

**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
PRESENTATION TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY CONSTRUCTION  
AND VETERANS AFFAIRS  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**SUBJECT: QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE MILITARY**

**STATEMENT OF: CMSAF RODNEY J. MCKINLEY  
CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT OF THE AIR FORCE**

**February 4, 2009**

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED  
BY THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**



# BIOGRAPHY



## UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

### CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT OF THE AIR FORCE RODNEY J. MCKINLEY

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Rodney J. McKinley represents the highest enlisted level of leadership, and as such, provides direction for the enlisted corps and represents their interests, as appropriate, to the American public, and to those in all levels of government. He serves as the personal adviser to the Chief of Staff and the Secretary of the Air Force on all issues regarding the welfare, readiness, morale, and proper utilization and progress of the enlisted force. Chief McKinley is the 15th chief master sergeant appointed to the highest noncommissioned officer position.



Chief McKinley grew up in Mount Orab, Ohio. He originally entered the Air Force in 1974, took a break in service in 1977, and re-entered the Air Force in 1982. His background includes various duties in medical and aircraft maintenance, and as a first sergeant and command chief master sergeant at wing, numbered air force and major command levels. His assignments include bases in North Carolina, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Virginia, Alaska and Hawaii. The chief also served overseas in the Philippines, Italy and Germany, and deployed to Southwest Asia in support of operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. Before assuming his current position, he served as Command Chief Master Sergeant, Pacific Air Forces, Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii. He was appointed to the position of Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force on June 30, 2006.

#### EDUCATION

- 1984 Tactical Air Command NCO Leadership School, Myrtle Beach AFB, S.C.
- 1986 Associate of Arts degree, Saint Leo College, Fla.
- 1986 Associate degree in aircraft maintenance technology, Community College of the Air Force
- 1986 Bachelor's degree in human resource management, Saint Leo College, Fla.
- 1987 Tactical Air Command NCO Academy, Tyndall AFB, Fla.
- 1991 U.S. Air Force First Sergeant Academy, Keesler AFB, Miss.
- 1997 U.S. Air Force Senior NCO Academy, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.
- 1998 Associate degree in personnel management, Community College of the Air Force
- 1999 Master's degree in human relations, University of Oklahoma
- 2004 USAF Senior Leadership Course, Center for Creative Leadership, San Diego, Calif.
- 2004 USAF Senior Leadership Course, Gettysburg College, Pa.
- 2006 Keystone, U.S. Joint Forces Command, Suffolk, Va.
- 2007 Air Force Enterprise Management Seminar, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

#### ASSIGNMENTS

1. July 1974 - August 1974, student, basic military training, Lackland AFB, Texas
2. August 1974 - November 1974, medical service specialist technical training, Sheppard AFB, Texas

3. November 1974 - August 1977, emergency room technician, Seymour Johnson AFB, N.C.
4. August 1977 - April 1982, separated from the Air Force
5. April 1982 - June 1982, aircraft maintenance technology technical training, Sheppard AFB, Texas
6. June 1982 - June 1987, phase dock inspector, maintenance instructor, quality assurance inspector, noncommissioned officer in charge of aircraft weight and balance and functional check flights, 354th Tactical Fighter Wing, Myrtle Beach AFB, S.C.
7. June 1987 - June 1991, dedicated crew chief, quality assurance inspector, noncommissioned officer in charge aircraft weight and balance and functional check flights, chief inspector of quality assurance, 3rd Tactical Fighter Wing, Clark Air Base, Philippines
8. June 1991 - June 1992, First Sergeant, 354th Communications and Services squadrons, Myrtle Beach AFB, S.C.
9. June 1992 - January 1994, First Sergeant, 401st Munitions Support Squadron, Ghedi AB, Italy
10. January 1994 - July 2000, First Sergeant, 3rd Combat Communications Support Squadron, 965th Airborne Air Control Squadron, 552nd Equipment Maintenance Squadron, and 552nd Aircraft Generation Squadron, Tinker AFB, Okla.
11. July 2000 - July 2001, First Sergeant, 723rd Air Mobility Squadron, Ramstein AB, Germany
12. August 2001 - September 2002, Command Chief Master Sergeant, 86th Airlift Wing, Ramstein AB, Germany
13. September 2002 - June 2004, Command Chief Master Sergeant, 1st Fighter Wing, Langley AFB, Va. (February 2003 - June 2003, Command Chief Master Sergeant, 379th Air Expeditionary Wing, Southwest Asia)
14. June 2004 - March 2005, Command Chief Master Sergeant, 11th Air Force, Elmendorf AFB, Alaska
15. March 2005 - June 2006, Command Chief Master Sergeant, Pacific Air Forces, Hickam AFB, Hawaii
16. June 2006 - present, Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, the Pentagon, Washington, D.C.

#### **MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS**

Legion of Merit

Bronze Star Medal

Meritorious Service Medal with silver and two bronze oak leaf clusters

Air Force Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters

Air Force Achievement Medal

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with "V" device and silver and three bronze oak leaf clusters

#### **OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

1984 John Levitow and Esprit de Corps winner, NCO Leadership School

1985 Maintenance Professional of the Year for Quality Assurance, 354th Tactical Fighter Wing

1990 Maintenance Professional of the Year, 3rd Tactical Fighter Wing

1994 First Sergeant of the Year, 3rd Combat Communications Group

1994 First Sergeant of the Year, 12th Air Force

1996 First Sergeant of the Year, 552nd Air Control Wing

1996 First Sergeant of the Year, Tinker AFB, Okla.

#### **EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION**

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force June 30, 2006

(Current as of January 2008)

## **INTRODUCTION**

Mr Chairman, Mr Wamp, Members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to address issues important to America's Airmen and our United States Air Force. It is an honor and distinct privilege for me to testify here today and represent some of America's finest men and women. We are more than 663,000 strong -- with more than 501,000 uniformed Airmen and nearly 162,000 Air Force civilians. I assure you, your Airmen take tremendous pride in serving this great Nation and America can continue to take equally great pride in the work of their Air Force. Airmen prove this daily in the skies, in space, in cyberspace, on the ground, and anywhere freedom and the American way of life are threatened.

The incredible support of this Committee and the Congress has been vital to our successes over the past year. We appreciate greatly the expansion of servicemember and veteran's pay, health care and retirement benefits, and the visits by House members to our servicemembers in the field and to our wounded warriors in health care facilities.

Our Airmen are tremendously dedicated to our Nation and our Air Force. They make many sacrifices, both personal and professional. We owe it to them and their families that they remain safe, healthy, well compensated, and are well educated. We must also ensure that they are properly organized, trained, and equipped to face the threats and challenges ahead. It's my honor and distinct privilege to share with you today some of our future initiatives; initiatives that will continue to ensure America has the Air Force it needs and it deserves.

## **REINVIGORATE THE NUCLEAR ENTERPRISE**

Your United States Air Force has experienced challenges in 2008. We recognized we lost focus in our nuclear enterprise over a period of years, but I can tell you today we have since regained the proper attention on all of our assigned missions. The focused leadership of the Secretary of the Air Force, the Honorable Michael B. Donley, and the Air Force Chief of Staff, General Norton A. Schwartz, have forged a new path and our future is very bright. These leaders are working hard to provide continued stability and direction for the Air Force.

We are getting back to the basics and the nuclear enterprise is priority one. To ensure our success in this area, we've taken a number of actionable steps, including the recent provisional stand-up of Air Force Global Strike Command, a major command that will combine and enhance the stewardship of our nuclear-capable bomber and Intercontinental Ballistic Missile missions. By organizing in this manner, we position the enterprise for strict accountability and compliance, and have strengthened the responsibility and decision-making chain.

Our Air Force leadership and Airmen will continue to tackle future challenges. In this effort we know every Airman must do their part. Our core values – Integrity First, Service before Self, and Excellence in all We Do – are now and will continue to be the foundation of all our actions. We will ensure discipline and adhere to standards irrespective if our Air Force specialty is in health care, force protection, food preparation, aircraft maintenance, aircrew, or any other job set before us. Our Nation depends on each and every one of our professionals to perform with excellence 24/7. Through superior performance and reliability, we will accomplish our missions. We are the world's greatest Air Force and will continue to be so.

### **AIRMEN IN THE JOINT AND COALITION FIGHT**

More than 208,000 Total Force Airmen are engaged in and supporting Global War on Terror operations daily and 32,000 are engaged in additional operations. Another 127,766 provide strategic mobility, space and missile capabilities, command and control, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance to joint warfighters. In all, 41 percent of our Active-Duty Force is fulfilling joint field commander requirements everyday.

Your Air Force contributes greatly to joint and coalition force combat capabilities. On any given day, over 34,000 Total Force Airmen are deployed to over 150 locations worldwide. More than 29,000 Airmen are deployed in the U. S. Central Command Area of Responsibility, with nearly 4,100 filling joint expeditionary taskings. In these missions, Airmen stand shoulder-to-shoulder with their fellow Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines in roles such as detainee operations, convoy operations and protection, explosive ordnance disposal, police training teams, military transition teams, civil engineering, security, communications, fuels, medical services, logistics,

intelligence, and base operating support as a member of the joint team, serving in whatever way called upon to accomplish the mission for America. Together with our Sister Services, we are training and augmenting both Iraqi and Afghan security forces, rebuilding critical infrastructure, and providing medical services to these war-torn countries.

Our Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) platforms are directly supporting joint and coalition warfighters on the ground. Air Force Predators, Reapers and Global Hawk UAS aircraft are finding, fixing, tracking, and attacking our enemies. The intelligence, reconnaissance, and surveillance capabilities these systems provide are key to battlefield operations. In our Predator operations alone, we have increased from 12 combat air patrols in 2007 to 31 today to meet combatant commander requirements. By increasing our UAS inventory, initiating new training programs to increase the number of UAS operators and growing the number of combat air patrols to 50 by fiscal year 2011, we are ensuring the long range effectiveness of these systems in preserving and protecting joint and coalition interests around the globe.

Your Air Force also provides a unique and vital capability to the joint fight – aeromedical evacuation. Since 2001, this medical transportation system treated and transferred more than 55,000 patients from the battlefield to U.S. medical facilities. Aeromedical evacuations, coupled with en route care, have achieved a died-of-wounds rate of less than 10 percent, the best survival rate in the history of warfare.

### **END STRENGTH**

To assist us in meeting joint and coalition fight mission requirements, as well as homeland defense and on-going global operations in air, space, and cyberspace, we are increasing Air Force end strength to 332,700. This move allows us to put more Airmen back into stressed career fields like aircraft maintenance and security forces, while meeting the manpower needs of the nuclear enterprise and our emerging missions in cyberspace and with United States African Command.

## **EMERGING MISSIONS**

Security of cyberspace is of grave importance not only to our Air Force, but also to our Nation. We fully realize ensuring the security of the Nation's net-centric information architecture requires more than Department of Defense emphasis; we are committed to working transparently with our interagency partners.

To improve Air Force efforts, we plan to stand-up the 24th Air Force under Air Force Space Command. Organizing the cyberspace mission under Space Command makes sense because of the synergies between the space domain and cyberspace. A physical location for the cyberspace numbered Air Force has not been determined, but we are pressing forward with all cyberspace initiatives, such as command and control, resourcing and training of cyberspace warriors. These actions and partnerships will enable us to conduct the full range of military operations throughout cyberspace.

The Air Force is also dedicated to the success of U.S. Africa Command and its mission. Through our new numbered Air Force, 17th Air Force, we are preparing to support the airlift requirements of the new command, as well as humanitarian assistance, security cooperation, improved air safety and security, and assisting our African partners with their efforts in these areas. Again, your support of America's Airmen as we find new and innovative ways of accomplishing this mission is key.

## **INNOVATION**

Today's Airmen and Air Force civilians, are striving to make our Air Force even better. Through an initiative called Air Force Smart Operations for the 21st Century (AFSO21), the Secretary has placed us on a path to even higher levels of excellence in mission performance in support of national security across the globe. Our goal is nothing less than the Air Force-wide delivery of ever-improving warfighting capabilities and resource productivity fully aligned and consistent with Department of Defense strategic priorities.

Just as the Air Force presence is a global one, so are the many examples of AFSO21 efforts. In Germany, a Kaiserslautern Military Community team set out to reduce vehicle

registration customer wait times from 38 minutes to 9 minutes – and saved 23,200 hours for 48,000 customers per year. In another area, AFSO21 analysis is leading to changes in the First Term Airmen’s Course. By standardizing the curriculum across the Air Force for the approximately 30,000 Airmen attending this training per year, we’ve turned 1.4 million hours back to commanders and supervisors – getting our work done with fewer existing resources. Our Secretary and Chief of Staff have called on Airmen to have a renewed sense of stewardship in all they do, and these efforts illustrate how Airmen are again answering the call.

### **RECRUITING AND RETENTION**

We are working hard to maintain our force capabilities. By shaping our force to mission requirements we will have the right number of Airmen with the right skills. We are firmly committed to securing the best equipment, training and education for our Airmen.

Our Total Force Airmen are the most valuable assets we have in fighting the Global War on Terror and ensuring air, space, and cyberspace dominance. Thus, we continue to recruit, train, equip, and retain the Airmen of tomorrow. As our Airmen become more expeditionary, more capable, and lethal, so does our Air Force.

Our goal continues to be to recruit the best and brightest our Nation has to offer and we are succeeding. Despite recruiting challenges such as increases in the high school drop-out rate, disqualification factors and an increasingly obese youth population, we still recruit some of the most talented young men and women in America. Just this year, we had a recruit take on the challenge of dropping 160 pounds to join the Air Force – a true illustration of the desirability of an Air Force career. These are highly-qualified recruits, with 98.9 percent earning a high school degree and most with some college completed. We are on track to meet recruiting goals for our Active Duty, Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard. Currently in this fiscal year, 9,935 of America’s young men and women destined for Air Force duty have completed or currently attend Air Force Basic Military Training. Additionally, there are 8,566 recruits “contracted” to attend Air Force Basic Military Training.

In fiscal year 2008, overall active duty Air Force retention rates finished below annual goals, while Guard and Reserve officer and enlisted rates met or exceeded all aggregate retention goals. Although overall active duty retention is trending slightly upward for fiscal year 2009, some of our critical and stressed specialties continue to experience significant shortfalls.

We continue to use reenlistment bonuses and quality of life initiatives to resolve these shortages. We appreciate continued Congressional support for these incentive efforts.

### **DEVELOPING AIRMEN**

We continue to develop our Airmen. Our expeditionary Air Force needs all their diverse cultural, language, political, and technical skills available to *fly, fight* and *win* the current war, while also preparing for future conflicts and missions. Our overall goal is to continue providing combat-ready, expeditionary forces to combatant commanders now and in the future.

The first step for the Air Force is to transform each and every Airman to be relevant in light of the changing security environment and be ready to deploy and engage with expeditionary combat skills. We are strengthening all levels of training and education to sharpen our expeditionary skills.

To this end, we extended enlisted Basic Military Training from 6.5 weeks to 8.5 weeks. The added time is being used to enhance the expeditionary capabilities of our new Airmen and increase their warrior skills. A whole new portion was added, the Basic Expeditionary Skills Training course, which involves four days in a simulated deployed area. The first extended basic training class graduated January 2, 2009, and by all accounts is a great success.

### **QUALITY OF SERVICE**

Air Force leaders know the quality of service we provide for our Airmen and their families is a distinct determining factor in how long many of our warriors will serve. In the tough recruiting and retention environment we find ourselves, it is imperative we maintain high standards in quality of service areas and guard against any erosion of benefits.

Military life presents unique challenges. Our Airmen trust the Air Force is doing everything possible to care for their families while they are away on expeditionary deployments,

temporary duty absences away from home station, and extended duty hours to meet our current high operations tempo.

Whether working on the installation or deployed fighting the Global War on Terror, our Airmen deserve buildings and facilities of a high standard commensurate with the outstanding service they provide their country. Since 2000, with the very generous support of the Congress, the Air Force funded 159 military construction projects for child development centers, fitness centers, and dormitories totaling \$3 billion.

We thank this Committee and the Congress for their historical support of funding for quality of life initiatives. Steady gains in these areas over the years have enabled us to retain skilled Airmen and develop them into the specialists and leaders we need for the future.

### **ASSISTANCE TO SEVERELY INJURED SERVICEMEMBERS**

We are constantly expanding the boundaries of caring for our wounded warriors. After all, these brave men and women stood up in service to their country, and now we have a responsibility to stand up and ensure they get the care they deserve. Advancements in medical care now save more lives than in past wars, yet the extent of some of the injuries is grievous. These warriors wonder about their future and what it holds for them and their families. This is where the Air Force Warrior and Survivor Care Program steps in. This program follows our Airmen and their families through treatment, recovery, and if needed, into the post-separation period. For Airmen who move to civilian status, the program continues for as long as the families needs, and assists with extended transition assistance, employment applications, civilian job searches, financial planning and assistance, relocation and integration back into civilian communities.

To further assist our wounded warriors return to the civilian workforce, our top leaders recently reaffirmed our Air Force commitment to Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses. These veterans bring an understanding of our operations and missions to their support of our operations. It is important we leverage their capabilities in meeting the Air Force mission and priorities. Our Small Business Program teams at Headquarters Air Force, major

commands and wings are working aggressively with local requirements officials to advance the opportunities for these Service-disabled veterans to continue their service to our Nation.

Our Air Force will continue to work with our joint partners, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Military Severely Injured Center, to make sure we are doing everything possible to care for these heroes and their families – it is our solemn obligation.

### **POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS (PTS) AND TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY (TBI)**

The Air Force continues to maintain a vigilant and proactive posture to mitigate the physical and psychological effects of deployments, especially with respect to PTS and TBI. Airmen learn about PTS, TBI, and other deployment-related health issues via Landing Gear, an education program used before, during and after deployments. Airmen are screened for TBI, PTS, and other mental health issues at the end of a deployment and 90 to 180 days after returning from deployment. Ready access to high-quality treatment for PTS has been enhanced through the hiring of additional mental health providers and ongoing intensive training in PTS treatment techniques.

### **SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION**

The Air Force is committed to eliminating sexual assault in the Air Force and providing a safe environment for all Airmen. Our Air Force Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program maintains a full-time sexual assault prevention and response capability at all main installations and at primary locations in the deployed areas of operations. The Air Force program continues to mature in providing services to victims of sexual assault, and is progressively shifting to a prevention-based approach, promoting a culture of Airmen watching out for other Airmen.

The Air Force has invested heavily in bystander intervention training modules that provide specific skills for each Airman to react appropriately in situations which may potentially lead to sexual assaults. We have zero tolerance for sexual assault and we will take all actions necessary to prevent the occurrence of sexual assaults, while taking aggressive action against perpetrators of these crimes.

## **CHILD CARE**

Child care continues to be important to our Airmen and their families. Our Airmen work long hours, holidays, and weekends – and our child care programs are challenged to accommodate a variety of schedules in a variety of locations across the country and overseas. Our military families are varied as well with military married to military, single-parent families, and military married to civilians. With the current economic situation, many spouses of military members have to work to supplement the family income. We assist these Airmen and their families by providing child care for the longer hours, holidays, and weekends they work through the Air Force Family Child Care Program at no additional cost. Quality child care facilities are a key component in assuring Airmen their family is being cared for while they defend our country. Since 2000, the Air Force has funded 22 child development center military construction projects worth \$163 million.

Our child care programs also include Reservists and Air National Guardsmen by providing child care during scheduled drill weekends. So while we face funding challenges in meeting every child care requirement we are striving to provide quality child care options to all our Airmen.

## **AIRMEN EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES**

Today's Airmen are smart, well-trained, and efficient – they are the most educated enlisted force in the world. More than 269,940 Airmen have earned a fully accredited Associate Degree, corresponding to their career field, through the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF).

Currently, 71 percent of our enlisted Airmen have one to three years of college, 18 percent have Associate Degrees and 5 percent have a Bachelor's Degree. When you look at our senior noncommissioned officers, 51 percent have an Associate Degree, 18 percent have Bachelor's Degree and 4 percent have a Master's Degree.

We are working to make it easier for our deployed Airmen to continue their education. In March, we are scheduled to roll out the General Education Mobile program. This program will

offer the five general education courses required for a CCAF degree through distance learning courses. This program is intended to attract those students who are struggling to get their general education credits filled because of numerous reasons, primarily the Air Force's high operations tempo. Distance learning will allow some of our more heavily deployed career fields to continue their education while deployed. In many cases, the students must be at home station to finish these classes as they are not offered through distance learning at some deployed locations.

Many of our Airmen are also leveraging their CCAF credits through the new Associate to Baccalaureate Cooperative Program. This program has grown since last year from 24 to 35 civilian higher-education institutions and offers 150 Bachelor's Degree programs. These institutions take all of an Airman's CCAF credits and apply them toward a Bachelor's Degree.

Our Airmen are greatly interested in education and are also concerned about basic and higher-education opportunities for their families as well.

### **SCHOOL TRANSITIONS FOR MILITARY CHILDREN**

Military life, frequent moves and extended separation during deployments present a host of challenges for our families. Nearly half of all servicemembers are married and have children. Consequently, military families often weigh assignment decisions based on the quality of education from the local school systems for their children.

A number of states, working with the Department of Defense, are establishing an interstate compact to address solutions on the state, local, and school district levels. These compacts are working to solve issues dealing with class placement, records transfer, graduation requirements, immunizations, exit testing and allowing late entry to extra-curricular activities and sports teams. We are interested in seeing more States sign on to this interstate compact so children in military families are not penalized in school for their families' service to the Nation.

### **IN-STATE TUITION**

With the passage last February of Federal legislation mandating all States offer in-state tuition to the children of servicemembers, no matter where the servicemember is stationed, the

U.S. House of Representatives has helped us move down the path toward extending educational opportunities to our college-age children. Currently, 49 States offer in-state tuition to dependents when a servicemember is assigned within that State. Thirty-six States offer in-state tuition to military dependents, no matter where the servicemember is stationed -- up from 33 States in 2008. We look forward to seeing all the States meet the legislation's goal of offering the full in-state tuition benefits to all dependents by July.

### **SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT**

Military families often require two incomes to sustain their households, similar to American families as a whole. Frequent moves often inhibit military spouses' ability to start and sustain a career. Differing licensing requirements can limit advancement or deter re-entry into the workforce at a new location. Because of these factors, military spouses frequently suffer long periods of unemployment and, therefore, loss of income.

The Department of Defense has identified where there are licensing barriers and is developing policy recommendations for licensing/credentialing requirements across states. The Department of Defense is promoting portable careers in fields like information technology, health services, and financial services to military spouses and is working with many States to develop policies that promote timely transfer of employment, eliminate cross-state certification barriers, and adopt high quality alternative certifications.

### **UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION**

I believe spousal income is often a critical supplement to a military family and toward helping them maintain a reasonable standard of living. As a Nation, we should be in the business of strengthening our military families – not forcing separations. When States support unemployment compensation, they also allow spouses to take reasonable time to find suitable employment at the new location and give them the time and resources necessary to obtain any new licensing or credential requirements. Currently, 24 States provide unemployment compensation to spouses who leave because of a military move, and we are looking forward to the day when all States properly compensate military spouses.

## **HOUSING**

The Air Force is committed to ensuring our Airmen and their families have quality housing in which to live and raise families. We believe our people deserve well-built and well-maintained housing. Through military construction and housing privatization, we are providing quality homes for our families. We will continue to privatize housing at continental U.S. bases, including Alaska, Hawaii and Guam. We will also renovate overseas housing as its inventory ages and requires sustainment and modernization.

Investment in dormitories continues to provide superior housing to our unaccompanied Airmen. In addition to repairing structural inadequacies in dormitories, our focus remains on ensuring we provide a structured environment where commanders and first sergeants serve as mentors in the care and development of our first-class Airmen. The dormitories are not just a place to sleep; they are a place for young Airmen to adjust to military life. We are also modernizing inadequate technical training dormitories that house enlisted Airmen.

## **MILITARY CONSTRUCTION (MILCON)**

For the past several years, the Air Force has taken risk in infrastructure in order to invest in modernization efforts. Though we intend to continue modernizing our force, we also expect to support our Airmen by renovating and replacing aging facilities in the coming years. We have prioritized our program to cover our most critical MILCON requirements. Again, the continued support of this Committee and the Congress has been vital to the success of these MILCON programs and is much appreciated.

## **JOINT BASING**

Joint basing is an opportunity to improve efficiency in common delivery of installation support services. It allows consideration of best business practices to ensure we enhance joint war-fighting capabilities while eliminating unnecessary duplication. These actions will save scarce funds and result in more efficient installations from which all Services will project combat power for our Nation.

To work this end, the Air Force has worked with our Sister Services to establish the highest common output level standards for installation support functions. By implementing these standards at each joint base, our Airmen, Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, their families, and Department of Defense civilians receive the efficient, consistent and high quality services they deserve. In addition, joint base organizations will be designed to provide focused installation support to mission commanders. This allows us to build closer relationships and forge stronger Service ties making joint bases successful and desirable assignments. We will not only train as we fight, we will live as we fight.

### **SUMMARY**

Mr Chairman, I am proud to be an American Airmen. My pride comes from the efforts, actions, and contributions of our Airmen around the world. The majority of our Airmen serving today joined our Air Force after the tragic events of September 11, 2001 and they have answered our Nation's call. They are incredible ambassadors for our way of life and our Nation.

I am also very proud of our Air Force families. These families make many sacrifices for our Nation. Our spouses and children watch as their loved ones are sent into harms way, yet they dry their eyes and pick up the extra work load on the home front. These families miss their Airman on birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, little league baseball games, and even simply time around a bowl of popcorn and a movie. Through all this, our families go above and beyond to provide the inspiration, comfort, and support needed for our Airmen to complete the mission. And when the day or the deployment is done, it's our Air Force families who welcome their hero home.

We need to continue taking care of these Air Force families because one of the worst situations that can happen for our Airmen is that when they arrive at the end of their Air Force career, their family is no longer beside them. I have been present at too many retirements where this is the case. We as a Nation need to do everything we can to care for the families who care for our Airmen.

Thank you all again for your continued support of our Airmen and the United States Air Force.