



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF  
WASHINGTON, DC

Monday, March 20,  
2006

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## Letter to Airmen: Operation Iraqi Freedom Anniversary

To the Airmen of the United States Air Force,

Yesterday marked the 3rd anniversary of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM and the removal of an oppressive, dangerous regime. This was the culmination of a joint and coalition intense effort on land, sea, and air. I want to take this moment to say thanks for all your sacrifices ... and to let you know that you are doing awesome work. In OIF, within the Joint Force, our Total Force - active, guard, and reserve Airmen – grounded the Iraq Air Force, destroyed the combat effectiveness of the Iraqi ground forces, blinded the Hussein leadership and paved the way for a series of ground battles that saw Baghdad fall in 22 days. Your innovation and flexibility made the difference, whether it was Airmen decisively striking Republican Guard formations; in orbits over every Iraqi airfield; embedded with ground forces; launching and orbiting satellites high overhead; controlling armed UAVs; or airlifting critical supplies and troops. And today, you continue to provide air support to the Combatant Commanders around the world, while also flawlessly performing non-traditional missions like base defense and convoy operations.

Your contributions to the spread of freedom and democracy did not begin three years ago; the Air Force has been at war continuously for over fifteen years – since the opening rounds of Operation Desert Storm and through twelve years of no-fly zone operations. And although Iraq is receiving the majority of attention, Operation ENDURING FREEDOM and Operation NOBLE EAGLE remain critical to winning this Long War. The Global War on Terror has now lasted 10 months longer than our Nation fought in World War II. This is a joint fight, across the world—where we have a vital role. Meanwhile, things have been fairly quiet on the home front, and that's good. That means we are doing our job well. You are protecting America by monitoring intelligence, sitting alert, and flying patrols over our cities. By protecting our homeland and fighting the enemy on their turf, you are keeping your family, friends, and the American public safe. Our mission is to fly and fight and win our nations' wars – and you're doing just that.

You are making a difference. I am proud of you. America is proud of you. You are helping to rebuild countries and protect fledgling democracies in Iraq and Afghanistan, while keeping America out of harm's way. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the Pakistani earthquake, Philippine landslides and, most recently, floods in Hawaii, brought out your best as well, as you pitched in side by side with allies and joint partners providing humanitarian relief across the globe and in our own backyard. You are the most combat experienced, battle-hardened Airmen since WWII. You are successfully doing whatever is asked of you across the domains of air, space, and cyberspace – you are always there.

Thanks for all that you're doing – it matters. Your tireless efforts keep this the best Air Force the world has ever seen, ready to lead or support the joint fight anywhere, anytime. You are making it happen in Iraq, Afghanistan, in the skies over America, and anywhere our Nation needs us. Keep it up and keep 'em flying!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "T. Michael Moseley".

T. MICHAEL MOSELEY  
General, USAF  
Chief of Staff

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