



Lt. Gen. William J. Liquori, USAF (Ret.):

All right, well welcome and thank you all for coming. I have to say I am impressed. We thought we had that coveted 4:05 time slot, but you guys showed out in force and I think this is... One of the staff actually mentioned this is about Amplifying the Guardian Spirit. It's not Guardian Spirits at 4:00, right? That's 5:00.

But anyway. So I am pleased to be joined by this august group of Space Force leaders to talk about the Chief's Line of Effort Number Two, Amplifying the Guardian Spirit. And from my perspective, arguably the most important of the lines of effort. I mean obviously they're all important in the work that's going on and each of them is important, but at the end of the day, it's how we develop our Guardians. It's what they do and how they do it that will make a difference with the other lines of effort and will ensure that we are meeting our missions and continuing to move things forward.

And just the sheer number of people in here at four o'clock says there is a lot of interest in what it is that each of you has to share. And I think it's a pretty good panel from the perspective of the breadth that we have on the panel as far as different parts of the service, if you will.

We've got the head of our human capital arm, Ms. Kelley. We have the person who tries to direct the staff, I guess is probably the best way to say it, or heard the cats, in General Whitney on the space staff, and then our Senior Enlisted Leader from Space Training and Readiness, Command Chief Seballes.

Wow. Are you going to pay them now or later or what? Holy cow.

Well, I would dare say that each of you probably learned maybe a little bit earlier than the rest of them, of the Chief's lines of effort and probably had a chance to talk with him a good bit about those beforehand and have now over the course of the last year had a chance to engage with many of the Guardians in the field here in the room about these lines of effort and the criticality of them and what they mean.

And so I thought a good way to start this discussion would be to ask each of you for just a brief comment about what Amplifying the Guardian Spirit means to you and your organization.

And maybe we'll start with you, Kate, if that's all right?

Katharine Kelley:

Absolutely. So first, you're exactly right. It is the most important line of effort. So this is a really exciting topic to talk about and, again, thanks to everybody who's taken some time to be part of this today with us. Thanks for helping us put this panel together, Bill. And thanks to both of my esteemed colleagues here.

It's great to be able to talk about this in a forum like this where you can give your thoughts and give your perspective and really jump on what I consider to be the next wave of what was started under General Raymond and now moving forward under General Saltzman. And so, Amplifying the Guardian Spirit is a really interesting concept because there was so much momentum built already in the Space Force about the Guardian ideal and where we were trying to go in a long-term, that I think what was really interesting about this line of effort for General Saltzman was the use of the word amplification and the use of the word spirit. Two reasons for that, for me.

One is that we needed to continue and build upon momentum as a new service. I did some earlier discussion today and we talked about how much inertia there is institutionally against startups. And make no mistake, as a service we're a startup, and we're in an ecosystem of a very sizable bureaucracy that pushes down on you. So that inertia that you need to get going is one of the reasons why I was really excited about the amplification choice of word for this line of effort.



And then also the spirit piece for me, I think a lot about how it embodies the way that each of us has to come to work every day. I call it the game you show up with. What attitude do you have, what stick-to-it-iveness do you bring and what is your mindset about why you come to work every day? What's the greater purpose?

And I think for those of you who were listening to Chief Towberman's remarks earlier, those four core values are really what we're all about. And so the Amplification of the Spirit to me is what we all come to work with every day, why we do it, and where we want to take it as a service.

Lt. Gen. William J. Liquori, USAF (Ret.):

Perfect. Thanks,
Steve?

Maj. Gen. Steven Whitney:

So, thanks. Again, it's my privilege and honor to be here share with you today and talk for just a few moments. If I could build on what you said there for a second, it's a mindset to me. The Guardian Spirit is about how we as a group of individuals dedicated to a common cause are going to go about achieving that and how we're going to help each other and how we're going to grow each and every day.

To me, the Space Force is a learning organization. And to me, personally as a practitioner of the Guardian Spirit, I think about it as Amplifying the Guardian Spirit is that contract that I have with each of the individuals that I help work and grow and those that help me work and grow each and every day. And so I'm just excited to be here and to talk about it from that perspective just a little bit today.

Lt. Gen. William J. Liquori, USAF (Ret.):

Perfect. Thanks.
Chief?

Chief Master Sgt. James Seballes:

Yes, sir. I am also very privileged to be up here, and so I'm also surprised to see this many in the room at 1600, so that's awesome.

What does it mean to me? I look at it as it is the excitement and the hope and the opportunity that each of us that serve in the Space Force came over with to be a part of this new startup, this new organization.

That energy is the Guardian Spirit, and how do we amplify it is we come back on the promises that we made to each one of the Guardians that came over and we do our very best, no matter where we sit, to try and fulfill that promise and then not end there. To continue to go, to continue to push forward. And that's how I would sum it up, sir.

Lt. Gen. William J. Liquori, USAF (Ret.):

Perfect, thank you.

All right, so as a new service still establishing our identity, one of the natural things that everybody talks about is this magical light switch of how do we set our new culture? Just throw that light switch and bang, you've got this new culture.



And I think all of us know that that's not what happens. Culture grows and develops. So I was wondering, and I'll start with you Chief, what do you envision for the future of the Space Force culture, which is such a core part of the Guardian Spirit?

Chief Master Sgt. James Seballes:

Yes, sir. So for the future, the way I would look at that is we have to continue to appreciate the Guardians that we're bringing over. Some of the folks that we're bringing over, some of the best that many of us have ever released seen, come through the pipeline. An example is we just had Airman DeRosier in about two classes ago, I believe. His story is pretty unique in that when he found out about the Space Force and he decided that he wanted to join, he didn't meet the fitness requirements and he didn't have a GED.

And he took it upon himself to lose the weight, get a GED, get in, and then not only come in, but he won the top grad award. And so not just the top grad award amongst the Guardians across the entire DAF at the basic training graduation. And that's an example, again, of the spirit that we're bringing in the future going forward, we have to continue to cultivate that with those folks that are coming in that are driven.

I don't think it'll be a matter of whether we have to motivate them to be a part of the Space Force or motivate them to Amplify the Guardian Spirit. I think really as leaders, no matter where you sit, again, your responsibilities to vector them and make sure they're going in the right direction, but definitely do as much as you can to remove the roadblocks and stay out of their way and let them go.

Because they are ready, they're willing, they're hungry, and they want to be a part of this just as much as the rest of us.

Lt. Gen. William J. Liquori, USAF (Ret.):

It's a great perspective and a wonderful example, I think of in practice, the Guardian Spirit, if you will. Either one of you have anything you'd like to amplify on that?

Katharine Kelley:

I was just thinking, Chief, as you were talking about how that particular individual took control of something that they wanted to achieve. I think what's really interesting to me is I think about the word culture.

First of all, there's almost not a week that goes by that somebody doesn't want to come talk to me about the answer that they have to the Space Force culture. And I really appreciate your comments, Bill, because I think it's what we as members of the service, all of us together, bring each day and how we treat each other and how we behave and what we value that builds that culture way more than any external entity who wants to show up and help you understand what your problem is or how to build it if it's not coming from here.

And the other thing that I have been really struck with about the power and the value proposition of the Space Force that is so far above and beyond what other services have at the moment, is the power of the total force that we have inside the Space Force from the perspective of other services transferring in, as well as what our Guardians and our former Airmen bring.

And I think it's just an unbelievable amount of value proposition and amplification to go to the line of effort that we're talking about. That people's experiences from these other services, from outside the Space Force, from the Air Force, civilians and people who are coming directly assessing in.



That amalgamation of talent and experience from across that spectrum is just huge for us. And it's not only challenging as we develop and build our cultural identity, but it's also in my opinion, a force multiplier.

Maj. Gen. Steven Whitney:

I just quickly add that I think the culture is built one Guardian at a time, one day at a time, as we go through and make those connections and those opportunities. And Chief, if I could get you, I'm going to throw it to you for just a second. But one of the most unique things I think we do over at Starcom is at the end of BMT, is the patching ceremony. It is the absolute perfect way to build a culture to get things together. If you could talk for just a second about that... I think we're going to talk later, but that is a fabulous thing and maybe ties in really well right here.

Chief Master Sgt. James Seballes:

Yes, sir. Absolutely. Yeah, so for those that don't know, we implemented last year a patching ceremony at our first BMT graduation and that patching ceremony didn't come from the top. That was actually the team that was planning and building the curriculum that came together. That was not just enlisted Guardians, it was also civilian Guardians and some officers that helped come up with the idea of the patching ceremony.

And the patching ceremony I think is very unique. Some other services do a type of recognition like that, but what's unique about what we do in the Space Force is the Space Force patch that you wear in the OCP, we actually ask Guardians from across the service to wear them for a minute and then write a note to each one of the Guardians that graduate. And then when they get the patch at graduation, they also get the card. And it's a special note that comes from anyone from the CSO on down.

And I've had the privilege to be at two of the ceremonies and when I do pass the patch and the card, I do say, "Hey, just make sure you read this," because one of them that I read was where General Whiting said, "Hey, if you see me in the field, mention that you got my patch and I'll give you a coin."

And I was like, "Hey, you don't want to miss out on that coin, right? So read your cards."

But it is such a cool thing, and when you see that Guardian get the patch on their arm and the excuberation and the feeling like they are now part of the team, nothing really beats that at all. And we've now adopted it at OTS and we've adopted it even at the Air Force Academy for the Guardians that we bring in from USAFA.

Maj. Gen. Steven Whitney:

And I think that's just one minor example of how we work that connection every day to try and build a broader spirit, that one connection at a time to just try and come together as a group and to do something that's unique and different that's holy ourselves. We're such a small service. There's 8,700-ish folks.

Just for those of you who want to put in perspective, Air Force Material Command is about 5,700... Or sorry 57,000. Let me get that right. And so we're not even a fifth of the size of Air Force Material Command and we're an entire service. So that provides us so many opportunities to do things like this patching ceremony, to do the one-on-one conversations, to have the mentorship, to have that connection. I just think it's a great opportunity.

Lt. Gen. William J. Liquori, USAF (Ret.):



I could not agree more and I love seeing the photos, each successive graduation of the Guardians receiving their patches, reading the notes, and even more of the Guardian's families that are there and the smiles that are on their faces. It's the part I miss the most, is the people side of this, which is why I was excited when they said, "Would you like to do the Guardian Spirit panel?"

I was like, "Absolutely, I would like to do that."

So, you've all hit on something that I wanted to expand on just a little bit more, and that is it's very easy for those not in the service to think about Guardians as those who look like the Chief or General Whitney. But really, our Guardians are officers, they're enlisted, and they're civilians, and they're our contractor workforce.

And I was wondering if you might be able to expand. I'll start with you Kate, and then if either of you have anything you'd like to add. But how do we enhance that collaboration and feeling of teamwork and partnership between all of the different flavors of Guardians?

Katharine Kelley:

Yeah, great question. Thanks.

Obviously, near and dear to my heart as I think about how you sit as a senior civilian and represent the totality of the force. I think it's the same thing if you're sitting on a general officer side, how do you make sure that civilians are hearing and seeing all of that together as a total force?

And I think it's incumbent upon all of us quite frankly, no matter where you are, at whatever echelon, to remember that when we say Guardian, we really do mean all of us who are on the team. And it can get very lost if you don't really put an intentionality behind what you say and what you do. I mean that really has to be part of what we live each and every day. And so when you're going for that hard project, are you grabbing multiple players to be on that team?

Are you putting different people in charge of things and allowing them to have a voice? Are you making good decisions that have the views of others even if they're not impacted by those policies or those decisions? That's really the way that we all have to think and operate at all echelons because what General Whitney just said is right. We are such a small service that there's almost no decision that gets made that doesn't have a real tangible impact on the total force.

If you're not thinking about the total force all the time, whether it's in the teams that you build in the work that you do, in the way that you seek input to help you do the work, not only are you missing out on the power of that perspective, but you're not really embodying the fact that Guardians are a total force package. And I think that's really important to us to remember.

Maj. Gen. Steven Whitney:

If I could, I'd say as a leader of one of those teams, it's important to me that you demonstrate that behavior, right? If you are a leader of a team that's more than just the military suits or it's got civilians and it's got contractors, you're the leader of that entire bleeping team. That doesn't mean I'm going to pass off all my civilian appraisals to my civilian deputy. It means I'm the leader and I'm responsible for taking care and developing each and every member on that team.

That means I'm responsible for recognizing each and every member of that team. They have different reward systems and benefits, whether it be through the Civilian Appraisal System or through civilian medals that you can do. Or through contractor award fees, or even sometimes it's a note to a sector president to say, "Hey, I just want you to know that Billy here's doing a fantastic job."



You can find ways, but you've got to demonstrate that behavior. You are the leader of that team or you're a member of that team, and you've got to be 100% committed to being on that team.

Chief Master Sgt. James Seballes:

Yes, sir. I would add that for the total force, really even outside of the Space Force, appreciation, affiliation, autonomy, role and status, these are all five key things that motivate human behavior. And so far in the Space Force, I've witnessed where we do include every single buddy, officer enlisted, civilian, and we truly do that, give them the autonomy to lead things.

And we don't just, as General Whitney just touched on, we don't only give civilian things to the civilians and officer things to officers or enlisted things to enlisted. We spread that across and we do model that behavior in multiple facets to where as a chief, I don't just get to hand out coins and do manpower actually have a portfolio of things that I work at my level.

We have civilians that lead things, whether they touch military things or not, it doesn't matter. They're part of the team and it's about amplifying the expertise and the specialty and the energy that they bring to each of those positions and those roles. And we have to continue to do that, especially even as we grow and things get a little bit more complicated so that we continue to bring in the entire team.

Maj. Gen. Steven Whitney:

And not only what they bring, but the unique experiences and perspectives like Ms. Kelley talked about, making sure that you're bringing all that in and having that in there, because we all come from different backgrounds and how do we utilize that to make ourselves stronger as a force going forward?

Chief Master Sgt. James Seballes:

And sir, if I could? One last thing. I would say that we talk about it quite a bit but again, we have to model it, is the development of our civilian corps. I think too often we do tend to focus in other services more on the military aspect of that development, and we just sometimes forget about our civilian force. So far, we're very aware of it, but now it's time that we actually have to come through on that promise as well.

Lt. Gen. William J. Liquori, USAF (Ret.):

Let's expand on that a little bit. I think it's a great point. So these Guardians are the centerpiece of this line of effort, if you will. And they're our most valuable resource. So what I'd like to hear is, given the Guardian Spirit and given this line of effort of amplifying it, what are each of your views on development of leaders in this new construct that we have, if you will?

I'll start with you, Steve, and go from there.

Maj. Gen. Steven Whitney:

Well, to me, that's my sole purpose, right? I've progressed in my career. I started as a tactician and I was doing the things that a lieutenant does and taking it and I've progressed through. But now I'm a general officer and really the legacy I leave is not the systems I worked on or the programs I built, but it's the people I leave behind.

And so, how do I invest in them to grow them? And it's on a personal nature, it's a one-on-one conversation. They're not always pleasant conversations. Let's get that right out of the way, right? This is not the, "Hey, I'm going to give you feedback once a year on a Form 724 and I'm just going to check a bunch of boxes."



This is sitting down after the meeting talking about, "Well, how'd that go? What'd you do well? What'd you do wrong? Let's talk about that. How do we get better?"

And it's being open to having that conversation both ways. Some of my best mentors are people that work for me. And so by having that conversation, they can point out to me my blind spots as well. And to me, that's really what we need to do when we talk about developing leaders is we've got to be willing to have the conversations about feedback, we've got to be willing to invest in them, and we've got to be willing to show that we're open to taking that feedback and demonstrating the behavior of how you do that as a learning organization.

Lt. Gen. William J. Liquori, USAF (Ret.):

Chief?

Chief Master Sgt. James Seballes:

Yes, sir. So yeah, I couldn't agree more. The feedback piece, I think, is absolutely critical. We started now at basic training where we do the plan, execute, debrief model for everything they do, something as simple as taking the entire flight over to the chow hall.

They learn how to do that, but the debrief piece is really, really key and they get taught from the moment they come in that that debrief is not personal. It's professional. It's meant like we're all equal. We're going to talk about what was the good, bad, and ugly, so that we can get better. It's not to bring somebody down, it's really to bring somebody up.

And if we're doing that with our newest successions, that's a thing that we have to adopt across the force because it's something that, I'll say just at least from my experience going back into the Air Force, that feedback process was not something we really got taught well, I'll say, in the middle. Someone who was, no kidding, killing it? Easy. Somebody who killed it the other way? Totally easy to give that feedback.

But how do I give feedback to someone to go from number eight in whatever rank they are to number seven or from seven to six? Just to get incrementally a little better? And then to do it with the intent to make them better and not to beat them down or not to take something and weaponize it against them. That feedback is super critical.

The other thing I would say on developing our leaders is that we can't take a traditional linear approach where you wait till you make a certain rank or certain position and then you go to school and then you go to this and then you go to that. We're just too small to wait on that. We'll get too small of a subset of our population that gets developed. We have to look at maybe non-traditional ways to develop our Guardians, and maybe that's an opportunity that we might not give to that person of that rank or that position in a different service and just take a risk, if you will, thinking we got to develop all our Guardians to a certain level.

We got to take those non-traditional means and invest in them and not also worry about what I've often heard over the years, is return on investment. We'll only send that person to school if they're going to reenlist or they're going to take an ADSC. We have to do it with the promise that, even if they do separate, that they go out and they become an advocate for the Space Force. Or better yet they go from uniform to civilian or vice versa.

And we have to take that mindset and we do that. We create an environment and a culture that people will continue to want to be a part of and it won't be a challenge.

Lt. Gen. William J. Liquori, USAF (Ret.):



I think that's a great point for any of you that are at a transition point in your lives. I can just tell you from experience, you don't stop being a Guardian when you take your uniform off.

For those of you that are in the military or civilians that are getting ready to transition, there's a lot of ways to serve, and you're able to continue doing that after your time in this service, for sure.

Kate?

Katharine Kelley:

Thanks. Bill, I just wanted to add a little bit of... So we heard from General Whitney about that personal interaction that you want between, say, the mentor or the leader and the individual. And then Chief, you hit on it as well and then talked a little bit about how we make investments in Guardians.

And I think the other piece of this is what ecosystem do you build for those Guardians to be part of? So there's the individualized assessment and development. And then there's the question of what do we as a service set conditions by which Guardians can move through career paths, be it military or civilian?

A lot of the things that we're working on, on behalf of the service, have to do with getting identification of the right individual who has the right skills aligned to the job that needs those competencies or skills. And then at what point in their career, because all three elements are really important, you can have the right skills, but it might not be the right time.

You can maybe need to develop the skills and get a little bit more reps and sets, so to speak, before you're ready for a certain opportunity. But we're trying to design an ecosystem that allows a feedback loop, by the individual and by the organization itself, to try to get all three of those things to come together at once.

So there's this piece of individualized development and performance and taking accountability for what you bring and what you as a leader offer to your people. And then there's as a service, how do you think about development of a career path and an assignments process and a promotion cycle and a job opportunity and a selection that matches the right person at the right point in their career to the job they're most suited to do. And it's really exciting to see how we as a service are focusing on both aspects of what I think is important about your question.

Lt. Gen. William J. Liquori, USAF (Ret.):

Couldn't agree more. One of my favorite things to do when I was on active duty was to go out and wander. Number one, it gets you out of your desk. Number two, it keeps you moving. But most importantly, you get to meet the people.

And there was never a time, no matter how short of a time I had, there was never a time where you didn't come upon someone that had a creative idea that they were working on in their head or maybe had started. And you find these just pockets that are hidden away.

And so, there's an incredible breadth and depth of expertise in the field in this room, for sure. And across the field. And I guess I'd be interested in each of your thoughts on how is it that we really capitalize on that and take advantage of it in order to secure the nation's interests in from N two space Chief, I'll let you start. Okay, sir.

Chief Master Sgt. James Seballes:

Yeah, again, I talk about this quite often in my current role, but I'll go back to basic training for a second. So last year our average ASVAB score for our sessions was 82.5. This year to date, and I believe we still have two cohorts to graduate, the average ASVAB is 85. So to your point, we are bringing a very high



caliber, highly skilled force into the Space Force. And so how do we capitalize on that? I think for me it is rooted in mission command.

We have to know can you delegate down and allow these members, wherever they're at, officer enlisted or civilian, to really get the opportunity to use their voice to thrive, to bring ideas to the table that maybe we don't think of, and to really kind of embrace that culture that I've heard the CSO talk about where we need to be a yes, if not a no because kind of culture.

And I think if we do that, those folks that are coming in, that clearly based on the caliber of folks that are bringing in, they have opportunities. They have other options, but they've chosen to come into the Space Force. How do we capitalize that? How do we listen to their voice and then arm them to do the great things that we need them to do? I think that's really the key, sir.

Lt. Gen. William J. Liquori, USAF (Ret.):

Steve?

Maj. Gen. Steven Whitney:

I was just smiling. I was thinking about wandering around the Pentagon and not getting lost, of course. But even there you can find pockets. And I think it goes to a lot of what you're saying, Chief, about you hire really good people and you bring them in and you give them the broad outlines of what you need to do and then watch them run.

It can be scary as the leader to do that sometimes because you never know what you're going to get, but sometimes it surprises you. And so it really goes back to what you're trying to accomplish as the leader. And to me, leadership is all about problem solving in a social domain to achieve a desired end. It doesn't describe how I go about problem solving, it's just that I need to solve that problem.

And sometimes the best ideas come from out in others. And so, I love the image of wandering around and finding folks that are off doing things, whether it be in some small corner of the Pentagon, working in a skiff, or on those glorious days in the Pentagon where you actually get to go travel elsewhere and visit somewhere else and seeing some of that.

But it is truly, to me, it's amazing to watch and our Guardians really bring it when that happens.

Katharine Kelley:

You didn't mention the other benefit of wandering around. Beyond just getting lost, you're away from TMT for a minute.

Maj. Gen. Steven Whitney:

I was going to say, I'm not tasking you. That's what it is.

Katharine Kelley:

And you're not tasking me.

Lt. Gen. William J. Liquori, USAF (Ret.):

Both of you probably are aware, but if you wander long enough in your building, you'll just end up back where you were.

Maj. Gen. Steven Whitney:



So there's actually a great story about General Eisenhower. When the Pentagon was first opened, he left his office and he wandered the E-Ring and he actually made two full laps before he came across somebody and said, "Hey, how do you get to the Chief of Staff of the Army's office?"

And they looked at him and said, "General Eisenhower, it's two doors back on the left. You just passed it."

Katharine Kelley:

The other piece that was in my mind as I was listening to you both talk is just having the humility to ask other people for their ideas just goes such a long way, right? And having the, I'll call it, the strategic patience to seek out other people's views because we can get all at whatever echelon we're at in a service this small with what we've been asked to do, we can all get running at such a pace that your instinct is to just get it done quickly.

And the reality is, if you can hold yourself to seek other views and you can do things like crowdsourcing feedback or take the time to be out and about to find those pockets, or just ask for some interested people who have a passion to solve the problem you're trying to solve, you'd be amazed at the amount of interest that comes out when you offer that opportunity.

So I think it's incumbent upon all of us to just remember, and I'm super guilty of this, you can just get going so fast and you're just trying to knock down targets at whatever level you're at. You've got to have that tactical patience to seek out the people who really have a different view and have a passion to solve the issue.

Lt. Gen. William J. Liquori, USAF (Ret.):

I think... Yes, absolutely.

Let me pull at a thread there for a second, because I think crowdsourcing is one of the most powerful, effective tools that we have. I think it's proven itself in this very young service for sure.

But I think for those who aren't as exposed to it, crowdsourcing is just, "Oh, so-and-so said let's do this, so let's go do that." "And so-and-so said, let's do this."

And now you move in a lot of different directions. So could you talk for just a second about effective crowdsourcing and what crowdsourcing is not, if you will?

Katharine Kelley:

Right. So I did not set him up for that question. I promise you. And we get this a lot, especially in the S1 lane. There is always multiple ways you can do something, right? What there isn't, is always a singular answer. And so I think about crowdsourcing in two ways. One is what I just discussed. The other views of people to bring their perspective to help you get to a better or different solution that otherwise you wouldn't have gotten to on your own.

But the other thing it does is it really sets the stage for the complexity and the real importance of the decision you're about to make. Because if you go out and you ask a huge audience a question and two people give you an answer, maybe it's not as big a deal. But if you get 200 people that have a view and 180 of them are different, you've not only gotten feedback, you've also gotten an indicator of how important the decision you might make actually is to those around you.

So for me, crowdsourcing isn't just, "Can I find that one thing to go chase?"



It's, "How important and how broad a spectrum of interest is there on this issue?" And then let's put some processes in place or some analytics in place to try to come up with something that makes sense for us.

Lt. Gen. William J. Liquori, USAF (Ret.):

It's a great perspective on it. If I could hit you up for one more. The Chief often talks... Both Chiefs have talked about the fact that our size allows us to be a pathfinder for the Department of Defense.

Specific to Amplifying the Guardian Spirit, could you talk for a second as the person in charge of that line of effort, if you will? Granted that it happens throughout the entire force, but as the person on the staff most focused on that, if you will, could you talk about how that can be a pathfinder for the Department of Defense?

Katharine Kelley:

Certainly. I mean, I think it should not be lost on anybody in the Space Force that every single day you come to work, you are in fact exactly what he just described, which is a pathfinder for the DOD. And there are any number of examples.

The most obvious one is how do you stand up and actually operate a new service in a contested space domain? Make no mistake, that's why we're all here. But beyond that, our size, as much of a hindrance as it can be when you're trying to, what we call, fight the Pentagon wars or fight the DC wars, your size can be tough. But the size is also what gets people willing to say yes when otherwise they would say no. And so we've been able to convince, quite frankly, Congress as well as the DOD to help us do some things that otherwise haven't gotten off the ground, really.

So raise your hand if you're wearing a wearable device right now? Keep your hands up if you volunteered and it's part of a study? Right there. Every one of you who volunteered to be in that study, right, is a pathfinder for the DOD right now because there are all sorts of policies, all sorts of risks, and all sorts of, quite frankly, naysayers about whether that technology and that ability for you all to user adopt that technology in a meaningful way is going to prove out positive.

And so the feedback that we get from your wearing of this device is going to expose the DOD to whether or not we can think, and should think, differently about the way we think about fitness, the way we think about holistic health, the way we are all mindful of whether or not we are healthy writ large, and to what degree do we want to be aware of that as a service.

So those types of things are not possible without creative thinkers, risk-takers, and populations that are willing to be that on behalf of the large DOD. And that is what we all are, and that is what it means to be a pathfinder for the DOD.

Lt. Gen. William J. Liquori, USAF (Ret.):

That's perfect. Thank you.

My light says we're moments from the orchestra playing us off the stage. So let's finish with this question. Luckily for us right now, or maybe I'll just say we continue to take advantage of the fact that we're new and that recruiting is not necessarily our problem right now. Not a big problem right now. There are many, many, many people who are wanting to be a part of this organization for all of the right reasons.

But over time things will change and the environment will change. And so, retention and recruiting are going to be critical. They're critical to the success of any organization. And so, I was wondering if each of you could touch on, and I'll start with you Chief, and then we will go down the line.



What do you see as the value proposition of being a member of the Space Force and how do we use that to maintain and improve our recruiting and retention?

Chief Master Sgt. James Seballes:

So I think part of it comes back right to what Ms. Kelley was talking about, but just in a different perspective. The size of our force. We can do things in the Space Force that you can't do in other services. There are so many things that, in the other services, they have to take into consideration hundreds of thousands of people and they instill processes like the assignment system as an example, to churn, to crank through that many people.

When you have roughly 8,000 military and equal amount of civilians, you can do talent management in a completely different way. I harp on this quite a bit at times, that one of the value propositions is truly that talent management, that our Guardians truly do have a voice. I've seen it play out multiple times over, and I'm not just talking about senior personnel. I've seen it for some of our junior Guardians, our mid-tier Guardians, where they have a situation that in the other service, I don't know that they would get turned down per se, but the process is so lengthy. There's so many levels and there's so many people that would've to go through that it's almost not worth it to try.

And in our service as an example, with the size that we are, the Chiefs, we are all on a single text. And while... When it's somebody's birthday, we get a lot of texts for somebody's birthday that day. But the power of that, to be able to reach out to one text, to one link, to be able to try and solve a problem for officer enlisted or civilian, I mean, that's huge.

The other thing, and I think we're getting better at this, and there's some challenges that we have to getting our message out there, but showing the things that we actually do. So many folks, so many of our Americans across our country, don't truly still understand what it means to have a Space Force.

In Colorado even, I've been congratulated because SpaceCom is staying in Colorado for now. But I'm in the Space Force, and so people don't quite understand it. So taking the opportunity to show more of what we do and what it means to be in the Space Force and the actual impact that we have, I think that's going to continue to attract folks to be a part of the Space Force because it's something unique that you can't do anywhere else.

Lt. Gen. William J. Liquori, USAF (Ret.):

Why am I envisioning that text this morning saying, "When they announced me, make some noise?" Is that how that went? Come on.

Chief Master Sgt. James Seballes:

I can neither confirm nor deny, sir.

Maj. Gen. Steven Whitney:

Come on, sir. You know Chiefs always stick together. That's all you need to know.

Real quick, I'll just say I think the small size, like Chief said, is really our best advantage. I think from a recruiting perspective, it allows us to think differently about where we need to go and what we need to go after. Maybe we don't need to do the mass recruiting efforts, but maybe we need to do some more focused gathering of folks.



And then just in my last two seconds, I just want to take a moment and say thanks to all the Guardians out there for what you do each and every day. You guys are amazing. You are the reason I come to work every day, and it's my honor to serve with and for you. Thanks.

Katharine Kelley:

Well said. Well said. I think for me, I think about size is one thing as a service, right? But what do you like about when you come to work every day? Do you bring your A game? Do you think about it as how you're contributing? And do you understand where you are as part of the ecosystem?

If you can feel good about what you're contributing and understand how it's contributing to the larger purpose that the service has, I think you can really feel a huge sense of purpose as a Guardian in the Space Force. And so whether we are 14 to 16,000 people right now, I'm proud to tell everybody that we're going to hit 8,600 this year. This is our highest number on military so far, and that's a really powerful point to think about what we've been able to get to.

But if you pay attention to the domain that we're responsible for, you can only surmise that this grows over time. The thing that I would leave everybody with is remember that right now. The agility, even though there's a double-edged sword to it, the agility that we have as a small service is a powerful tool. And how you fit into that ecosystem to take advantage of it is probably one of your greatest tools as a Guardian. And so making sure that you understand why you're there, how it fits in with a larger purpose, and therefore what you bring to the game, especially because right now we're small. Every one of us has to come to work every day with their A game, and I think that's really important.

Lt. Gen. William J. Liquori, USAF (Ret.):

Those are three great perspectives to end this topic on. I want to thank each of you who I know has very busy schedules to spend some time unpacking this line of effort with us. Thanks to all of you for sticking with us through the end of the day.

But more importantly, thanks for what it is that each and every one of you are doing each day. Have a great rest of your day. A good rest of the conference. Semper Supra.

Katharine Kelley:

Thank you.

Lt. Gen. William J. Liquori, USAF (Ret.):

It's great to see you.