



# CHIEF's Sight Picture

12 January 2004

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## Force Development -- The Chief Master Sergeant

For more than a year, we've been moving out on a new vision of how to best develop our officer, enlisted, and civilian airmen -- Force Development. Several efforts are now underway that will ultimately improve the capabilities of our entire enlisted corps. A very important first step in this process has been a concerted look at how we can better develop and use those who will become our most senior enlisted leaders -- our Chief Master Sergeants.

Since the creation of the rank of Chief Master Sergeant some forty-five years ago, the roles and scope of responsibilities of our Chiefs have evolved tremendously. At every level, senior officers, commanders, and subordinates rely heavily on the unique combination of operational, functional and institutional experience, and proven leadership abilities of our Chief Master Sergeants. As we continue to evolve our force, it is essential that our development of those who serve, or will serve as Chief Master Sergeants, keep up with the needs of our mission and our people. We must place these key senior enlisted leaders in the right jobs at the right time in their career, and deliberately develop them to enable their success.

Over the past year, CMSAF Murray and experienced Chiefs from across the Air Force formulated a number of proposals to improve the development and use of our Chiefs to best meet the current and future challenges facing our force. At CORONA Fall in November, our top leaders approved their recommendations. In the next few months, we will begin to implement the following changes:

- Beginning with the next promotion cycle, we will stand up a new top-level course of enlisted professional military education designed specifically for those selected to serve as Chief Master Sergeants. The course will focus on leadership in the operational and strategic environments, and will constitute a substantial leap forward in the development of our Chiefs;
- We will pursue non-traditional developmental opportunities to further develop the leadership skills of our current Chiefs. For example, last fall we sent a group of 22 Chief Master Sergeants and CMSAF Murray to the Center for Creative Leadership. This leadership development course was previously reserved for top civilians, general officers, and select colonels. Throughout the remainder of this year we will send nearly 100 more Chiefs to this or an equivalent program;

- We will implement an aggressive, but smart, cross-flow program that moves Chiefs in over-manned specialties into vacant leadership positions. Chief Master Sergeants bring a wealth of experience and leadership to virtually any assignment. Unless prohibited by certification requirements, we will no longer accept placing junior personnel where the mission requires the leadership of a Chief;
- We will limit Joint, Air Staff, MAJCOM, and special duty Chief Master Sergeant assignments to three years. Chiefs with headquarters experience are tremendous assets in the field. Our headquarters and major force management programs also benefit greatly from an infusion of fresh field experience;
- Command Chief Master Sergeants will serve a minimum of two years and a maximum of three years in their positions;
- Beginning with those selected in promotion cycle 04E9, Chief-selects must attain three-years retainability prior to sewing-on their stripes;
- Requests for In-place Consecutive Overseas Tours and Home-basing assignments will be closely scrutinized to ensure they are clearly in the best interest of the Air Force -- taking into account the developmental needs and assignment opportunities of fellow Chiefs. The Indefinite Date Eligible to Return from Overseas process impedes our ability to effectively manage our senior leaders and will rarely be approved for Chief Master Sergeants;
- We will implement standard criteria for Commander's Involvement Program positions to ensure the appropriate and limited use of this important process;
- Selection for all Air Staff and other designated Chief Master Sergeant billets will be done through a nomination process. When a top position opens, our MAJCOMs will nominate their most qualified Chiefs to the appropriate hiring authority;
- We will inform wing commanders of the assignment vulnerability and assignment actions involving Chief Master Sergeants assigned to their organizations;

Finally, we are now conducting a top-to-bottom review of Chief authorizations. Based on the results, we will take appropriate actions to ensure Chief Master Sergeant billets are placed where the Air Force has the greatest need for the unique capabilities and leadership of a Chief.

Each of these changes is driven by the need to optimize the development and use of these very limited yet extremely valuable senior leaders. These initiatives represent a substantial investment in our Chief Master Sergeants and recognize the vital role they will play in the continued success of our Air Force.

Over the next several weeks, through the CMSAF, Command Chief Master Sergeants throughout the Air Force will brief Commanders, Chiefs, and senior noncommissioned officers on these initiatives in more detail. As they do, I ask you to view the changes in light of the new era of operational challenges on our horizon, and the importance of Force Development in meeting these demands. We are adapting the Air Force to the needs of the 21st century. With these initiatives, we give our most senior enlisted airmen the training, assignments, and experience they need to more effectively lead the airmen of the world's greatest Air Force.



  
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