



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



SECAF/CSAF Letter to Airmen: Personal Financial Management

Air Force Mission success begins with you -- the individual Airman. All Airmen must possess constant professional and personal situational awareness to ensure positive impact on their unit's mission. Although we often see our professional life in a very disciplined way, we sometimes don't realize how our personal well-being affects our job performance. Being on solid financial footing is one way you can positively affect your life.

For example, hurricane season is now upon us. We urge you, particularly if you live in an area prone to nature's fury, to examine how prepared you are to protect your family financially. One of the lessons learned from the past year's natural disasters is that *after* the disaster is not the time to assess your insurance needs. Too many of our teammates, including retirees, were caught unprepared and now are bearing an avoidable financial burden.


All Air Force members, whether living on base or off, should consider their family's needs for adequate personal property (renter's) insurance. Make a detailed inventory of your personal property -- even a simple videotaping could help. If you are a homeowner, consider purchasing flood insurance. Finally, don't forget *comprehensive* coverage for your cars (liability insurance won't pay for a storm-damaged vehicle). Remember the adage, "chance favors the prepared."

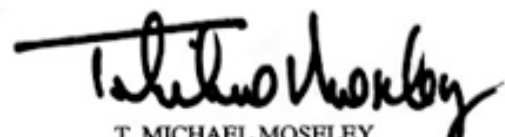
Once you have protected your family through insurance, turn your attention to other facets of personal financial management. Air Force Family Support Centers possess a wealth of information to educate you on the many tools available to help you manage debt, begin saving, protect against identity theft and secure your family's future. Your local JAG office can help with consumer and debt problems as well. Moreover, every Air Force base offers beginner financial classes to help you setup a realistic household budget, live within your means, and learn the basics of taxes and investing. Though it seems like a long way off, investing today will help you maximize the cumulative effects of a disciplined savings plan for your family.

As John Wayne once said, "The fastest way to double your money is to fold it over one time. Then put it where it will grow." Along those lines, the Air Force offers the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) which allows your money to grow tax-deferred while being automatically deducted from your pay through allotments -- this is an easy way to invest your money systematically.

We want confident and proud Airmen. When your personal life is in order, you are a better warfighter for the Joint Team. Gaining and retaining control of your family's personal finances will provide you the right situational awareness to truly focus on the professional side of your life. If you want to be secure tomorrow, the time to start acting is today!




Michael W. Wynne
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