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The Importance of Service
By: Cadet Scott

When I was younger, I heard stories from my parents about their fathers’ time in the Air Force. My mother’s father had been a part of the Strategic Air Command during the Korean War serving as a radio operator in a B-29. He took part in missions from Puerto Rico all the way up near the Arctic and everywhere in between. My father’s father served as a flight instructor in the states during World War II. He enlisted around the time of the Pearl Harbor attack and ended his career as a captain in 1949. Their years of service and stories are what inspired me to join the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps program here at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

The Air Force has always been a dream of mine ever since those stories were first told to me. Those stories kept me going through my junior and senior high school years and originally, I had my eye set on becoming a pilot. I was so focused on that one job that I did not even consider any others. Once I started my college career and started attending the Air Force classes, I slowly started to realize there were so many more things to do. My interests started to change from being solely focused on pilot to not being entirely certain what I wanted to do. As I began to think about other jobs, I realized that I would be happy to do almost anything in the Air Force. My mindset had changed from just thinking about myself and my own excitement to serving my country and helping people in need all over the world.

The Air Force has had a long history of not only military success but humanitarian success as well. All over the world, the Air Force has been involved with bringing relief to people in need. Whether it was helping people recover from a natural disaster or helping a country rebuild from a recent conflict, they have always been there to help people get back on their feet and recover. That kind of behavior is what makes The United States Air Force the best in the world and it gives one of the best examples of service before self. Aside from being a strong military force, being a helping hand people can count on may be the most important function it serves. I think learning this, as a cadet is very important so that when we graduate, we are not just focused on our own prosperity but the prosperity of all people.

As a military force, we are ambassadors to the public of not only our own country but of the countries we deploy to as well. The kind of reputation that comes from helping others without
seeking personal gain can be critical in public support. If members are associated with protecting the public and helping them survive, then the organization has a stronger, more influential presence in the world. Just as important, not doing this disrespects our predecessors. One member ignoring or being rude to a civilian can destroy decades of hard work done by the rest of the organization, which can be devastating. In the eyes of that person, the entire organization has the same attitude that one member had. This destroys public support and can do even more damage than realized. As military members, we are called to always be respectful no matter who we are dealing with or our personal feelings about them.

Learning to help others over your own personal gain within and outside of the Air Force is crucial. Doing so promotes the organization and makes you a better person. All military personnel need to learn that no matter what, others come first. I have experienced this in my own life and think it is a valuable lesson everyone should learn and take to heart.

The Road from Enlisted to Officer
By: Cadet Collins

If you’re not a cadet in the detachment, then you probably do not know me. My name is Jordan Collins and I’m twenty-four years old. You’re probably thinking, “He got a late start, didn’t he?” Well, in a way, yes and no. You see, I spent five and one-half years on the enlisted side of the Air Force. Straight out of high school, ten days after graduating to be exact, I shipped off to Basic Military Training. Fast-forward about a year and a half and you would find me at my first duty station: Kadena Air Base on the tiny island of Okinawa, Japan. Being so far from home at only eighteen was frightening at first, but I slowly grew to love the people around me as if they were my family. I was just a lowly Airman First Class (E-3) all throughout my time on Okinawa, but responsibility was never hard to come by. Not for me at least. My primary duties were to “refrag” the munitions trailers that would come back to the flight line with expended countermeasures (chaff and flare) and send the trailers back out onto the flight line to upload the fighter jets for the next day’s sorties (or “go’s” as we called them). It was not very common for anyone other than a Staff Sergeant (E-5) to run a crew of people in these “refrag” operations, however a string of incidents within the Squadron resulted in having only approximately 50% manning throughout. So leadership turned to the “seasoned” Airmen to lead the way, and I was one of those Airmen.

I was put on a night shift with about four other airmen and one Staff Sergeant. A short time after being on night shift, I was in charge of an operation to “refrag” a trailer and send it out to the C-130 rescue squadron. Expended munitions had come back the planes so we were refragging the trailer to send out fresh munitions. Apparently a friend of mine was not paying attention when he checked on one of the flare modules because he missed a few that were expended and those got sent back out to the flight line. This is a huge no-no as it impedes mission readiness. So the next day I found...
myself in the Flight Commander’s office, along with my Shop Chief and the Staff Sergeant who was on my shift. As the Captain was really laying into my Shop Chief and the Staff Sergeant, my knees shaking and heart racing, I interjected stating that it wasn’t either of their faults and who was I to let them take any of the blame when it all should have fallen to me? I explained to the perplexed Captain (I guess he’d never seen an airman willing to shoulder all of the blame. Either that, or he was still stunned from me interrupting him. Hindsight being 20/20, perhaps that wasn’t the brightest idea) it was not their fault and that it all landed on my shoulders. I neglected to do a final check of the munitions before they were sent back out. Although they were all of my friends, I fell into complacency that they would do the job correctly without me needing to look over their shoulders. After sitting for a few moments in silence, the Captain rose up and looked at me, shook my hand, and said, “It’s impossible to be mad when someone owns their mistakes as you just did” and dismissed us. Sure I got a verbal reprimand from my Shop Chief, but that’s where it stopped.

The point I’m trying to make is: If you make a mistake, whether it is at school, in life, or in Field Training Preparation, own that mistake. Shoulder the blame and learn from it. Make it the fuel that fires your desire to improve yourself. Keep your head up and keep on going. If you own a mistake, rather than make up excuses as to why you failed, others will not see you as a failure, but rather someone who knows when to admit when they’re wrong. One mistake does not constitute a failure. Making the same mistakes over and over again because of hubris is what makes you a failure.

Through the Eyes of a Prior Enlisted Cadet
By: Cadet Puchbauer

This week for Soaring Warrior we have chosen to question the cadets with the most military experience, those who have prior military experience. Cadet Bottia, a senior that will graduate this May, has quite a bit of military background, as well as advice for newer cadets. A Senior Airmen in the 932 Medical Squadron at Scott Air Force Base, Cadet Bottia was a Physical Therapy Technician, 4J052. Mainly, he worked at the Physical Therapy clinic, where he assisted patients with anterior cruciate ligament reconstructions, post rotator cuff surgery rehab, torn meniscus recovery, among other injuries. Cadet Bottia has a lot of valuable experience in the medical field, and looks forward to his career as an Air Force Officer.

Coming into the ROTC program, what was one thing that you already knew from being prior enlisted that helped you adjust to your duties and responsibilities as an ROTC cadet?
I do not think being a prior-enlisted cadet has any significant advantage coming into the ROTC program. What I do know is that prior-enlisted cadets come into the ROTC program having a solid understanding of the three core values; Integrity first, service before self and excellence in all we do.

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Prior-enlisted cadets do not only know the core values but they have lived by it for some time now.

What was the biggest difference in the training as an enlisted member and a ROTC cadet, if any?
ROTC is more of a hands-off training, where cadets are expected to learn on their own and make mistakes. Enlisted training is a lot more hands-on and more of a one-on-one training and supervision.

What is your favorite memory from all of your training for the military as a whole, and was it at Basic Training or Field Training?
My favorite TDY was at the Scottsdale Healthcare Hospital in Arizona. This hospital was one of the biggest trauma centers of Arizona, and it was where I was tasked to assist the Physical Therapist with patients in extreme critical conditions, such as traumatic brain injuries, sever burn victims, amputations, etc. In this TDY I truly utilized all my technical skills and I felt how rewarding and incredible my career field actually was.

What do you plan to do in the Air Force when you graduate in May, and what are you most excited about being on Active Duty?
I was blessed and fortunate enough to be selected to become an Intelligence Officer. I will be going to Tech School at Goodfellow Air Force Base, Texas. My duty station will be determined at the end of my tech school. I am excited to finally serve my country as a military leader and mentor, and I would like to influence young enlisted members and encourage them to achieve their best potential.

As a 400 and being through the ROTC program as well as being prior enlisted, what is some advice you can give to the 100's this year?
Throughout most of my GMC college career, I wore a bracelet that had the words “resilience” engraved. Resilience is the ability to bounce back and continue to fight. As a college student you will face many life challenges; many college students face break-ups, bad friendships, alcohol, family problems, etc. Resiliency will help you to stay focused and to be committed to your future as a military leader.
and officers work better together to make the United States Air Force work more efficiently?

The two cadets interviewed are as follows: Cadet Colonel Geena Welch and Cadet Third Class Jordan Collins. Cadet Welch is an AS400 (academic senior) studying Supply Chain Management at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. She has held many leadership positions in the detachment, from an AS200 Flight Commander to Detachment 205 Cadet Wing Commander. Cadet Collins is an AS200 (academic sophomore) studying Political Science at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. With these experiences, both followership and leadership, they were asked how their experiences in the enlisted force have related to their leadership skills in their pursuit of becoming officers.

To answer the first question, Cadet Welch stated that though her enlisted experience has not helped her much in AFROTC, it would help her once she transitions to Active Duty. “Being in Training is different than being in the Operational Air Force. One of the big differences is knowledge vs. experience. Being book savvy is a great foundation to have before commissions, and the training that us cadets are receiving now…is essential.” Cadet Collins believes prior enlisted experience helps to an extent such as with uniform wear and military bearing. “AFROTC is a lot like basic training in the fact that you need patience and have attention to detail.” However, most of the leadership skills are learned in the AFROTC environment.

Cadet Welch answered the next question by saying that she incorporated enlisted practices in with her leadership positions. Her fellow prior enlisted cadets, Cadets Bottia, Peters, and Wendt, have done the same. She finishes by stating, “Remember that new implementations, although difficult to accept, will happen and I commend the Wing for being so flexible.” Change and flexibility are two terms that are often drilled into cadets’ heads, and as explained above, are good traits to be aware of and have in the Air Force. As for Cadet Collins, he has not had much leadership experience yet. He wishes for AFROTC to have more real-life scenarios. He wants the cadets to be aware that there are “cadet-isms” (things strictly enforce in AFROTC) that are not present in Active Duty, so once commissioned, new Lieutenants are on a completely different playing field.

Advice is always something cadets seek in AFROTC, and receiving it from experienced cadets is a great way to maintain a healthy relationship with the enlisted force. What Cadets Welch and Collins gave is definitely something to keep in mind. Cadet Welch commends those officers who are humble and make an effort to show appreciation for their enlisted personnel. It is important to be a mentor and an advisor in any situation. “Be prepared to lead by example, take on responsibility that you feel you shouldn’t have, and more importantly, be approachable. Your enlisted will follow you if you are humble and they know you care for them.” It is also important to remember that future officers will be working with an array of individuals, some older and some younger. Remember one’s place and responsibilities. Cadet Collins advises the following: “Own your mistakes, admit when you’re wrong, and don’t make up excuses.” As an officer, one is in charge of him/herself as well as enlisted personnel below him/her. An officer will earn more respect if he/she takes responsibility for his/her actions. Avoiding responsibilities will not only make an officer look bad, but also the entire unit and ultimately the Air Force look bad, too.

Finally, Cadet Welch ends with explaining desired traits in an officer. Officers need to listen to their enlisted Airmen, have an open mind, remain professional, and communicate openly. When an officer is engaged in an idea or task with his/her enlisted personnel, the enlisted force works better. “Enlisted understand you are not their friend, but sometimes they need to know that you have their back.” Cadet Collins says much of the same. Officers need to keep in mind that though their rank is above that of the enlisted, they still rely on their enlisted subordinates. Officers should remind themselves of the task at hand through the enlisted force’s point of view.

For the Air Force and military as a whole to work effectively, it is important to maintain the balance between the enlisted force and officer force. If one has not had the opportunity to talk with individuals like Cadet Welch and Cadet Collins who have Active Duty experience, it is strongly recommended to receive their advice and learn from
Keep Moving Forward
By: Cadet Anderson

I am truly grateful for my flight mates and all of the cadets in this detachment. The cadets in Field Training Preparation Flight however, are the people that I look up to the most. None of us joined the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corp expecting the events of this spring semester. We never knew that we would be facing one of the largest cuts that the Air Force would be making. No person could have explained to us that we would only be given one chance to receive an enrollment allocation or that our Field Training would be cut short. We are all surprised about the changes being made with rated versus non-rated slots and all the changes being made. This flight is under the pressure of Field Training Preparation. Good cadets were lost to medical disqualifications. Also, we are under the pressure of knowing that after Field Training we are still competing for our place in the Air Force. The path to being an officer has become much more difficult than anyone could have understood, but we are still here.

The cadets that stand next to me during Leadership Laboratory are brave. We did not quit when we were informed on downsizing policies. We never said, “This is too hard.” Instead we said, “Yes Sir.” Contracted or not, we are all dedicated to this Air Force, and I see everyone showing their faith in and out of military environments. I am proud of this flight for sticking the semester out and watching out for each other. We are constantly finding ways to keep our morale strong. We realized a long time ago that this could be the end of our Air Force career and yet we are still here fighting for what we believe in.

One quote that embodies our spirits is, “But it ain’t about how hard ya hit. It’s about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward. How much you can take and keep moving forward.” - Rock Balboa

The journey is nowhere near over, but we will all keep pushing forward and holding on. We cannot tell what the next month will hold, but we will not give up.
Greetings, Detachment 205! I am Cadet Vance, this semester’s General Military Course Advisor. This is a sort of ‘GMCA Corner’ where I can address all of the GMC and answer any mass questions that they may have. This month, I have been asked to discuss what a 100-level cadet might expect were they to gain the position next year.

The first piece of advice I have for you is as follows: be prepared to answer questions. There will always be confusion, and you are one of the few GMC cadets in a position to answer. How do I shine shoes? How do I wear the uniform? How do I address POC cadets? These are questions that will always be asked, and need to be addressed. My second piece of advice is to hold yourselves to high standards and accomplish your goals as a cadet. The best way to obtain this position is to make sure you present yourself as a capable individual who is able to lead their peers.

If you choose to apply for the position, know that the GMCA is an example set before all GMC on how to act and perform. You are in a spotlight- so be approachable, know your stuff, and do your best!

EDITORS COMMENTS

Welcome back!

I would like to congratulate the Cadets of Detachment 205 who recently received Rated Slots.
- Cadet Linder: Pilot
- Cadet Hanenberger: Pilot
- Cadet Sievers: Air Battle Manager
- Cadet Ramey: Combat Systems Officer

Enrollment Allocations have been sent out and we all would like to wish the Field Training Preparation Flight good luck and we believe in all of you!

Let’s have a great semester and end this year right Detachment 205!

Cadet Piraino
Contact Information:
Mailing Address:
AFROTC DET 205
Southern Illinois University
Carbondale
807 S. Normal Ave
Carbondale, IL 6290-6899
Phone Number:
618.453.2481
https://www.facebook.com/AFROTCDet205

Cadet Adam Pruim
Email: apruim4@siu.edu
Phone: 815.545.5104

Cadet Adam Piraino
Email: ajpirai2@gmail.com
Phone: 312.953.1551

Make sure to visit the cadet run Det. 205 Facebook page at
https://www.facebook.com/AFROTCDet205