



Letter to Airmen

Honorable Michael W. Wynne
Secretary of the Air Force

Tuesday, January 09, 2007

Letter to Airmen: Excellence in All We Do

The new year is upon us and promises to be as challenging as the past year, because a nation at war knows no rest. Our Air Force has been at war for more than 16 years, and we must plan for more. The new year gives us all an opportunity to reflect on our achievements over the past year and set new goals for what we want to accomplish as individual Airmen and as an Air Force. One of the beacons to guide you in forming these goals is the Core Value of "Excellence in All We Do," and a mechanism to implement these goals is AFSO21.

Having just returned from the CENTCOM AOR, I know very well the amazing things you are accomplishing every day for our Air Force as you face the rigors of serving in a combat zone. Every Airman's dedication and attention to detail in this demanding and unforgiving environment are what makes our Air Force second to none. And I was also proud to see Airmen everywhere using Air Force Smart Operations to strive for excellence in their deployed workplaces. Seemingly simple suggestions, such as rearranging tool rooms and weapons storage facilities, saved time, money, and even lives, while giving us a more efficient and lethal organization.

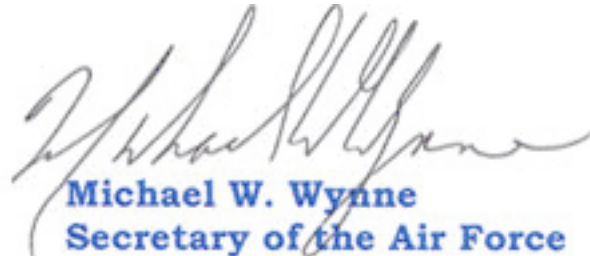
But AFSO21 does not just call for excellence in process improvement or organizational structure. The changes in enabling functions are not ends themselves; rather they must lead to greater combat capability. On my recent trip, I was impressed by the Airmen who added IR sensors to their vehicles to search for IEDs. Other innovations, such as the ROVER laptop, came from the warfighters in the field who sought better air/ground interoperability. From life-saving ideas to increased operational capability, Airmen continue to impress me with their passion for finding a better way.

"Excellence" does not stop with singular achievements, which is why our Core Value has the qualifier of "in All We Do." A culture of excellence must inform and permeate all of our actions. AFSO21 assists us in achieving this excellence by empowering our Airmen to ask how we can do things better. Excellence must be our prevailing attitude.

To those of you who are returning from deployment, I welcome you home and encourage you to share your experiences from the field with your commanders, your fellow Airmen, and the public. Your invaluable combat experience will contribute mightily to our collective pursuit of excellence, as long as we capture your successes in combat and codify them into relevant and realistic training for others.

There is no doubt that we are the greatest Air, Space, and Cyberspace force in the world - no one can do what we do on a daily basis. Yet we still have room for improvement. Remember, our enemies are continually looking for ways to defeat us, so it is critical we build upon the successes of 2006. Make excellence your hallmark for 2007; it's what distinguishes us as Airmen and as an Air Force.




Michael W. Wynne
Secretary of the Air Force