



Letter to Airmen

Honorable Michael W. Wynne
Secretary of the Air Force

Wednesday, October 10, 2007

Modernizing the Air Force - Progress Report

Wow--we had a great celebration across the Air Force to commemorate our 60th year as an independent service. We took the celebration international, honoring all Airmen who have taken to the skies to defend their nations. We also paid homage to our own and our Joint service brethren who gave their lives, not just in service to our country, but to keep America free.

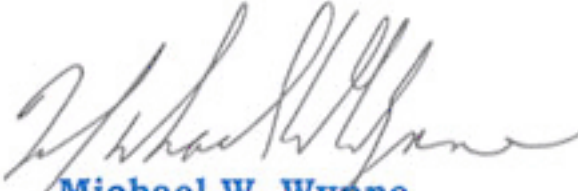
Since President Bush--our nation's first Air Force President--dedicated the Air Force Memorial, it has become iconic in Washington DC as a memorial for the ages. We conducted the first wreath laying ceremony there in October 2006 and another in September 2007 to open the annual Air Force Association convention, which was held in conjunction with the Global Air Chiefs Conference. These observances book-ended our year long celebration and caused us to reflect as we considered the bright future that lies ahead.

A few years ago we set out to recapitalize our aging fleet while maintaining the quality of life for our people and their families, winning the war on terror, and continuing to be the Nation's strategic shield and sword. This continues to be a daunting task as we are pushed and pulled towards a future we cannot always control. We are not shirking from our goals. It is the duty of every Airman to ensure, to the maximum extent possible, that future Airmen are equipped and confident so they can deter, dissuade, and when called upon, defeat enemies of our great nation. We recognize that achieving our goal must be reflected in the national will to have a well equipped Air Force; we must be allowed to acquire and retire our equipment whether in air, space, missiles, or cyberspace.

I want to report back to you that our modernization efforts are bearing fruit, but not at a rate that satisfies me. Despite our advances, the average age of our inventory continues to increase. However, in areas of operational availability and number of aircraft down for maintenance, there has been great progress. In terms of satellite performance and actions on the ground to minimize outage and maximize distribution of situational awareness, there has been great progress. In terms of coming to grips with our responsibilities in cyberspace, with the establishment of a Cyberspace Command, there has been great progress. This all means that you, our Airmen, have responded to the call, set yourselves to the tasks, and set our great Air Force on a path to success.

We are investing across the board to modernize and, though the pace is not what I want as yet, there should be no doubt that your determined efforts will result in a future where commemorations to come will salute our efforts today, much as we saluted the efforts of our predecessors over the course of our 60th year celebration. Well Done!




Michael W. Wynne
Secretary of the Air Force