

Chief Chat Episode 2 Transcript

Hey , what's up teammates ? Welcome to the Chief chat podcast . I'm Chief master Sergeant , Eddie Diaz Command Chief at the United States Air Force Academy . I'm a student of life followership and leadership . You know , throughout my military career , I've discovered that within every organization , there are enlisted airmen and guardians with lots of experiences who are wanting to share their examples on followership and leadership with you . In this podcast , we'll delve into the dynamic world of enlisted life and the US Air and Space Force giving our enlisted members a voice . So join us as we explore the intricacies of followership , leadership , technical expertise and the unique experience that shape the journey of our military community . Get ready for engaging discussions , personal stories and a deep dive into the heart of the enlisted experience together . Let's uncover the untold stories and valuable insights that make our military community strong . Hey , ladies and gentlemen , welcome back to another episode of Chief chat . I'm Chief Diaz . Hey , and I got another chief in the room with me today . It's a great day to sit down and chat with Chief Rob Duval , the special duty manager for the Air Force Academy . Military trainers or AM TS as we call him around here at Yafa . But he also serves as a senior enlisted leader for the Air Force Academy cadet wing . Hey , chief , welcome to Chief Chat . What's going on , brother ? How you doing ? I'm well , I'm so glad that you're here to talk about enlisted leadership and followership with me . We're gonna gain some good perspective from you . You know , Chief , during the lifespan of an enlisted airman , we will have crossed paths with airmen serving in almost every developmental special duty or DS D as we know them . Except for one , the academy military trainer question for you as the AM T special duty manager . How would you best describe the roles and responsibilities of an AM T primarily , they are part of the command team for the cadet squadrons . And so in each cadet squadron , right ? You have the squadron command or active duty . It's an air officer commanding , it's either a major lieutenant colonel and then from there , you have 2 a.m. TS as well . And so they , they are aligned like that first sergeant sel that you see in operational air force and between those three , they're the triad um that helped do that . So that's , that's the primary thing . Um I would say secondary would be , their job is really to model the enlisted force for these cadets , especially if they go flying . They're not gonna have a lot of interaction uh with the enlisted force I never thought of it like that . You're so right . Like , they'll be in training for years . Correct . And even when they get to a squadron , their engagements , if they're like , you know , in the math community then , yeah , they may have crew chief and , uh , load masters and stuff like that . Um , but outside of that , if they're in the , the pilot , the fighter pilot world , they're not gonna have a lot of meaningful engagement . So I don't mean that in a bad way , but that's just not their world . And so the impression that these AM ts make uh on these cadets soon to be officers is just , it's , it's paramount . Um And so that's the second one is to be the example . And then the third is to model that officer enlisted relationship . You , right . So again , going back to that , so General Moga who just left , he was the , the commandant of cadets before general marks . He is a fighter pilot , a single seat fighter pilot , he'll tell you . And so the first time he had major interactions on a daily basis with enlisted , he was a vice wing commander . And so if you put that in , so if you put that in perspective , not until he was a vice wing , like how many years had been serving more than a little bit . And so he uh yeah , so he'd been through a whole bunch of things again , great guy , crazy career . Um One of the best ever do in the cockpit . Right . And , you know , one of the best to ever do it outside as well , but it just speaks volumes that he , in that example just didn't get that much engagement . And so , um , putting all that together , that's the primary big three . But then all those things we talked about earlier . I mean , they're also ad a , I mean , they're , they , they help cadets figure out what they're gonna do in their careers . They are mtl's , they are MTIS , they are first line supervisors , sometimes , sometimes they're uncles and aunts , right ? They are all the things to these young men and women because for a majority of these cadets first time out of the house . And so they are that

consistent adult presence with some receipts behind them in the Air Force . Well , there is definitely no doubt that being an AM T is very unique and different from any of the D sds that are out there in our air force . I mean , it's a huge difference . And so , I mean , everywhere has their mission set , right ? A TC , they , they are the pipeline for us , but that pipeline is more of a conveyor belt , right ? Because you spend a finite amount of time in basic training , you spend a finite amount of time in tech school and they need your first duty station , right ? And so when you start looking at the D sds , primarily , they are aligned to accession sources right . Um This is an accession source , right ? We , we bring in civilians and we push out lieutenants . But the difference is , it's a four year journey . And if you go to the prep school , it's a five year journey . So the relationships that you gain with the squadron is much more comparative to really what I say , uh I say operational , but I grew up as a firefighter and the way we came together and the , the morale that we had collectively as a crew was different than when I moved over to communications , right ? I would actually say the culture of the organization within the cade question is more like that fire department where they live together , they work together . I mean , they , they're never not around each other . Sure , during the academic day , they go here , they go there . Um If they're in IC or in a club , they go do that as well , but they always come back to their squadron and they do that for three of four years . The big difference is you're not just pushing them out again . I don't mean disrespect , like when I say that way , but we're in it for the long haul with them . And the other major difference is this is a leadership laboratory , right ? If you've ever been to the Air Force Academy , chances are you've seen a glider floating around um gracefully falling towards the earth in that glider , you have two cadets , an upperclassman teaching an underclassman how to fly . And that is the best analogy that we can use for what we do here at this installation . We want these cadets to learn lessons . And so even though you have enlisted personnel , you have officers that have been in the Air Force for the Space Force for a while , we can come in and do this perfectly probably . Um , but that's not our job . Our job is to be more like personal trainers for them . We teach them proper form , we teach them proper nutrition , proper rest . And then when it's time to lift the weight , we spot them , right ? And so we're there for their safety and then we're there to make sure their forms , right ? But they need to lift the weight because we want them to make a few mistakes , right ? And that's the whole thing about a leadership laboratory , figure out what works for you because if you're uh if you're figuring out who you are as a person at that age , that happens , but then trying to figure out who you are as a leader and pure leadership at that . Yeah , that's a hard thing to do . And so I want them to stub their toes a little bit . Uh So that way they learn a few lessons when they're dealing with Cadet Duval than when they graduate and deal with M du Hey , you know , another thing that caught my attention as you were describing that chief is for our enlisted academy , military trainers , they're in a role of being the leader to future officers . So for like the span of that four years that they're here , they're being led by enlisted that's like their primary leaders in a , in a squadron , which is amazing because come graduation day and you know , and second lieutenant gets an assignment to a civil engineer squadron . And then six months later that am t that they had shows up at that same unit because it's time for them to P CS . And then they have to transition from being the leader of that cadet , but now they're following which is very unique and very dynamic . What a , what an incredible opportunity for our AM TS , you know , chief , it's , you know , I know that you were an AM T several years ago here at the Air Force Academy . How is it that you are getting after making changes uh over the span that you've been here for the greater good of our AM TS ? And what changes have those been ? I would say just like a lot of places , mission sets the blocking and tackling of what we do really hasn't changed , right ? The , the , the , the approach now , maybe we got some different game plans , we definitely got some different position , players , maybe we got a new GM , right . We , we got influences that come in and kinda change nuances , climate culture um of the organization . But what we do hasn't changed . Um , we've made some improvements on , I'd say talent management approach . We've worked with half a one D we've worked with a F PC . We've

worked at a , etc to really make sure that we've got this right . So we did a utilization and training workshop . That's kind of where we , we do a , uh a look at their career field and we say what needs to be trained and at what level do things need to be trained and , and uh product of that was our career field education and training plan . And so we've redone all that . This is the first time we've had a numbered course registered with the Air Force since 2011 . What an accomplishment . Now it's a registered course . It's on the books . Yeah . So that's , that's one thing a few years ago . They also brought in some uh oh sixes because it used to be the group A O CS at the time they were called , they were oh fives . They were lieutenant colonels and they realized , hey , we got a , I got a one star wing commander and then we had a gap uh outside of that , that didn't quite align with what the Air Force does . And so the decision was made to bring in O6 group commanders , uh command selection board , group commanders . So the same ones , the MS GS are pulled from , um , they brought them in , uh at that time , we still had seniors as the Se Os . Um again , doing , doing their best work that they can do . But we realized there was a gap in , in experience there too . And so we were able to working through a lot of people . And uh again , let me tell you , your network is your life um being able to network through people and get the right folks to get on board . Um This summer , we're bringing in four chiefs . Oh , that's incredible . Yeah , bringing in four chiefs . So talk about yet more leadership opportunities for our enlisted , not , you know , for enlisted chiefs , but the level of experiences that they're gonna bring to the organization . Yeah . And then uh probably two other things worth mentioning that we've done . Um And so four years ago , uh my billet was actually a command chief billet . Um It was a tier too , I mean , it had to be a graduated command chief to come here . Um which aligned with what the commandant was , has to be a graduated wing commander , a one star position . Um Decisions were made , cuts are done and so they , they pulled it back down to a group position . Um And then we were also able to work through a whole bunch of folks and bring it back up to what uh developmental position . Uh The SI MS A Chief Minister of the Air Force has a handful of these development positions across the the formation . And now this is one of them . And so the person that we're hiring in , um the the mandate is they are graduated command chief . And so that way again to help complement and be forced multipliers for the commandant having those same levels of receipts behind them is important . And I say the last thing improvement wise is we set up an AM T council . And so if you ever been on any installation , there's a first sergeant council and what that does , it brings people together , it flags communications from the wing to the squadrons . Um And then the biggest impact of that is really it networks the shirts and gives the different levels of experience an opportunity to cross connect and so kind of a forcing function for that . So similarly , we stole that and we just use AM T instead of first sergeant to uh to do that . And so we've , we've only started that this year . Um And so far it's been really good in attendance and the feedback on what we've been able to work and talk about and connect has been pretty good as well . Oh , that's good . Such amazing changes and transformation that you've made to your AM T teammates here at your cadet wing and also here at the United States Air Force Academy . Thanks for your leadership . I really appreciate it . I know you're making them better leaders so that they can uh develop these amazing cadets into the officers that we need , you know , before we conclude today's podcast . Chief . Final question for you . If , if you could have dinner with , with someone , whether alive or passed on , who would it be ? And why ? And , and what would you hope to discuss over dinner ? I'd say my grandfather . Uh , actually I'm not gonna pick , I'd say both grandfathers . I'm , I'm , I'm gonna take two . both of them served , um , my grandfather on my dad's side , um , was in the army . Um He was , uh he , he got out as a major , uh was in the Aleutian Islands during World War Two . Um wanted to fly . Uh couldn't because he was color blind . Um But , you know , uh I would say my , my father is actually my best friend and so we talk probably 56 times a week . Um And we always talking , he sometimes references he wishes he was able to have the relationship that he and I have with him and his dad . Right ? And so there's certain things that , that , you know , generationally just wasn't able to pull through .

Um And so if , if I could have one dinner with somebody dead or alive , uh it would probably be him . And then on my mom's side again , he served in Her Majesty's Army in Burma . Um And , you know , they lived in England as soon as they came out and stuff . Yes , in Burma . And then down to India as that war went on . Um , you know , and both my grandfathers died , um , when I was younger . Uh , and so I never got to know them as adults . I was stationed in England . So I got to know my grandmother , all of my mom's family , um , as an adult and it's just different . Um , and , and I have missed out on being able to , to know him in , in that same way . I can imagine how amazing that dinner would be . And then let alone the conversation . I know it'd be quite impressive . Actually , we we should use the three of us together so whoever can arrange that ? Yeah , let's get the three of us together and have one dinner . Awesome . Well , Chief , thank you so much for spending some time with me today here on yet another version of chief chat . You know , you are the the master special duty manager for all of our academy , military trainers here at ya A but you also serve as a senior and listed leader here for the cadet wing . Really appreciate your golden nuggets today talking about followership and leadership and you're amazing , Chief . Thanks so much for being here today . I appreciate it , brother . We want to express our gratitude to our dedicated listeners and the incredible enlisted airmen and guardians who are the backbone of our services . Your commitment to followership , leadership , technical expertise and sharing your experiences is what makes our military community stronger . Remember your stories matter and your contributions are vital too . So until next time , stay resilient , stay inspired and keep making it count . This is your chief Steve . Thanks for tuning in .