



The Enlisted Perspective

By CMSAF Rodney J. McKinley

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A New Service Dress Uniform

As Airmen, we have many opportunities to represent our Air Force to the American public, our sister Services and Allies. Many of these opportunities are formal occasions where we don our service dress uniform for Joint school graduations, promotions, retirements, memorial services, host nation celebrations or community events in Downtown, U.S.A.

As the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, I have the chance to attend many formal events with my peers from our sister services. I am always proud to stand beside them, wear our uniform well, and represent you - our great Airmen. I look forward to the day when I stand tall in a new service dress uniform with a stronger military image, one that will make a powerful statement about who we are - America's Airmen who fly, fight and win in any domain. The proposed heritage jacket will give us a uniform with more historical significance, better functionality, and most importantly, will embody the warrior spirit that defines us as Airmen serving in the Profession of Arms.

From the Berlin Airlift, B-26 and B-29 bombing runs over North Korea during the Korean War and the "Shock and Awe" air campaigns of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Air Force remains at the forefront of the fight. Since everything we are and accomplish today has root in our warfighting history, it's only right our uniforms should reflect this heritage.

A new service dress uniform also links with our efforts to cultivate a Warrior Ethos throughout every facet of the Air Force. Among these efforts, we are expanding basic military training to give Airmen skills to set up and defend expeditionary air bases, we recognize our Airmen's ground combat actions with a new Air Force Combat Action Medal, and we now have an Airman's Creed to embody and articulate our warrior spirit.

As I travel throughout our Air Force talking with Airmen, I see warriors who are leading the charge in the Global War on Terror. Despite long hours, extended deployments and a myriad of challenges, our Airmen continually prove they have the grit and determination of the Airmen who fought the wars before us. A new heritage service dress uniform will say to the world what we already know - we are proud Airmen linked to a combat-forged past, and Air Force warriors prepared for today's challenges and future battlefields.

I'm looking forward to wearing our new heritage service dress uniform - and I hope you are too.



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