



THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE  
CHIEF OF STAFF, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON DC



Letter to Airmen: Advanced Education

To: All United States Air Force Officers

Since our birth as an Air Force in 1947, we have continually adapted and evolved - providing our Nation with the most lethal and capable force possible. The challenges of today and tomorrow demand we continue to improve. We are transforming our processes, streamlining our organizations, recapitalizing our systems and improving the capabilities of our people. These changes will ensure success in defending our Nation and her global interests.


A key component of our evolution is the more deliberate development of our most important weapon system – our Airmen. In a smaller, leaner and more expeditionary-focused Air Force, it is essential that our Airmen have the knowledge and competency to accomplish our mission. As we continue to fight this Global War on Terror, we will be conducting operations in both familiar and unfamiliar places, with both old and new friends. To succeed, our expeditionary Air Force will need all the cultural, political, and technical skills available.


One of the most effective ways to develop this knowledge is through advanced education. However, we have all seen how this intent can be misunderstood. Over time, earning a post-graduate degree deteriorated into a method to increase the likelihood of promotion. People used their education benefits and precious free time to pursue degrees that may or may not have been relevant to their Air Force duties. So, to discourage such activity, information regarding advanced degrees was masked from central promotion boards. This had two effects. As intended, people stopped "square filling". Unfortunately, many others stopped pursuing degrees that would have benefited themselves and the Air Force. And, we made it impossible for boards to see all that you have accomplished and your full potential.

Both of us want to encourage Airmen, not discourage them, from pursuing advanced education. Therefore, we want a change to the officer promotion process that would again provide supervisors, commanders and selection boards information on all academic degrees earned. Beginning with the calendar year 2008 central selection boards, information on all degrees earned by an officer will be available to the board. If you choose to complete an advanced degree, this timetable will give you almost two years to complete a degree before this policy is implemented.

We have the greatest Air and Space force the world has ever known. The challenges we face will demand our utmost determination, and all the intellectual "throw weight" we can muster. This policy will help ensure we are equal to the task. Together we will win the War on Terror and continue our proud heritage of defending this great Republic.



  
Michael W. Wynne  
Secretary of the Air Force

  
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