's our federal active duty; Title 32 which is what we're in when we drill and we go to tech school and we do our normal training and so forth, and that's the same pay, the same benefits as federal active duty. But when our states mobilize people on state active duty, it's all over the spectrum as to what their benefits are and what their pay are. In essence, I have 54 state pay charts for state activation. Many have no benefits, most have no hospitalization, most have as medical care the workman's comp plan in that state. There's no BAH, no BAS, and no points for retirement that adds towards our good years. So in many cases, I think of New York who's had Guardsmen, both Army and Air, on duty guarding bridges, tunnels, and other infrastructure since 9/11 on state active duty, receiving no benefits, receiving no retirement points, probably not qualifying for a good year towards their retirement. The same in Louisiana where we're had both Army and Air Guardsmen on duty since Katrina guarding the streets of New Orleans as we have a defunct police department. Those folks are now caught up in the second phase called Gustav. But they too are on state active duty with no benefits and in some cases it's a flat fee of \$25 a day, up to where the state of Delaware has double the active duty pay chart, but once again, no BAH, no BAS, and no retirement points or other medical coverage.

Those are the challenges that we face. Obviously our goal in a situation like Gustav with the hurricanes is to put folks on Title 32 status so everybody's got a fair and consistent pay plan, but thanks for bringing that up, Chief. I neglected to mention that when we talked about mobilizations.

We mobilized 16,000 Guardsmen for Louisiana, and we've mobilized about 5,000 for Texas and there will probably be

more coming as more information comes on the need in that state, from both Army and Air National Guard.

Chief Sullens: If I could pile onto the Chief there just a second and give you something to think about and really ask for you to consider moving this torch on down the road as you become more senior in your careers.

The biggest challenge I see with total force right now is the ability to truly use a chief as a chief in any duty or a master sergeant as a master sergeant in any duty, and I can give you several illustrations. But you will find that oftentimes when we go after the best leader and they happen to be reserve and we try to bring them into an active duty billet, we find law or policy or various things standing in our way. Instead of truly taking the big government approach and doing what is best for our Air Force we bend to that policy or that law. And good Chief Smith and Chief MacIntosh know what I'm talking about.

But envision this a day. If you're active duty and your family has been without you for three out of the last four years because of a one-to-one dwell, and here's an opportunity to provide you a break, why couldn't we place you in a Guard or Reserve billet for a short amount of time, knowing that we're going to bring you right back to active duty full time status three or four years down the road and start managing our force that way? If we needed to pick the next Air Combat Command Command Chief and the most qualified Chief for that duty happened to be a reservist, why can we not have the reservists compete on equal footing as our active duty counterparts?

Those are philosophical, rhetorical questions that I just asked you to let sink into your brain and truly consider total force as it's meant to be, and that is best interest of the Air Force versus active duty, Guard or Reserve, and it's a street that runs two ways.

Question: Chiefs, Avery Marsh, ACSC. This question is primarily directed to Chief Sullivan, however, being the great chiefs that you all are, I'm sure you all can answer it also.

General Schwartz pointed out that we today are going to embark on a UAS career field for officers. Now given that many of the other services also employ enlisted personnel as UAS operators, what is the United States Air Force looking at doing to blend in enlisted personnel who have the exact same capabilities in the officers, if not perhaps even more so, so that they can more cohesively make

UAS operators across the board officer or enlisted, just like our sister services?

Chief Sullens: You just took the award for the deepest question this hour, sir.

[Applause].

That's bigger than anyone in this audience, to be quite honest with you, and that's going to be a spirited debate over the next 90 days. I'll just give you a couple of things to think about.

A UAS in an unarmed kind of fashion is a completely different kind of operating platform than one where you hang missiles off the wings. You get into issues of if you have to fire those missiles is that the same kind of operator that's operating it when it's just in an orbit? Is that a duty that's typically either by law or policy or by moral conduct standards, ethical standards, consistent with an enlisted member or an officer? These are things that minds much smarter than I are going to wrestle with I think in the next 90 days and you're going to see that one solved pretty quick.

Maybe there's a situation coming where the person that puts a UAV up there in a static orbit to do full motion video is a different kind of person than the rated officer that kind of waits in the wings, hovering over a group of seven or eight UAV pilots, and when we have to release weapons, steps in and executes those kind of missions. There's a lot of things put in play, and I wouldn't even want to hazard a guess just yet as to how that's going to play out.

I think our Chief gave us two pretty good pieces of data today during his speech on how he sees UAV/UAS operations and I think I would stand by for about the middle of October and we can have a much more intelligent conversation on that, sir. It's a great question, it really is.

CMSAF McKinley: Sir, to piggyback on that, the things that the boss talked about this morning, we have to have a path for the next three years or so forth, and I think there are still a lot of options on the table, but we have to make sure we have the right pilots going through the pipeline and to use the UPT, that's been decided we'll probably do that, at least for a period of time, but on the UAS side of the house, it has to be a path that, a career path of people that we know that are going to stay there for a period of time, whether you be enlisted or officer.

It has to be something that everybody thinks that this is the way to go.

A while back I went to the Air Force Academy, spoke to a whole lot of cadets, and I was asking every one of them what they wanted to do and everything else. I want to be an F-15, F-22, F-16 pilot. There wasn't one person that said I want to work on UAVs. It has to be a point where it's understood that that is a career path. That is where our Air Force is going. We're going to be using more and more of these because they are just fantastic weapons to have in our Air Force and for the military. It has to get to the point where we have people that that's a career path they're going to go to, for promotions, everything else.

But for right now we have to look at short term of where we're going, and that's the path that the boss said this morning, but that's on the table in the next very short period of time to determine where we go to it from the future. But we've all got to understand, UAVs, UAS, that's the way to go in the future. Who knows what the mix of fixed wing aircraft to UAVs are going to be in the future? There's a lot still to be determined.

Anything from Space?

Chief Small: I would only add that 61 years of Air Force history teaches me that the enlisted corps can do anything we're asked to do. From space to surface and all points in between. Nothing happens in the United States Air Force today, yesterday or tomorrow without NCO leadership.

So we have in the UAS platforms today and on the platforms that support UAS, we have non-commissioned officers and junior enlisted airmen performing some of the most complex and delicate missions today.

[Applause].

Question: Chief McKinley, I'm Sergeant Aubrey from Kunsan Air Base, Korea. My question is for you today.

I wanted to say that I'm a big fan of your Enlisted Perspective that you post on the portal, and one I read recently was called "Blocking and Tackling", and it was about leadership and our corps values. You said leadership is not a popularity contest, and you reminded us that we follow all the AFIs because that's integrity. We don't get to pick and choose. I read this 19 days before I sewed on my staff stripe and it really encouraged me as a leader and empowered me as a supervisor. So please know, that we do

read those and we enjoy getting to hear directly from you what you have to say.

My question is about the Enlisted Perspective you put on right after that one on our EPR system and rating our Airmen more fairly. When I read it, I wondered if you wrote it because you aren't seeing the scores evening out even with the new form. So my question is, after having the new form out for a year now, are you seeing a more honest and fair rating system in our enlisted force?

CMSAF McKinley: First off, thanks for reading my Perspectives. I really appreciate that. I do write those and put a lot of thought into each one that I put out. I have another one coming out this next week. I think that will be, hopefully, well read. But the one I put out on EPRs, "Evaluating Your Airmen". The reason I put that out there is I speak in front of large crowds on a regular basis and I'm asked all the time, what are you doing about over-inflation of EPRs? A lot of times I turn to the crowd and I say what are you doing? It's an integrity thing. It really is.

On the new form we changed a couple of things on the back side. It's still one to five, but before, a five was immediately promote. And we all like to immediately promote our Airmen so it's pretty easy to put five on there. But right now on the back of the EPR it does not say immediately promote, and five is truly among the best. A four is above average. A three is average.

So is every single Airman you have, is every single one of them truly among the best? Or do you have some that are just above average or some who are average?

What it is, I think everybody in the Air Force pretty much agrees with the perspective I wrote. I don't think there's anybody that is going to disagree with me. But is the whole Air Force going to jump in and do this all at one time? What it takes is, you have one commander, one squadron over here saying you know what? The Chief is right, but if we start doing this on EPRs in our squadron then the other squadron's not doing it and therefore we're going to hurt our Airmen.

We spoke to General Schwartz about this and I think he agrees with it also. But this may just not be a thing that we're going to take on in big Air Force at this time to push it down to every command. I think it's something that as a supervisor if you feel that your Airman deserves a four, you need to write a four. The forms are there. You can change the forms every year, it doesn't make a

difference. What makes a difference is when you evaluate your Airmen you give them the right EPR. You say the things that need to be said, but what we try to do is continually improve our Airmen to make our Airmen successful.

We do not want our Airmen to fail. If our Airman deserves a three or four on their EPR, if you're giving them a five for sub-par performance or just average performance and you're giving them a five, saying they're truly among the best, are you really doing good on your Airmen? If they have poor performance and they get a five, why do they need to improve? It's about giving proper feedback, trying to improve our Airmen and being honest.

For those that are truly among the best out there doing absolutely wonderful things, and they get a five, the same five that someone else gets that's just slugging along, is that really fair to them? So it's about being fair with all Airmen across the board. I'd like to see it, kind of a pipe dream really, that we start improving on this right away. I don't think it's going to be right away. I came in in 1974. In 1974 everybody was getting firewall 9s, firewall 9s, everybody. So it's been around for a long time. It's not like this is a new problem. I was just putting something out there and just being honest.

Anybody else have anything on that?

Chief Sullens: I'll just offer that I got a firewall eight my first EPR, so -- [Laughter]. I turned out all right. I'd defer down to my mates at the left hand side of the table.

Really, if you get a substandard EPR rating early in your career, there's a lot of living proof, most of it's sitting right up here at this table that you can recover and move on and do great and wondrous things.

So I go back to the point I made with Major Moore earlier, unless it's illegal, immoral or prejudicial to good order or discipline or unsafe, we ought to support what that supervisor wants to do. If we let them do that they're going to start moving out and drawing fire behind this new EPR expectation and we won't have to have this conversation, at least in its current form. Work to be done. But who wants to be first? That's the question.

CMSAF McKinley: And Ma'am, congratulations on pinning on staff sergeant. A great job you and all the wolf pack are doing out there in Kunsan.

Question: Major Mike Dailey, ACSC student.

Chiefs, our CSAF and senior leaders in the Air Force talk about back to basics and core competencies. In your opinions, what are things that are not consistent with our core competencies that we should consider eliminating?

CMSAF McKinley: Sir, could you repeat that one more time?

Question: The senior leaders, our Air Force senior leaders talk about core competencies and a back to basics approach. In your opinions, what are things that are not consistent with our core competencies that we should consider eliminating? Things we do on a day to day basis that aren't part of our core competencies that focus our attention in areas where we could spend our time better elsewhere.

CMSAF McKinley: Sir, there are some things we do where we have way too much ancillary training that takes a lot of our time, especially for the Guard and Reserve. We have a lot of additional duties, and some people have so many additional duties they can't even do their regular job. So I think that we've got to get back to the basics, really what he's talking about, and that goes all the way back to basic training, ROTC Air Force Academy, where we talk about the core values - integrity, service, excellence. We talk about military bearing, customs and courtesy, standards, discipline. All those things. When you break out a TO you don't sit on it, you actually follow it. But the basics of every job we do out there is to make sure you follow it and do the best job you can. And it starts with putting the uniform on in the morning. To wear that uniform proudly, wear it correctly. I'm personally very very happy that as an Air Force we went to wearing Blues on Mondays. That's one of the things that just of getting back to basics, because a whole lot of people forgot how to wear those Blues.

Not only that, but some people don't even have Blues because AFES across the whole Air Force, last Friday they had a huge sale on Blues. [Laughter]. I don't know if it's because something happened to their Blues. Sometimes when Blues hang in the closet for a long period of time they shrink. [Laughter]. But the fact is, that's one of our required uniforms and there should have been no moaning whatsoever about going to wear Blues and just getting back to basics as those things we learn as young Airmen of all ranks, and make sure that we think about the chain of command, follow the orders, and do our jobs as best we can.

We had one guy right here trying to get up and get a question. Sir, we'll take one last question.

Question: Good afternoon, Chief. Tech Sergeant Justin Pafalia, 726th Air Control Squadron out of Mountain Home Air Force Base.

My question comes from my peers and myself as well. When are we going to receive the reinstatement of the Air Force Good Conduct Medal? And will there be a more stringent requirement for that?

Also sir, when are we going to stop calling PT gear gear, and start calling it a uniform and addressing it as such?

CMSAF McKinley: Todd, take this. [Laughter].

Chief Small: Thanks, Chief. Always proud to serve. [Laughter].

I've heard much discussion about the Good Conduct Medal. I've got a couple on my rack here. I will be honest as you would expect, and admit that as I came through the years I didn't think I should get a medal for good conduct. As a non-commissioned officer, it should be expected every single day. That's what I do. So that's my perspective on that.

How's that, Chief?

CMSAF McKinley: That's your perspective, but the Good Conduct Medal is coming back. [Laughter].

Chief Small: Overruled. [Laughter].

CMSAF McKinley: Arvin?

Chief Davis: The other one was uniform versus PT gear.

I can tell you, I kind of struggled with this when I was deployed at al-Udaid. Personally, I'll give you my personal opinion. I think it's semantics, but I think it should be a PT uniform. Especially when you look at the number of folks, they're so creative with the way they wear it. I think we're looking at that, though, a number of things with the PT uniform, and I think we're looking at standardization. Nothing that hurts me worse than to see a guy wearing black sox with his PT uniform or with it hanging down around his behind so you can say no to crack to him. [Laughter].

I think it's a uniform, but at the same time I think that we've said that you will wear the PT gear. Again, semantics. PT gear, PT uniform. You still should wear it correctly. I think that's part of, when we start talking about back to basics, that's what we have to do.

How many times, and I won't ask you to raise your hand, how many times will you walk by somebody that looked pretty bad in that gear? I'd probably say more times than you would like.

So I would tell you, don't get caught up in the verbiage, what it's called. I look at it as SN-2903. They show you how to wear it. Wear it that way, regardless of what we call it.

CMSAF McKinley: I can tell you one thing that we're doing. This is Air Force. We are re-writing 36-293 which is the uniform and personal grooming standards. We are writing that and we're writing it just like the old 35-10, for those of you who know what 35-10 is.

So we're going to come out and say step by step how to wear the uniform, grooming standards. We leave way too much up to interpretation right now and this goes from the nuclear enterprise to medical and a lot of other things. There's a lot to be said about AFRs. So we're looking at bringing back the dress and appearance as an AFR versus an AFI, and being very much direct on it.

And on the PT gear, wearing the PT gear, my thoughts on that is that if we're out there as a unit, the word uniform means uniform. It means we should look together, we should look like a military organization. So I'm in favor of when we're out there and we're going to work out together as a team, as a squadron, that we all have our shirts tucked in. But one of the first things we need to do, which we are doing, is fix the absolutely horrible PT gear we have right now.

[Applause].

I'm mainly talking about the shorts, as we all know that. [Laughter].

We're all finished here, I think the time is up, but on behalf of myself and all the command chiefs up here, we want to thank you for your very good questions. Very good questions. Hopefully we provided some good answers. I think I'll be off on the side a little bit, and I'm sure some of the command chiefs will if you have anything else

you'd like further clarification on or just to come over and ask any other question.

Mr. Largent, AFA, thank you very much for allowing us to be part of this today, and thank you for all you do every day for our Air Force and for our nation. God bless you.

[Applause].

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