



**Air Force Association
Air & Space Conference and
Technology Exposition**

Tuesday, 18 Sep 12



General Mark A. Welsh III

As Delivered

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Thank you so much for that wonderful welcome. I've got to tell you, this is a little surreal, really surreal. I had to put slides up because I was a little nervous about looking over there and seeing all of this on all of that. It would have been more than I could take, I think.

Thank you so much for being here this morning. Mr. Secretary, Gail, thank you for being here. I'm going to come back to Betty because I've got a great picture I want to show you of her, but she's a babe and she's up here in the front row. Hold that thought. I'll come back to it.

I love the theme of this conference. "Airmen, Airpower and America's Air Force." It's a great theme. It's a great topic to discuss. And this is a great Air Force, folks, and I'm excited about talking to you and giving you a few of my thoughts about it.

First of all, this picture here is one you can't see from the back, but that's my name on the side of the cockpit. I carry this around with me just to remind myself that at one point in time I was cool. [Laughter]. Now I'm just dumpy. But I can remember those days.

Next slide, please. [Pause.] This will be a panic moment. [Laughter]

Before we go any farther I have to say thank you to somebody. General Norty Schwartz, in the transition from his tenure as Chief to the beginning of mine as Chief, was absolutely incredible. I don't think Chief Schwartz is here today, but I got the chance to say thank you, but I didn't get the chance to say it publicly. He went so far above and beyond what can be expected that it was just unbelievable, and I wanted to make sure that you knew that, and I wanted to let you know what a class act he was in everything he did in this transition: from inviting a bunch of the former Air Chiefs to his house to talk to me about the job; preparing me on the issues that he felt he didn't quite get to or felt that he didn't quite accomplish what he wanted to accomplish. I noticed in the discussion he failed to mention all the things that he did do, which didn't surprise me. But there were many of those. He just did an unbelievable job, and Chief, wherever you are, thank you so very much for the way you treated me and Betty and the way Suzie did as we came into this job.

[Applause].

The great news for us is that's not a wave goodbye because General Schwarz will be serving on the Board of AFA for the future, so we're really excited about having him still around to kind of watch my back and kick me in the butt when I need it.

Next slide, please.

There's one other person, actually one other couple I'd like to say something about here this morning, because I'm going to officially announce right now that Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Jim Roy will retire on the 31st of January of 2013.



[Applause].

Those of you who have not had a chance to work even for a brief period of time closely with Chief Roy and Paula just simply don't know what you're missing. This guy is an unbelievable professional. He has dedicated himself completely to the last three years in this job. And he's got a partner in Ms. Paula who just raises his game every single day. She is a phenomenal, phenomenal member of our Air Force. She is connected in every possible way. Everywhere they go, the enlisted force, the families, and pretty quickly whether they want to or not, the officer force and families at that location are hugging Ms. Paula and talking to Chief Roy about what's best for our Air Force and for our Airmen. You guys have been such a blessing to our Air Force. Thank you for what you brought to the job. Thank you for what you brought to the nation. And all of our best wishes as you move on to great success and happiness in the future. Betty and I are really going to miss you. Congratulations.

[Applause].

Next slide, please.

Is that a great looking uniform. [Laughter]. Just in case you missed it before.

I was a little upset last night at the dinner, though, because I noticed that the Honor Guard and the Band and even the Singing Sergeants have copied it now. [Laughter]. You might not have seen the Entertainment Channel's e-Fashion Police Show. For those of you who don't watch it, I'm not making this up, their lead fashion consultant actually got this photo sent to them on a blog and replied in print with his opinion on the uniforms. A picture of Chief Roy and Chief Schwartz and I standing together at the transition ceremony. His words were, and I'll try and quote them exactly, "It's a uniform that conveys a sense of power. It's a very masculine uniform and it can only be worn by men in excellent physical shape." [Laughter]. "These guys look outstanding." [Laughter]. I must say I agree wholeheartedly.

There's a secret I need to let out, though. Chief Schwartz didn't come up with this idea on his own. This is actually a copy of the uniform that the former Chief Master Sergeants of the Air Force wear at their little get-togethers down in Florida each year. You should ask them about that. [Laughter].

"Airmen, Airpower and America's Air Force." It is a great theme. So let's start where all things should start in our business. Let's talk about Airmen.

Like U.S. Army aeronaut, Thaddeus Lowe. September of 1861, raising himself a thousand feet above the terrain just on the other side of the Potomac River, a couple of miles from here. A thousand feet in the air, looking at Confederate lines in the vicinity of Falls Church, and then telegraphing their location back down to the ground on a wire he carried up with him so that Union artillery could fire on the Confederate ranks. The first time we've seen indirect fire from the United States military. It was successful. So the Secretary of War ordered old Thaddeus to build a battery, that they called the battery of seven balloons. This was one of them, the Intrepid. This is the beginning of our heritage.

Next slide.



It continued. In World War I the American public fell in love with aviation by watching the Lafayette Escadrille, reading their story, talking to the heroes as they came back to the states. That's the Escadrille in the big picture in the center. Those are their pets -- Whiskey and Soda -- in the upper left -- the two African lion cubs. That's a serious squadron pet. That's Raoul Lufbery in the upper right. And that's of course the ace of aces, Captain Eddy Rickenbacker in the bottom right. And all of a sudden aviation was romantic. And fighter pilots were incredibly handsome and attractive. [Laughter].

Next slide.

The heroes kept coming. Billy Mitchell, Jimmy Doolittle, General of the Air Force Hap Arnold, Curtis LeMay, and lots of others. Robin Olds, Robby Reisner, John Jumper, George Muelner, lots of others. Craig McKinley.

Next slide.

They keep coming.

In the audience today are a couple of members of the group I took this picture of. About a month ago the Chief and Paula and Betty and I went to the mortuary up at Dover. I'd been to distinguished transfer ceremonies, but I hadn't been to the mortuary itself. I'd read all about it in the paper but I hadn't been there and met the Airmen who were involved in that incredibly important work. So I went to meet them because I'd heard they were great. I had no idea how great they were.

This is the dress and wrapping section. I believe that the NCOIC is here. Sergeant Worthey, are you in the audience? Would you come up here for a minute and join me?

The responsibility of this section in the mortuary at Dover is to wrap remains if required and then to dress the bodies before they're shipped home to their families. This is the NCOIC. It's good to see you.

[Applause].

Sergeant Worthey is from Dover, Delaware. She's an Air Force Reservist. She's been in the Reserves for 15 years. She's deployed 10 times to the Air Force Mortuary Office at Dover. Ten times. She has treated the remains of the fallen for the Cole disaster, from OIF, from OEF, and from other mass fatalities during that time period. Her job is for the uniforms to be perfect before they leave and for the remains if they can't wear a uniform to be perfectly wrapped so that the family never has to deal with the aggravation of a problem with their son or daughter or husband or brother coming home.

Can you imagine doing this on 10 deployments? Let me tell you a very brief story about the mortuary I heard while I was there.

Sergeant Worthey's section once had a set of remains they were wrapping that couldn't wear a uniform. When they wrap remains of that type they wrap them in multiple layers. In between each layer is identification so if anything ever happens during the shipment the body can always be identified no matter how many of the outer layers wear off. Typically dog tags are put inside each layer.



As they finalized the preparation for this fallen hero to head home, right before the body shipped they found out that he'd been promoted posthumously. Now nobody ever unwraps the body. No one will see the remains after it leaves the mortuary. But Sergeant Worthey and the team unwrapped every layer, reprinted new dog tags, and reinserted them with the proper rank. Just because that's the way it should be.

This is really, really difficult work, emotionally and technically. Nobody's better than the lady standing next to me.

The art work in the background on the wall, she's part of creating that, too. This is one of the people she supervises, Senior Airman Smith, in the fitness center that she helped design. This is just a special, special person and a remarkable senior NCO and I wanted you to have the chance to say thanks.

[Applause].

Next slide, please.

We talk about Airmen. It's not just who we are, it's what we value that makes us hopefully a little bit unique.

Last year at the Outstanding Airmen of the Year banquet I had the opportunity to see an Airman who was in U.S. Air Forces in Europe at the time where I was stationed, Tech Sergeant Dustin Goodwin do the walk of honor down the aisle here as one of the 12 OAY winners. Sergeant Goodwin is a hero. He's a security forces member. He killed three militants in the wire at danger close range in a gunfight at Bagram to prevent them from penetrating the perimeter. He's a hero. And he was a spectacular NCO before that incident occurred.

When he came to the award ceremony he did what one of our winners did last night. Instead of asking a family member or a friend, somebody that they'd known in the past, he asked his supervisor, his flight chief. Captain Gil Wyche. Captain Wyche is also here. Bronze Star, Purple Heart. He was in that same gunfight directing traffic. When I asked Dustin why he invited Captain Wyche he said I thought it would be important to have someone I admire, someone I can emulate, someone who leads Airmen. Gil Wyche won the Sijan Award for the United States Air Force last year. He deserved it. We value leadership in this business.

Next slide.

Senior Airman Christopher, are you here? Would you come up here too? There's lots of different kinds of leadership in our Air Force. One of the things that we also value greatly is pride. It's an honor to see you again, Sir.

Senior Airman Christopher is married. He has three children. He's a welder. He's also an Air Force Reservist. He also works at the mortuary in Dover. He's a manager at the Fisher House. His job is taking care of families who come to bring their loved ones home.



We spent maybe 30 minutes in the Fisher House. In the entire time I kept telling everybody around me I want to take Senior Airman Christopher home with me. When we first went into the building he gave us the tour of the facility. Every room was his favorite. [Laughter]. He showed me the chairs where the families sit when they're most upset. He told me how he arranges the chairs so the light will hit them the right way and it won't get in their eyes when they're talking to the doctors or the chaplain. He talked about how the families when they first come into the building will sit with the chaplain at the dining room table and no more than five minutes before they come in the door he puts juice and water on the table because he doesn't want them to have to worry about a dripping glass or a water spot on the table while they're hearing the news about the state of their loved one's body.

When he showed us the actual rooms, there were two coasters on the top of the headboard there on the bed. He said there's nothing there right now because nobody's in the room, but just before they come in the door I put a cold glass of water here because nobody should have to drink warm water when they're feeling the way they must be feeling.

Everything we saw, everything we talked about was attention to detail. It was all focused on the family. It was all about making it easier for somebody else and it was all because he is maybe the proudest guy I've met in the last 10 years -- about wearing this uniform, about taking care, about doing the job right. Senior Airman Christopher, it was an honor to meet you.

[Applause].

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

I told you, I told you she's a babe. [Laughter]. This is my wife Betty who hates it when I do this. Betty needs me for absolutely nothing. [Laughter]. She's smarter than I am, she's better looking than I am, sadly, she can bench press more than I can. [Laughter]. So I'm hoping the only reason she's hung around for these 35 years now is because maybe she actually likes me. Honey, thank you for everything. Thanks for being here today. You're going to love her. You really are.

Next slide.

We value family, by the way. Everybody's family. Every member of every family. It's important for us to remember that.

Here's something else we value in our Air Force, and we always have. The Wright Brothers were kind of the ultimate innovators in the aviation game. Following a passion for manned flight through every possible hurdle. The concept of over, not through, was kind of born, I think, at their house. It's a great concept.

The Question Mark. 150 hour flight, 43 refuelings in 1929 through a 20 foot hose. Can you imagine? Hawk Carlisle can't refuel now in an F-16. [Laughter]. That's what I heard, Hawk.

The bomber crews of World War II, figuring out how to build formations that allowed planes with overlapping gun coverage to defend each other because there were not enough fighters with enough range to get to the target.



Innovation. It's everywhere in our Air Force. The F-22 is an entire farm of innovation. It does things no airplane can do and no airplane will be able to do for a while. Part of the reason we have issues like the life support issues we're dealing with now is we never had an airplane that could operate, maneuver and pull Gs above 50,000 feet. Not the way this thing can. We're into a new era and the young guys have to fly that airplane. It's going to be tough. But they love it. Don't believe what everybody's telling you about people not wanting to fly the F-22. There's nobody asking out at the moment that I've heard about.

Then of course RPAs, unmanned aerial systems, unmanned air vehicles, whatever you want to call them. We're on kind of the second stage here. We just passed the Wright Flyer stage of these things. In the next 20-30 years these things are going to explode. Who knows what will happen next, but it's going to be exciting to watch and our Air Force has to be in the lead because we'll know the best way to use them.

Innovation is what we're all about. We always have been. Technology. Great people. An important mission. A focus that nobody else brings to the game.

Next slide.

By the way, this is Carl Spaatz. You might not know this but before they called him Tooeey they called him "The Riddler." [Laughter]. He of course was the pilot of the 150 hour flight in air refueling, in the Question Mark. That's his Question Mark jacket and I'm thinking about bringing these out as the new uniform item for the Air Force. [Laughter].

Next slide.

By the way, Carl Spaatz was also a great innovator after that flight of the Question Mark. He became our first Chief of Staff after 1947 when the Air Force became a separate service and he with Curtis LeMay giving him a steady dose of advice and a great helping hand, kind of created our nuclear structure. Created the rules, the guidelines, the alert rates and the status reports required to keep an ICBM and a bomber force on alert for all these years. Really a remarkable, remarkable leader.

That innovation continued. This is Master Sergeant Bart Decker. He's now retired. He was an Air Force Combat Controller and in Operation Enduring Freedom he was one of the first guys on the ground with an Army ODA team.

He's a new age kind of guy and he's big into technology. He's got a boatload of it on that horse. This is a remarkable picture. It's just a remarkable picture. Our JTACS and Battlefield Airmen today and our Combat Controllers have taken this to another level. All the lessons he learned they've improved upon. With the help of our industrial partners they've actually picked up new battery packs. They've got lighter weights. They've got better equipment. And they do a better job of saving lives and ruining the enemy's day every single day on the battlefield. Innovation is who we are, folks. We can't back away from this. We can't shy away from it. We have to engage our partners in industry on this. It's important that we communicate about it and our Airmen need to be thinking about it at every level of our Air Force.

Next slide.



Everybody in this room remembers where you were on this day. You probably remember exactly what you were doing when you first heard. And you know, most Americans froze. They just sat almost dumbfounded staring either in their house or their office at their computer, at their TV. Just frozen in disbelief at what was happening. But as always, a few Americans didn't. They went against every single speck of human instinct and they went toward the carnage. They stepped into the chaos.

The term Minuteman may be the earliest symbol of America. The Minuteman certainly was, and the Minuteman may still be the most well-known. But the Minuteman isn't always a man.

Next slide.

This is Major Heather Penney. Everybody in the Air National Guard knows this story and a lot of us in the active duty do not. Heather Penney was the first F-16 pilot in the F-16 unit up here at Andrews Air Force Base in the Maryland Guard. On 9/11 she and Colonel Mark Sasseville were actually given orders to bring down Flight 93 once it was determined that it was turning back and heading toward D.C. They didn't have any weapons on the airplane so they sat on the end of the runway waiting for clearance to take off. The game plan was Sass would take the cockpit and she'd take the tail. As she waited for takeoff clearance she was thinking okay, this is it. My last takeoff. Can you imagine? By the way, her father was a United Airlines pilot. He flew 757s. She knew he was flying that day but she didn't know what flight number he was flying in. Can you imagine that?

Where do we find them? We value courage in this business. We should all value her.

Next slide.

You know, when World War I ended we learned that information, that reconnaissance could be helpful. We learned that you could actually do aerial bombardment. So in the interwar period we started improving the bombing techniques, looking for different ways of becoming more accurate, trying to get larger planes with larger payloads. We knew that pursuit in fighter combat would be an exciting thing to do, so that continued in the interwar period. World War II kind of cemented the idea that strategic bombardment was the way of the future. And we came out of World War II and General Spaatz and SAC took over and we built the world's greatest strategic bomber force.

In Korea we were reminded that we have to be able to support ground units, but it still kind of stayed in the background until Vietnam where we realized that we really did need to think a little bit more about the joint work. We had to do a better job of supporting a ground component from the air. And our tactical proficiency on things like air superiority missions was not great in every platform. We kind of got a wakeup call. So our Air Force got serious about improving our tactical skills. For the next 20 years we did that. Then we did Desert Storm and demonstrated the best tactical Air Force the world has ever seen.

For the last 20 years the enemy's been changing. Now here we sit at another one of those turning points. Where are we going to be when we grow up? It's time to think seriously about that, folks. It might not be who we were. The pressures we have on us with budget, the pressures we're going to have on us with sequestration if it goes, the pressures we'll have with an increasing decrease of our budget even if sequestration doesn't happen, are going to be significant. So it's time for an honest look in the mirror. I think we've been trying to do that. I think most of you had a role in it. But let's not close our eyes and clamp our mind shut yet. I don't think the thinking's done.



Next slide.

This is a good friend of mine. He's an Army two star named Jim Boozer. He's the Deputy Commander of U.S. Army in Europe right now. Jim Boozer's a combat veteran. He's commanded multiple levels in combat in the Army. He's just a great American.

I asked Jim to come talk to our USAFE NAF and wing commanders while I was over there and give us his view of the Air Force. Just because I thought it would be interesting.

One of the things he said right at the beginning of his presentation kind of startled me. He said you know, I've been in the Army a long time now and I've commanded I think eight times, and I've been in combat, I think as a commander four times, he said. And he said every time in the field as a commander I worry about everything. I worry about the ammunition storage points. I worry about my resupply routes. I worry about my perimeter defense. I worry about how I'm going to move things from here to there. I worry about the enemy, the threat picture, the tactics. I worry about collecting intelligence. I worry about everything. But not once in my career have I ever worried about anything up there. That's a quote. Think about that for a minute. That's a remarkable quote. He has no idea how it happens either, by the way. He'll freely tell you that. He just doesn't worry about it because it's never wrong.

You should be patting yourself on the back right now. That is an incredible testimony. It's also a little worrisome because he doesn't know how it happens. He has no idea what goes into it. He doesn't know the resources required. He doesn't understand how many people are operating to make sure he doesn't have to worry about what's up there. I believe my job, our job, is to tell him.

Next slide.

When I came back to this job I started talking to people in the Air Staff about what's going on because I'd been away from it. I hadn't been in the middle of the discussions and the planning. I was concerned because I kind of lost touch with the vernacular after being out of the building, and that scared me. It was okay though, because as I got all the briefings it all started to become clear.

Slide please.

We've got all these things, and there's more of them. They keep coming in. Okay, stop. It's gonna hurt in another three seconds. [Laughter]. I'm worried about this. I'm confused. And I just need you to know it. I'm confused because I don't understand what all the terminology means. I'm not understanding the stories when I hear it. The Secretary is a phenomenal teacher on the program side. On the Ops side, on the mission side, I'm not connected anymore because we're changing everything. Our doctrinal terms are changing. What we're calling missions is changing. You guys who grew up flying CAS missions or interdiction missions, go try and see how many sub-derivatives there are of those things now. XCAS, XRCAS, INT, XINT. You can go and go and go and go. We do it for good reasons. We do it because we're well-intentioned. But I'm telling you, everybody doesn't understand what we're doing. We're doing it not just on the operational and doctrinal side, we're doing it on the money side, we're doing it on the planning side, and we're doing it in lots of ways.



I was scared to death my first couple of weeks because I thought it was just me. Then Larry Spencer came back from a money briefing and said I have no idea what they just told me. [Laughter]. If a professional accountant doesn't understand it, I'm now nervous.

And it's not because everybody's not doing great stuff. Almost everybody is. My concern is we're not telling our own story well enough. We're trying. But something's not connecting.

Next slide.

When I get confused I go back to the basics. In 1947, the Air Force became a separate service as a result of the National Security Act of that year, and there was an Executive Order, Order 9877, which was published that gave the details of what our job was. Here's what it says. "Air superiority, strategic air forces, air reconnaissance, airlift, air support for ground forces, coordination of air defenses." Sound familiar? They haven't changed.

These are still the things our combatant commanders expect us to deliver. We can call them whatever we want, but this is what they're looking for. They all understand these words. Let me talk about each of them.

Next slide.

This is the best picture of air superiority I've ever seen. General Boozar's in there somewhere sleeping. [Laughter]. Can you imagine any enemy doing this with the United States Air Force in the air? It would never happen.

Next slide.

If we are not able to gain and maintain air superiority which is not a given and it's not easy, if we were unable to do that in a future conflict, if we couldn't guarantee that we could, then everything about the way the United States Army and the United States Marine Corps fight on the ground would have to change. What they buy, how they train, maybe even who they recruit. This is a foundational element of the use of airpower and of joint warfighting. Period. We need to make that very clear to everyone. I'm not talking about asking for more F-22s, folks. I'm just saying this mission is critical to us. It's foundational.

Next slide.

Since Curtis LeMay we've been the best in the world and we remain that way. The nuclear mission continuing to strengthen the enterprise is still our number one priority in the United States Air Force and it will remain that way.

In our nuclear inventory we have two-thirds of the triad that provides nuclear deterrence to the United States of America. That's a huge responsibility. We have 36,000 Airmen every day who worry about the nuclear mission. Actively engaged in it each and every day. It's a big deal for us. We can't afford to ever get this wrong.



Global Strike will continue to be a focus area. The ability to hold targets at risk is also foundational for the United States Air Force. The long range strike bomber program is one of our top three programs. It is a must-have capability.

Next slide.

This hasn't changed since 1947 either. The way we've done it has changed. We didn't use to talk about B-1s and B-52s and B-2s doing close air support. Those innovative Airmen again. Incredible thinking. Incredible innovation. Incredible flexibility. Incredible success.

It worked well in this scenario. It might not in another one. Air support to ground and naval forces is foundational to the United States Air Force. It's what the President told us to do in 1947. It's still required.

Next slide.

I don't think anybody in 1947 could have imagined what ISR would become. The balloons didn't look like this back then. Incredible capability. Incredible capability.

Our Air Force finished fielding its first 21 orbits, CAPs in those days, of Predators in 2006. A huge investment. Somewhere in the vicinity of \$55 billion for the infrastructure, the communications architecture, the PED, the people, the training, the entire complex. The requirement's now at 65 CAPS with a push to go to 85, although the Secretary is holding the line. But the demand is significant.

Part of the reason is because everybody wants it. If you're getting shot at you want more. I understand that. But we're going to have to get engaged seriously in the mental process here of how we define the ISR requirement for the future, because there isn't enough money in the universe to fund the requirement that we have in the Department of Defense. What we buy has to be thoughtfully considered. How much we can afford has to be factored in. Do you need an orbit for every squad on the ground? Maybe for some missions, certainly not for all.

How do we do this differently in the future? It's time for innovation again. We innovated the heck out of the immediate problem for the last 10 or 12 years, but we've learned everything we know essentially about ISR in the active duty and Guard and Reserve Air Force over the last 20 years. There were very few people who knew anything about it in 1990. And most of the rest of the world hasn't had that focused attention on it for the last 20 years and they're lagging us.

So do we keep running away? Do we slow down? Do we create partnerships that will actually allow us to build capacity in other nations that we can use as parts of coalitions? Or do we just keep running on this? This is a big debate. It's a fair debate within the Department of Defense, and we're going to have to help the COCOMs frame it. They have an immediate problem. If I was them I'd say the same thing. We organize, train and equip for all of them. It's our job to do the thinking on this.

Industry, you can help us. You've got some brilliant people in this business.

Next slide.



There is not a bigger success story in the Air Force than mobility. Hasn't been since the Berlin Airlift. We fly 60,000 airlift sorties a year. That's still close, Ray? 60,000.

On the tanker side, this is going to sound like a strange statistic. Some of you may not have the same experience, but I've refueled a lot in my career. I have never, not one time, showed up at a tanker track and the tanker wasn't there. That's remarkable. Excellence is the way of doing business in our mobility fleet. They're fantastic. They are the complete Total Force package. They do so many other things, as you can see on this slide. We have Guard C-130s that work forest fires; we've got aeromedical evacuation crews bringing broken warriors home each and every day. It's an incredible success story.

The fleet's well resourced. We have good numbers. We have to keep it that way. We have to make sure the modernization plans, the upgrade plans are in place so we don't get some immediate short-notice funding requirement to fix things because that won't float. We've tried that in other things. We've got to think this through.

Next slide.

The Air Operations Center became a weapon system a while back. It became an effective tool for warfighters more recently. One of the issues we have to think about is can we really fully fund our Air Operations Centers. If we can, we should. If we can't, we should have fewer of them. Having half of an Air Operations Center or having one that operates on a couple of cylinders isn't really helping us. Downsizing these things is hard. There's lots of pushback from lots of places. This is another discussion we need to have.

We stand for command and control. The combatant commanders expect it from us whether it's integrated air missile defense, it's just missile defense, or it's ballistic missile defense or it's theater missile defense -- they're looking to us. We've got to be good at this. So we have to resource them properly. If we have to get smaller, as the Secretary's said many, many times, to be really good then we get smaller and we're really good at what we're doing.

Next slide.

Happy 30th Air Force Space Command. It's a big event. Lots of great things have happened in the space world over the last couple of years. The fleet health has returned to the satellite constellations through a lot of hard work, a lot of consistent investment and a lot of support from everybody from the Secretary on down. I think we've really made a huge improvement there.

The launch story is a great success story right now. How many in a row now? Fifty-one successful launches after something that was considered a fiasco at one point in time and nobody was sure we could get our arms around it again. We can't lose sight of success like that. Lots of great people doing great work. New mission areas, domain control, space control both offensive and defensive, space situational awareness. All this stuff that is essential to the nation, not just to the Air Force. Everything we do in our Air Force is enabled in some way, shape or form by some asset using space as a medium. Everything. So if you're somebody who's worn a space badge, you don't need to defend yourself anymore. You're critical. You're the heartbeat now.



It's kind of like tankers for airborne operations. Space is it for everything else. Thank you for what you're doing, Willy, in the way you're leading. But lots of work to do here.

This is another place where if you get behind the investment and modernization curve you don't catch up. It takes you a generation to catch up. But more thought. What do we need? What sensors are required? Is there a different way to do it? Are small sets a good way to go? Are tac sets helpful? Is operationally responsive space a valid operational concept or not? We can only study it so far before we do something.

Next slide.

I still twitch when I say cyber. I'm a believer. I'm just not sure we know exactly what we're doing in it yet and until we do, I'm concerned it's a black hole. So you just need to know I'm going to be going a little slow on the operational side of cyber until I really understand what we're doing. I'll be the one you're dragging, Willy. I'll warn you now.

But we have a lot of people in this discussion who don't really know what they're talking about. I know because they're all like me. We've got to get smart about this. There are people who can help us. But please, when you come to educate us, don't come in using cyber talk. We don't get that. I haven't figured out what an IP address is yet. In 30 years you'll have experts making these decisions. Right now you've got idiots helping make these decisions. So common sense, plain English will really help us.

But we've got to understand, this is essential. This is the future. It's an air, space and cyber future. There is no doubt in my mind. Everything we do can be affected either by or through this. In either a good or a bad way.

Next slide.

Today all over the world we're moving people and equipment. Some in some pretty ugly spots. We're doing tactical airdrops to resupply fighters in Afghanistan. Marines and Soldiers. We're doing convoys with Airmen leading the way, manning the 50 cal, driving the lead vehicle, commanding the convoy. We're flying ISR missions for every combatant commander on earth. We're fighting on the battlefield side by side with our Army, Navy and Marine brothers and sisters. We're flying spacecraft. We're downloading data. We're moving it all over the world. We're defusing IEDs. The Air Force matters. It's important that we tell that story. We're not better than anybody else, folks, but we're just as essential.

Next slide.

All that costs money. We do it with all three components. So there it is. [Laughter].

Next slide.

When I get stuck in the problems that I just don't think I know how to handle: I don't know how to deal with sequestration. How do you make all those cuts? I don't know how you solve this active duty-ARC thing? Why is everybody so upset about it? Why don't people talk nice? What's



going on? Why are politics so local? When I can't figure that stuff out I kind of go back to using common sense as the first standard I try to apply.

This is an air base in Africa. It's really a cool air base. There's about 100 Airmen who operate it in a deployed state. It's a neat spot. The day I went there to visit for the first time I pulled into the white building straight ahead of you, kind of the local terminal that we built up to have office space on the upper floor. Right over there behind the train on the right, that big bulldozer. As I pulled in there I got off the airplane and started talking, and they told me a story about a leopard, like that one on the bottom. They got ready to start flying sorties in the morning and they went out and there was a leopard lying on the center line of the runway. They went, "We better go get that bad boy off the runway." So about four of them started walking out there. [Laughter]. They got about halfway there, looked at each other, and went maybe, "We'll go get the fire truck."

So three of them jumped in the fire truck and they drove the fire truck out and they pulled it right up on the center line and kind of nosed it right up to the leopard who wasn't real impressed. They stopped just short of it. The leopard kind of looked up and looked underneath the fire truck at the shade, and got up and walked right into the middle of the fire truck and laid down. [Laughter]. Now they've got a leopard on the center line with a fire truck on top. And they don't want to move the fire truck because they're afraid they'll hurt the leopard. So they get out of the fire truck, and the three of them are standing there beside the fire truck looking at the leopard who's way in there about ten feet like a huge kitty, I guess. They're trying to figure out what to do with it.

They've got these long poles on the side of the fire truck, as it so happens. So one of them took the pole down and they started poking the kitty. The leopard was on his back, swatting at the pole until he finally rolled over and gave them the kitty's not happy any more sound and they dropped the pole and jumped up on the side of the fire truck.

So now there's three of them three feet off the ground on the side of a fire truck with a full grown leopard underneath it. They looked at each other after about 30 seconds, and went okay, Plan C is they drop and they run back into the cab of the fire truck.

Plan C's a good one. We'll tranquilize him. So they get on the radio and they call into the MedTech and say hey, mix up a tranquilizer. I'm on it. I don't know if the MedTech's ever done a tranquilizer for a leopard before, but he was getting it done. They went to look for a tranquilizer gun, but nobody inside could find one. The guys in the truck were scared to get out of the truck and walk in because they thought the leopard might get them on the way back in.

Finally they found not a tranquilizer gun, but they found a big syringe, one of those big plastic ones with the big needles on it. Now all they needed was a volunteer. [Laughter]. They found one. Amazingly enough, the youngest Airman volunteered. [Laughter].

He came walking out to the fire truck with a syringe, ready for action.

That's when the Chief showed up and went what are you doing? [Laughter].

These are really, really great Airmen. They're really talented. They're really smart. But every now and then common sense takes a vacation from all of us. It certainly did this day.



We've got to be careful about common sense taking a vacation with us as we get into these tighter times.

One of the things that tends to happen to us a lot is we hurry through decisions because there's so much going on and we forget to think about how is this decision going to affect every Airman, not just in my functional area. How is it going to affect our squadrons? I'm here to tell you, folks, you can break every staff in the Air Force and we'll survive. You break a squadron, we might as well go home. We have to make sure we keep that in the back of our minds.

We've got rid of most of our customer service people in the Air Force. You know what's frustrating our Airmen more than anything else? How do they get any questions answered on their travel problems, their travel voucher, their military pay that isn't working right, their assignment when they go through all the voice mails. It's frustrating the heck out of them, those of you who are still serving know that. It's nobody's fault, but we've got to start thinking about this. How do we do this in a way that doesn't drive them crazy? We're already working them to death. We've got them out there wrestling leopards in Africa. Common sense is a big deal right now.

Next slide.

So my view is we go back to basics. That sounds much more dramatic than it really is. To me the basics are pretty simple. Our Air Force has succeeded over time, I believe, because we have always recruited the best people possible, we've always educated them and trained them better than anybody else educates and trains them. And we've always given them the best equipment money can buy. That 'we' is the Department of Defense, the Air Force, the Congress, everybody's been a part of that.

That third part may be at risk. It may be that we can't always get the best equipment money can buy in every case. We may have to get equipment that's just better than anybody else's. But if we do number one and number two properly, we'll be fine. If we don't do number two properly, we will upset all the people we do in the recruiting phase that are number one, and we'll lose them. They are really proud of who they are. They're really proud of what they do. But if they feel like we're not giving them the tools, the training to do it right, they'll walk. If you don't believe me, go ask them. They're not willing to be second rate. I don't blame them.

You guys may remember Senior Airman Jason Cunningham. Air Force Cross winner. He deserves it. He deserves people around him who are the best recruits possible and who are better trained than everybody else.

Next slide.

I'm concerned about readiness. We're focused on readiness in this next POM cycle. The Secretary's been pushing this hard. We have to pay attention to it. Coming from an operational command I'm worried about fleet health, I'm worried about flying hours. Taking flying hours and augmenting training with simulator time is great if you fund the simulator. If you don't, you're kidding yourself. I'm worried about readiness. I don't think we're where we think we are. We'll see. We've asked all the MAJCOM commanders to tell us what they honestly think and to take a hard look at it themselves so it's not just a programming drill. But we're going to have to take a close look at this.



The Secretary's been pounding the table on readiness for '14 and beyond, so we need to give him the information he needs to make the right decisions.

Next slide.

This is a couple of happy guys hanging out waiting for the confirmation hearing. [Laughter].

Back to basics to me also means communication. That means team building. This is Frank Grass, the new Director of the National Guard Bureau. He's just a great officer. He's a great guy.

We've got this thing going with the active duty and the ARC. It's nobody's fault, folks. There are lots of great people on all sides of this discussion. Everybody's trying to do the right thing, there's just different perspectives. We've got to get off where we are now which is a position that's just untenable. The Secretary has given us very clear guidance to work towards some kind of movement forward. We're trying to do that. But we've got to think about the process that got us here. We've got to think about a smarter way, a more innovative way of communicating. We've got to figure out who our key partners are -- on the Hill, in the Pentagon, in the Guard and Reserve, and we've got to make sure we're connected to them in a meaningful way. We have to make it lasting. We can't do it for a week and quit. This is a generational change. You'll hear me talking a lot about this one.

Next slide.

I had a chance to go down and visit the National Guard Association of the U.S. in Reno last week, which was really a fantastic experience for me. Before I went -- actually about two days before -- I was driving by the Air Force Memorial and I looked up at this thing and I kind of started chuckling to myself. I think most of you have been there. I love this place. It's just got a distinguished beauty and a calm to it that's just spectacular. But I was driving by and I looked at those things and I went you know, that looks kind of like the active duty, the Guard and the Reserve. We were there in pretty tight formation, then all of a sudden we just started to do the bomb burst at the top. But I realized that we're still okay. We're still in visible range. We can still see each other pretty clearly. We still know exactly where the other guys are headed.

My dad flew an acrobatic team called the USAFE Acrojets out of Furstendfeldbruck, Germany, back in the mid 1950s flying F-80s. They actually did a bomb burst maneuver a lot like the Thunderbirds do now. But when they first started doing it, they had a problem with the rejoin. So he and a guy named Roger Jellison who was their slot pilot, and my dad flew left wing, sitting around with a beer one night and a couple of pencils and pieces of paper and tried to draw out the rejoin. Just like Bud Wyatt and JJ Jackson are trying to figure out how to draw the rejoin. And the goal was to keep it within visual range of the crowd because if you got away from show center it wasn't a very good show; to do it as quickly and as smoothly as possible. They figured it out. We will too. You can trust me on this one.

Next slide.

We have to because our Airmen deserve it.



Seven hundred thousand Airmen in our Air Force. That's uniformed, civilian, active, Guard, Reserve, I don't see the lines very clearly, guys. Seven hundred thousand almost in our Air Force. That's a phenomenal fighting force. It's a proud group of people.

Dave used to be one of them. When I was a squadron commander in the first Gulf War Dave was one of my production superintendents. He ran the flight line at night. He had another guy named Rick McMichael running it in the day time. Rick was a Chief Master Sergeant, retired now. He was going to be a Chief Master Sergeant from the day I met him, there was no question. Dave, probably not. He really didn't have a political fiber in his body. But if you wanted airplanes fixed and loaded and ready to launch on time you wanted him running your flight line. I was lucky to have him.

About the second week of the war I guess I showed up at my airplane and Dave was standing there like he was every morning in the dark. He said boss, they're all ready to go. I said thanks Dave, they always are. That was kind of a speech for Dave, he didn't talk much. Except to his Airmen.

We were standing there, he had a new flag, little flag like the one in the picture here on the antenna of his truck. I said, Hey, Dave, listen, we're going to go bomb the nuclear power plant south of Baghdad today. Do you want me to take your flag with me? Dave looked like I hit him and he said, you'd do that for me? Yeah, Dave. I'm a hell of a guy. [Laughter].

So I took the flag and put it in my pocket and I didn't think about it again. I flew the mission and came back. I landed and Campy came up. Tech Sergeant Manny Via was my crew chief at the time. Manny came up the ladder and I told him how the baby was doing. He went down the ladder. I followed him down. There's Dave. I started telling Dave about our incredible valiant efforts in the battle space. Here we were dodging surface-to-air missiles. We were magnificent. I give him the whole story. I was getting kind of a 'duh' look from him. Finally said, oh, the flag. Then I really got the 'duh' look from him. So I pulled the flag out of my pocket and I handed it back to him. Dave held his hands out, he took the flag, and he turned and he walked back to his truck. He didn't say a word. I remember thinking that was kind of strange. But cool.

I didn't think about it again. Got back from the war. After a while I started hearing about Dave and the flag. He had it matted and framed. Put a little plaque on it. The plaque says, "Flag carried on bombing mission over Baghdad, Iraq," and it had the date, the tail number of the aircraft and my name as the pilot. It was up in his office for a while, then he took it home. I found out he only had two things up on the wall in his apartment. Right inside the door he had a Coors Light beer bottle opener hanging on a nail, right by the light switch. Right over the couch in the middle of the living room he had that. This was his focus. I thought that's a little strange. But cool.

When I left the squadron we had one of those parties where they say nice things and then they get you out of the way for the new good commander coming in. At the end of the night the MC said does anybody else have anything to add? There was a voice from the back of the room that kind of said yeah. Everybody turned around because it was McGarr. He never said anything.

So he got up and he walked up the side of the room and he came to me carrying a rolled up brown paper bag out of the commissary, and he gave me a deeply moving little speech. He said, "Here." [Laughter].



I unrolled the bag. It made me a little nervous about putting my hand in there and I reached in and I pull out this. On the back in pencil it says, “With my deepest respect, David McGarr, Master Sergeant, United States Air Force.”

This is the best award I’ll ever receive. Nothing comes close.

About three and a half, four years ago now Dave died of pancreatic cancer. Before he died I had a chance to talk to him on the phone. He was in Utah. It was a horrible conversation because I didn’t know what to say and he never said anything. So he grunted a couple of times, and I’m getting ready to hang up, and right at the end he says, “Hey boss, do you remember that flag?” “Yeah, Dave.” “Do you still have that?” “Yeah, Dave. I’ve still got it.”

The last thing he said to me was, “Take care of that for me, would you?” You bet your ass, Dave. And before I’m done I’m going to tell the whole Air Force about it. Maybe twice. Because I want all of you to know about this flag and the guy it represents to me.

I see his courage in the red stripes and his integrity in the white, and his loyalty in the blue. And every star is some young Airman he taught how to do the job right, task by task, job by job, day by day. Because that’s how he’d roll.

His legacy will affect our Air Force for the next 100 years. He’s the proudest Airman I’ve ever met, except for my dad and me. I’m proud because of him.

We have thousands and thousands and thousands and thousands of Daves in our Air Force. They deserve our best effort. Our collective best effort to make this service great. The Secretary and I need help to do that. I assure you, we’ll do our part.

Next slide.

Can I ask you to do me a favor? Is there anybody in here who flew in World War II or Korea? Or served in the United States Air Force in World War II or Korea? If so, would you stand and remain standing for a minute?

Thank you, sir. These are the folks who taught us how to fly, fight and win.

Anybody from the Vietnam conflict? Sir, remain standing if you wouldn’t mind. Anybody who fought and flew in Vietnam or served in the United States Air Force in the Vietnam era.

How about anybody who’s retired from the United States Air Force?

How about family members of United States Air Force members?

How about active duty members of our Air Force or civilian members of our Air Force or Guard or Reserve members?

Ladies and Gentlemen, my name is Mark Welsh. I’m an Airman just like you and I’m proud to stand here with you. Airpower, it’s good for what ails you.



Thank you.

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