

USAFA,

A big thank you to everyone for a historic graduation. Given the circumstances, I could not have imagined a better send off for our new lieutenants and our first graduates to commission into the Space Force! This was a huge effort across the entire installation and I cannot thank you enough.

The Class of 2020 began departing USAFA on Saturday following graduation. They will be on leave until reporting to their first duty station. We are not cutting them loose, however. The new LTs will remain in contact with their AOCs as we figure out training dates and what comes next. As in other years, the AOC remains their supervisor and their chain of command remains with us until they check in. You may even see some of them remaining at USAFA, because unlike other years, we are allowing them to stay to complete out processing and make travel arrangements. To be very clear: the stop movement order we are all under allows "...accessions, basic training, advanced individual training, and follow-on travel to the first duty station." We also expect the new Lts to adhere to distancing guidelines and local shutdown restrictions wherever they are on leave to do all they can to remain healthy.

To the Air Force's newest Lts: your job right now is to stay healthy.

The summer is approaching swiftly and that means a shift in priorities. The underclassmen will finish the Spring Semester at the end of May and the Class of 2024 will arrive this summer. What I-Day and BCT look like this year remains to be determined. Furthermore, and as many of you are aware, SECDEF has issued a continuation of the Stop Movement order, thru 30 June. While the extension is not surprising, this should give you more of an idea as you plan for the summer.

Many of you had planned some kind of summer vacation and I do have a sliver of good news with respect to leave. Active Duty are now authorized accumulated annual leave beyond the normal 60 days, up to 120 days. Accrued leave can be retained until the end of FY23. Hopefully, that hard-earned vacation is only postponed and not cancelled.

Finally, remember that the Colorado Stay-at-Home order is in effect thru 26 April. We will watch and ultimately adhere to any guidelines for Colorado after the 26th. The pandemic continues and I ask that you continue to focus on your health and safety. We have been lucky that our community has been spared from the worst of the virus but we are not out of the woods yet.

Finally, as inspiration to tune in to our Thursday livestream event, I promise I will have more information on some of our first period summer programs as we start to make decisions on what our summer will look like. I'll also have Col Brian Hartless, our 10th ABW/CC and the 306 FTG/CC, Col "Mojo" DeBoer as we continue to hear from some of our mission element leads.

I look forward to talking to you on Thursday, until then - stay healthy and stay connected, JS