

# United States Air Force

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Presentation

Before the Senate Armed Services  
Subcommittee on Military Personnel

## ***Review of Single Servicemember and Military Family Readiness Programs***

Witness Statement of  
CMSAF James A. Cody  
Chief Master Sergeant of the U.S. Air  
Force

February 14, 2017

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## BIOGRAPHY



### UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

## CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT OF THE AIR FORCE JAMES A. CODY

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James A. Cody represents the highest enlisted level of leadership, and as such, provides direction for the enlisted force and represents their interests, as appropriate, to the American public, and to those in all levels of government. He serves as the personal adviser to the Chief of Staff and the Secretary of the Air Force on all issues regarding the welfare, readiness, morale, and proper utilization and progress of the enlisted force. Chief Cody is the 17th chief master sergeant appointed to the highest noncommissioned officer position.



Chief Cody entered the Air Force in November 1984. He graduated from the air traffic control specialist course at Keesler Air Force Base, Miss., in May 1985. His background includes various duties in air traffic control at the unit and major-command levels. Throughout his career, he has filled a myriad of roles including additional-duty First Sergeant and Directorate Superintendent. His assignments include bases in New Hampshire, California, Virginia and Florida. The chief also served overseas in Germany, South Korea, Turkey, and deployed in support of Operations Southern Watch and Enduring Freedom.

Prior to assuming his current position, he served as the Command Chief Master Sergeant, Air Education and Training Command, Randolph AFB, Texas.

### EDUCATION

- 1987 Noncommissioned Officer Preparatory School, Kapaun AS, Germany
- 1989 Air Force Communications Command Noncommissioned Officer Leadership School, Keesler AFB, Miss.
- 1993 Noncommissioned Officer Academy Correspondence Course
- 1995 USAF Noncommissioned Officer Academy, Kapaun AS, Germany
- 1997 Senior Noncommissioned Officer Academy Correspondence Course
- 1998 Associate of Applied Science degree in airway science, Community College of the Air Force
- 2001 Senior Noncommissioned Officer Academy, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
- 2005 Chief's Leadership Course, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
- 2005 USAF Senior Leadership Course, Center for Creative Leadership, San Diego, Calif.
- 2006 Gettysburg Leadership Experience, Gettysburg, Pa.
- 2008 Senior Enlisted Joint Professional Military Education Correspondence Course
- 2008 AFSO 21 Executive Leadership Course, Disney Institute, Orlando, Fla.
- 2009 Keystone, National Defense University, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C.
- 2010 COMAFFOR Senior Staff Course, USAF Expeditionary Center, N.J.

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2010 USAF Enterprise Management Seminar, Darden School of Business, University of Virginia, Charlottesville

2012 Bachelor of Science degree in business administration, Trident University International, Cypress, Calif.

2013 Professional Manager Certification, Community College of the Air Force

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

1. November 1984 - January 1985, Student, Basic Military Training, Lackland AFB, Texas
2. January 1985 - June 1985, Student, Technical Training School, Keesler AFB, Miss.
3. June 1985 - June 1988, Air Traffic Controller, 1964th Communications Group, Ramstein AB, Germany
4. June 1988 - January 1991, ATC Watch Supervisor, 1916th Communications Squadron, Pease AFB, N.H.
5. January 1991 - May 1993, ATC Watch Supervisor, 30th Operational Support Squadron, Vandenberg AFB, Calif.
6. May 1993 - May 1994, ATC Watch Supervisor, 51st OSS, Osan AB, South Korea
7. June 1994 - June 1996, Superintendent, Airfield Operations Training, 39th OSS, Incirlik AB, Turkey
8. June 1996 - March 2000, Superintendent, Airfield Operations, Readiness/Training, Headquarters Air Combat Command, Langley AFB, Va.
9. March 2000 - May 2003, Chief Tower Controller, additional duty 1st Sgt, 6th OSS, MacDill AFB, Fla. (April 2002 - July 2002, Superintendent, Combat Airspace Management Cell, Joint Task Force-Southwest Asia, Prince Sultan Air Base, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)
10. June 2003 - July 2005, Superintendent, Directorate of Air and Space Operations and ATC Functional Manager, HQ ACC, Langley AFB, Va.
11. July 2005 - August 2007, Command Chief, 15th Expeditionary Mobility Task Force, Travis AFB, Calif.
12. August 2007 - July 2008, Command Chief, 6th Air Mobility Wing, MacDill AFB, Fla.
13. July 2008 - September 2010, Command Chief, 18th Air Force, Scott AFB, Ill.
14. September 2010 - January 2013, Command Chief, Headquarters Air Education and Training Command, Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas
15. January 2013 - present, Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, the Pentagon, Washington, D.C.

## **MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS**

Legion of Merit

Meritorious Service Medal with seven oak leaf clusters

Air Force Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters

Air Force Achievement Medal with five oak leaf clusters

Outstanding Airman of the Year Ribbon

## **OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

1994 39th Wing NCO of the Year

1995 John L. Levitow Award, NCO Academy

1995 USAFE ATC Training Achievement Award

1995 STEP promotion to Master Sergeant

1997 ACC Director of Air and Space Operations SNCO of the Year

2001 Distinguished Graduate, SNCO Academy

2001 AMC Air Traffic Control Enlisted Manager of the Year

2001 Tampa Bay Military Citizen of the Year

2001 Air Mobility Command SNCO of the Year

## **EFFECTIVE DATE OF PROMOTION**

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force January 2013

(Current as of February 2013)

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## Introduction

Chairman Tillis, Ranking Member Gillibrand and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for your continued support of the men and women who serve our nation. I appreciate the opportunity to represent America's Airmen and their families and I am honored to convey their needs and offer appreciation for your support on their behalf.

The ultimate source of air, space and cyberspace combat capability resides in the men and women of the U.S. Air Force. We owe it to our nation, our Airmen and our partners around the world to provide a ready and resilient force. The security environment has dramatically evolved over the last 25 years, and the unpredictable landscape we now operate in requires the Air Force continue to revisit, improve, and evolve our personnel management processes to ensure we better recruit and retain our talented Airmen. The Air Force must meet the needs of the warfighter faster, more efficiently, and more effectively.

Our Airmen and their families are the key to our success. Our job is to support and defend America's way of life, defend our country's borders and national interests and, when absolutely necessary, to fight and win our nation's wars. It's not an easy task, which is why focusing on our Airmen and their families is so important. It is imperative we put them first, inspire them and support them as they face the challenges inherent in serving in the Profession of Arms. Where we can, we must ease burdens and remove barriers. Eliminating barriers ensures we fully leverage our skilled and innovative Airmen and supports retaining ready, resilient Airmen and families.

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The initiatives this Subcommittee supports allow us to strengthen the quality of life for our Airmen, even in difficult financial times. We rely on your efforts, actions and legislation to protect and support our service members.

We continue to explore opportunities to strengthen the force. While some initiatives are force-wide, others are more targeted, but all have the same objective. Taken together, these will strengthen our competitive position in the battle for top talent.

## **Growing the Force**

To meet global demands, resource emerging requirements, and repair and sustain the force, the Air Force must increase active duty end strength — up to 321,000 by the end of 2017, and up to 350,000 over the next seven years. The Air Force will consider end strength increases as it works with the Secretary of Defense to develop the FY 2018 President's Budget.

The Air Force continues to execute assigned missions, but nearly 25 years of combat — along with declining personnel numbers and aging equipment—have strained our readiness. Since 2001, the active duty Air Force has remained consistently engaged in military operations while reducing the force by more than 11 percent. The majority of reductions came from the Logistics and Agile Combat Support (ACS) communities without corresponding reductions in force structure or infrastructure. Although the Air Force took an 11 percent cut, ACS active duty manpower was cut 34 percent. Restoring the force ensures Airmen have time to take care of themselves and their families while also taking care of the mission.

The Air Force started FY17 with 317,000 active duty Airmen. To successfully grow our force to meet future end strength requirements, we must address mission and readiness demands while shaping the workforce to meet current and future mission and skill

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requirements. The active duty force needs to grow by approximately 4,000 Airmen a year through a combination of increased accessions and robust retention, while continually working with the Secretary of Defense to reassess our end strength needs based on overall mission requirements. To increase accessions, our recruiters and military training infrastructure must flex to handle this significant increase in annual throughput. But, we must remain measured and cautious in how fast we grow the force to ensure readiness and not further hollow the force.

## **Compensation**

Part of the FY17 National Defense Authorization Act considers potential changes to our Airmen's compensation, specifically in the form of Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH). The regressive nature of the proposed legislation effectively removes BAH as part of Regular Military Compensation. This would reverse nearly 20 years of deliberate legislative action to ensure service members are appropriately compensated for their service, and that their salaries remain competitive with private-sector professionals. The FY17 NDAA directs the DOD to move to a single pay system no later than January 1, 2018, which represents an attempt to treat BAH as compensation rather than an allowance. The talented men and women of the Air Force are called upon each day to perform crucial missions around the world. In every one of those mission areas, Airmen are the key to our success. Taking care of those Airmen must always be our first priority; every one of them earn their current pay and compensation. While we remain mindful of current budget pressures across the Defense Department, cost savings needs to be tempered by the need to retain our talent, which is truly a national asset.

## **Military Family Readiness**

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Families are often the catalyst to an Airman decision to stay or leave the Air Force.

These selfless families make many sacrifices, and the Air Force remains clear on its commitment to taking care of them.

Our Airman and Family Readiness Centers (A&FRC) serve as a crucial bridge with our families and military missions, encompassing 14 core programs to ensure the resiliency and readiness of Airmen and their families. Beyond our A&FRCs, the core of establishing a connection between squadrons and family members resides with our Key Spouse Program. The program is comprised of volunteer spouses trained on critical family-based programs and other aspects of family life, connecting an informal network of the nerve center in our units' families. Recognizing the pivotal nature of this relationship, we continue to focus on specific roles and responsibilities for Commanders, Key Spouse Mentors, and Key Spouses. This invaluable team dynamic exists at every Air Force installation per Chief of Staff of the Air Force's direction. We continue to expand and build our Key Spouse program as we recognize its importance to the resilience and health of the family, especially in a time of global uncertainty and continued operational demands on our Airmen.

Financial stresses significantly impact the resilience of Airmen and their families. This is certainly a key factor today as the nation faces fiscal uncertainty which has potential to eat at an Airman's compensation. To reduce this impact, our personal financial readiness program aims to improve the financial literacy and readiness of our total force. With the rollout of the Blended Retirement System and to ensure Airmen and families are prepared to make educated financial decisions that meet their needs and circumstances, we are developing comprehensive financial literacy training across the military lifecycle. Through individual counseling, education,

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and mandatory training, our Personal Financial Managers at installations are a ready and capable asset for our Airmen and families, especially the 440,000 Airmen eligible to make a decision on which retirement system is right for them. Last year, our PFMs assisted 100,000 Airmen and family members; the expectation over the next year is a significant increase in demand for personal financial services as we implement the Blended Retirement System.

The Spouse Education and Career Opportunity (SECO) Program tremendously assists our Air Force spouses. The DoD-led Military Spouse Employment Partnership, in collaboration with our A&FRCs, is supporting our spouses as they work to overcome the significant challenges of relocation. There are currently 338 civilian companies who have partnered to recruit and hire military spouses and have posted nearly 6 million jobs since 2011. This partnership with SECO resulted in 105,000 military spouses hired through the program since June 2011. Additionally, the Small Business Administration includes spouses in programs offered to the total force by providing the same counseling, training, and access to capital, provided to service members and veterans. This support is a significant boon to the employment prospects of our spouses who relocate every few years, but more work must be done. Most notably, spouses with careers that require certification (real estate, hairstylists, nursing, teaching, etc.) must continually seek, and pay for, recertification after every move. All states have enacted broad legislation that improves license endorsement for military spouses, provides temporary licenses and expedites their applications. Of the 50 states, 38 have improved endorsement, 47 have temporary licensure and 37 have expedited applications, but the goal is to have professional licenses and certificates which travel with spouses whenever they relocate.

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The quality of locally available public education, whether on base or off base, remains a critical concern of our Airmen and families. These concerns are significantly exacerbated for special needs family members or those who are home-schooled and seeking extra-curriculum activities with local schools. While the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission has done much to standardize the administrative rules between states for the transition of military children between schools, there is more to be done. The Air Force continues to explore options to meet child care needs. Options include extending hours at child development centers, using family child care providers and partnering with qualified community based providers. The Air Force Child and Youth Programs operations and installation support team is working with installations who are having challenges recruiting FCC providers; however, we still need affordable, safe, immediate child care for our families when they move. We continue to need support in funding the programs we have, building additional child care centers on bases or building better partnerships with community providers.

To ensure we meet the expectations of our families, the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force live streamed a Spouse and Family Forum centered on exceptional family members, spouse employment, schools, and deployment support. The Air Force followed up a month later with a Facebook Town Hall to announce what we accomplished since. Here are a few brief examples:

In response to requests for better communication for families enrolled in our exceptional family member program (EFMP), we established quarterly events and webcasts to the country including EFMP, family support, assignments, and medical representatives.

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Also in support to EFMP family members, we funded 44 additional Exceptional Family Member Program-Family Support (EFMP-FS) coordinators. Currently, there are 43,000 exceptional family members but not every installation has an EFMP-FS coordinator, ensuring every community with more than 200 exceptional family members has a dedicated coordinator.

### **Air Force Single Airman Program**

The Air Force's Single Airman Program Initiative (SAPI) delivers resilience and readiness capabilities that help revitalize squadrons and optimize Airmen performance. SAPI began in 2011 to expand activities for our single Airmen population. The Air Force created capabilities that focus on resilience, camaraderie, and reintegration; thereby, increasing readiness.

Air Force made SAPI a component of its overarching Recharge-for-Resiliency (R4R) program, which encompasses high adventure/adrenaline activities and A&FRC programs focusing on reintegration after deployment. R4R is executed in two separate formats.

There are Design-It-Yourself activities, where the Air Force allocates funding directly to installations to develop programs unique to the location and interests of the Airmen. These programs include ropes courses, zip-lining, water and winter sports, and cultural tours. The Air Force also created Ready-to-Launch activities with pre-designed programs to ease initial startup. As an example, the Team Cohesion Challenge is a successful program introducing the team-based training found in special operation units. The four- to five-hour event is demanding physically and customized to the terrain of each installation. Our Airmen make great use of SAPI opportunities in recharging themselves and elevating their fitness level.

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The Air Force recognizes programs such as SAPI contribute to the four pillars (spiritual, physical, mental and social) of Comprehensive Airman Fitness, while at the same time, provide fun events which help revitalize squadrons and optimize Airmen performance. Since the SAPI launch in 2011, the Air Force continues to advocate for resources to ensure the program flourishes as a valuable tool in building Airmen who are resilient, ready and available for the joint fight.

### **Conclusion**

Chairman Tillis, Ranking Member Gillibrand and members of the Subcommittee, thank you again for this opportunity to represent our incredible Airmen and their families. Despite the many challenges we face, your Airmen, supported by some of the strongest families our nation will ever know, remain committed to building a strong community whose members are capable and have a sense of belonging.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide insight into the issues impacting single service members and our families. We appreciate your continued support, and for your commitment to retaining ready, resilient Airmen and families. We're counting on you to lead our nation and ensure we have the resources to remain the World's Greatest Air Force.