



CURTIS E. LEMAY CENTER

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WARFIGHTING AND THE PROFESSION OF ARMS

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Since the Nation's birth, it has been the constitutional duty of our military to ensure national survival, defend lives and property, and promote vital interests at home and abroad. The enduring responsibility of the United States Air Force is to provide strategic deterrence for the Nation and fly, fight and win as an integral part of the Joint Team. Together with our brothers and sisters in arms, we underwrite the national strategy of defending the Homeland and assuring allies, while dissuading, deterring and defeating enemies.

**—General Norton A. Schwartz,
CSAF, 2008**

The central focus of the profession of arms is warfighting. As [Airmen](#), we are given a special responsibility to ensure the most effective Air Force the world has ever seen flies and fights the right way. Airmen have inherited an Air Force forged through the ingenuity, courage, and strength of Airmen who preceded them. An Airman should strive to continue to provide the nation and the next generation of Airmen an equally dominant Air Force. Doing so requires Airmen to fully understand the profession of arms they have chosen, the commitment each Airman made by taking an [oath](#), and the acceptance to abide by the Air Force [core values](#). It is a mindset designed to build confidence and commitment necessary to shape the professional in each of us, and how we work as a team to accomplish the mission. This mindset is shaped through the expeditionary nature of the Service, especially in support of combat, humanitarian response, and disaster relief operations and the lessons learned from those operations. The [Airman's Creed](#) is a condensation of this mindset.¹ Fundamental to this mindset is the Code of Conduct for members of the Armed Forces of the United States, applicable to the nation's uniformed Airmen as warfighters, fighting in the Service which guards our country and our way of life. It grounds every American warfighter with an established standard of conduct to

¹ For insight into the reasoning behind the Airman's Creed, see the CSAF Vector, *Airman Warriors*, April 2007.

support him or her at all times, especially those times of greatest stress and duress. The Code of Conduct is presented at [Appendix B](#).

Airmen share a long history of service, honor, and sacrifice forged in times of peace and war. From the earliest days of airpower to the heights of space to the boundless realms of cyberspace, Airmen have built an extraordinary heritage that forms the foundation of the Service's perspective. Even though we are technology focused, we value quality over quantity. We embrace change and, through transformation and innovation, we ensure a viable Air Force for the future.

Even something as straightforward as the Air Force symbol has evolved over time from the days of General Hap Arnold to the symbol we have today. It represents a sweep through our history, from a rich heritage to the horizons of the future. Through the current Air Force symbol, Airmen continue to honor the heritage of our past and build the promise of a brighter future.

Heritage to Horizon: The Air Force Symbol

Today's symbol retains the core elements of our Air Corps heritage—the Hap Arnold wings and star with circle—yet modernizes it to reflect the Air Force of today and tomorrow. The symbol has two main parts: The upper half, the stylized wings represent the stripes of our strength—the enlisted men and women of our force. They are drawn with great angularity to emphasize our swiftness and power. The lower half has a sphere, a star, and three diamonds. The sphere within the star represents the globe. It reminds each of us of our obligation to secure our nation's freedom with global vigilance, global reach, and global power. The globe also reminds us of our challenge as an expeditionary force to respond rapidly to crises and to provide decisive airpower worldwide.



The area surrounding the sphere takes the shape of a star. The star has many meanings. Its five points represent the primary components of the Total Force and family—our regular, Guard, Reserve, civilians, and retirees. The star symbolizes space as the high ground of our nation's air and space force, and as a rallying symbol in all our wars; it represents the officer corps, which is central to our combat leadership. The star is framed with three diamonds that represent the Air Force core values. Combined, the Air Force symbol presents two powerful images—at once it is an eagle (the emblem of our nation) and a medal, representing valor in service to our nation.

Airmen, firmly grounded in the core values and ingrained with a focus on the profession of arms, react to the stresses of combat, the pressures of deployed operations, and the demands of daily activities at home station with **valor**, **courage**, and **sacrifice**. While these characteristics are within each one of us, they usually come to the surface in

times of great difficulty or unforeseen circumstances. Those times can happen in the workplace, on the way home from work, during a humanitarian operation, or on the battlefield. While many acts go unseen, other examples helped shape the finest traditions of the Air Force and its history. They are something not only to recognize as part of our history, but also to showcase that all Airmen may be called upon to perform above and beyond in the profession of arms.

Valor



Quotations from the Air Force Memorial in Washington, DC

Saving the lives of your fellow Airmen is the most extraordinary kind of heroism that I know.

—General Curtis E. LeMay, 5th CSAF

When I think of the enlisted force, I see dedication, determination, loyalty and valor.

—Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Paul W. Airey, First Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force

As I prepare for this...mission, I am a bit homesick.... Mother and Dad, you are very close to me, and I long so to talk to you. America has asked much of our generation, but I'm glad to give her all I have because she has given me so much.

—Sergeant Arnold Rahe, US Army Air Forces, WWII, Killed in Action over France, from a letter to his parents

Valor is the ability to face danger or hardship in a determined and resolute manner. It is commonly known as bravery, fearlessness, fortitude, gallantry, heart, nerve, and many other terms. Valor is the willingness to step outside of one's comfort zone to deal with an unexpected situation. Such situations can happen almost anywhere. Valor exists in places other than on the battlefield; an Airman can exhibit valor when presented with unusual circumstances in the daily routine of life. When acting with valor, one expresses heroic qualities.

Courage

Quotations from the Air Force Memorial in Washington, DC

Courage is rightly esteemed the first of human qualities...because it is the quality which guarantees all others.

—Sir Winston Churchill,
Prime Minister of the United Kingdom during WWII

Courage is doing what you are afraid to do...

—Captain Edward V. “Eddie” Rickenbacker,
Leading American Ace of WWI

It isn't just my brother's country, or my husband's country, it's my country as well. And so the war wasn't just their war, it was my war and I needed to serve in it.

—Major Beatrice Hood Stroup, Women's Army Corps, WWII

Our nation is blessed by the courageous families who give us our courageous Airmen.

—General David C. Jones, 9th CSAF and
9th Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff



Courage is about the ability to face fear, danger, or adversity. Courage primarily comes in two forms—physical and moral. Physical courage encompasses the ability to overcome fears of bodily harm to get the job done or to risk oneself for another, in battle or the course of everyday life. Moral courage is the ability to stand by the core values when confronted with difficult choices. These choices could arise from situations where unacceptable behavior (illegal drug use, sexual harassment, etc.) is condoned or ignored by certain members of an organization. They might also come from situations discovered by accident or because others are boasting of the behavior. Recognizing

the behavior as inconsistent with Air Force standards should lead an Airman to inform superiors even when peer pressure exists or threats are made.

Finally, integrity breeds courage at the times and places when the behavior is most needed. More often than not, courage is shown in acts of bravery on the battlefield as Airmen step up to the challenges presented to them in a combat situation.

Sacrifice



Quotations from the Air Force Memorial in Washington, DC

They know not the day or hour nor the manner of their passing when far from home they were called to join that great band of heroic airmen that went before.

—Inscription from the American Cemetery and Memorial, Cambridge, England

...am going on a raid this afternoon...there is a possibility I won't return...do not worry about me as everyone has to leave this earth one way or another, and this is the way I have selected. If after this terrible war is over, the world emerges a saner place...pogroms and persecutions halted, then, I'm glad I gave my efforts with thousands of others for such a cause.

—Sergeant Carl Goldman, US Army Air Forces, WWII, B-17 Gunner, Killed in Action over Western Europe, from a letter to his parents

Tell them that we gave our todays for their tomorrows.

—Inscription from the Allied Cemetery, North Assam, India

...Our military families serve right alongside those of us in uniform. A special thank you to all the spouses and children and moms and dads out there praying for your loved ones in harm's way – we add our prayers, too, for their safe return.

—General Richard B. Myers, 15th Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

Sacrifice entails a willingness to give up one's life, time, or comfort to meet the needs of others. Personal sacrifice can be seen on a number of levels. Most commonly, one thinks of the heroic actions of uniformed Airmen in combat with the enemy. However, day-to-day deployed installation support activities can also present opportunities to put the needs of fellow Airmen before the wants of an individual dedicated to providing excellence to the warfighter.
