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Speaker 1 And know.

Speaker 2 Everybody. Welcome back to the debrief podcast. This is Erin Jantz joined as always by Colonel Baker and Chief Flores, our 97th Air Mobility Wing Command Team. Very special guest. This episode are Wing Chief of Protocol and U.S. Air Force Retired Chief Master Sergeant Gail Hargis. Thanks for joining us, Gail.

Speaker 3 Oh, thanks for having me. Love this. Excited.

Speaker 2 But hey, as always, gentlemen, how are you doing?

Speaker 4 I think we're doing great, chief. We're doing great.

Speaker 1 All right. Extremely well. I think we sat mute. Colonel Baker had a little, little off site. Life's good, but. Well, yeah, we thought. You know what? Let's just make sure we're working from the train to work with you to go over a line of effort with the objectives and kind of grading ourselves really as a command team, see where we're at and all to help take care of the mission, take care of our women in their families, and continue to develop leadership.

Speaker 4 Yeah, pretty incredible. We we really kind of neck down what's the objectives over the next 6 to 8 months and making sure that we keep focus and keep consistency with what we're trying to get after here and refocus and back on the vision, which I think we've been pretty consistent about overall. But it's always a great opportunity to do that. So we're really we left really excited from that and we've got the UI, the unit effectiveness inspection coming up next week. So that's a big one for the wing. I think we're postured as well as we can be positive. We've had some great conversations with the team about just having our airmen demonstrate their day to day mission excellence. And so we're we're excited about that and the opportunity for that. So I think there's just a lot going on and we're getting into the holiday season and we have great airmen, great civilian airmen. One of them who's joining us today, your first civilian airman guest, by the way, which is awesome. Awesome. So this is your first. Yes, we're breaking ground here. We always ask. We always do it back to chance before we get to our guests of honor. So how are you doing, Aaron Jeffs gentlemen?

Speaker 2 I'm doing absolutely stellar. Great. All of the above. The U.S. men's national team, soccer national team just made it to the round of 16. Thank the Lord. So I'm absolutely ecstatic this afternoon and I'm just rolling that over into the podcast right now.

Speaker 4 Perfect. Yeah, I can sense it. The energy and we were watching the game as well too, in between some of the meetings and events we had going on. But yeah, it's a great time. Great time for US Soccer and USA rebels. Absolutely gay. Are you watching the soccer or are you staying there now?

Speaker 3 I don't know anything about it.

Speaker 4 Sorry. Well, we got it covered. They're doing great.

Speaker 1 Okay. There's a there's a famous ancient saying that says football is like football.

Speaker 2 I actually.

Speaker 1 Has Ted.

Speaker 5 Lasso who was.

Speaker 4 Like, that's a good intro. Yeah. You if you really want to get the, you know, the connection there start with did lessons.

Speaker 2 Yeah that's great but but hey if you if you don't mind, we'll we'll jump right into getting to know our guest here. Gail, if you don't mind kind of giving us a brief introduction of, you know, why, why you joined the Air Force, first of all, and just kind of the introduction into your career.

Speaker 3 Well over 40 years ago, I. Was a senior high school trying to decide what I was going to do with my life. And I happened to see the high commercial on TV, the F-15 taking off, and I thought, that's pretty interesting. So I went to see the recruiter and that's when I decided that I was going to join the Air Force. Plus, my my parents were both Army and uncle, the Air Force. Another uncle in the Navy. Another uncle Marines. So keep it in the family, right?

Speaker 4 Yeah. Military family. That's awesome. We've heard a lot of that through different guests we've had on.

Speaker 3 It wasn't a brat, though. It was later after they got out. But, you know, back then, women didn't have babies stay in military. So. You know.

Speaker 4 So it was was that year or so I talk a lot about my sister was I call her my military hero. She was my inspiration to serve or one of them were your parents or one of your answer? Uncles. I think you mentioned what was it, one of them or just a conglomeration of all that?

Speaker 3 I think it was just a lot of them together, just hearing their stories and. What they went through. So, so pretty interesting stuff.

Speaker 1 Yeah.

Speaker 2 No, that's awesome. Can you can you give us a brief overview? It might not be brief because it's a it's a long military career. But but can you start off with your with your military career and what you were doing and where you made it? Yeah.

Speaker 3 So I came in right after high school and I was supposed to be computers, but that was a delayed enlistment for like a year and a half and I didn't want to wait. So I came in open general and in basic training, you know, you had to put your choices. And believe it or not, fuels was my last.

Speaker 4 How many was on the list.

Speaker 3 And because I thought, I don't want to put gas in cars, you know, for a living, but so yeah, you know, I went to tech school. That was what it was at Chanute. It's now at Sheppard in Texas.

Speaker 1 Even better.

Speaker 3 Even better. Right. First assignment was Okinawa at Kadena. And I did three years there, and I think I refueled just about every plane in the industry, even Air Force One. Oh, cool. Ronald Reagan came over and I was have the opportunity to refill that aircraft. So that was me. Had lots to do as well as their Philippines, Korea, mainland Japan met Chris, my hubby in the Philippines and.

Speaker 4 Also also one of our all star civilians. Cross out the Air Force base.

Speaker 3 He's he's amazing. We were actually in the Philippines for a couple under and I got dispatched to refuel his aircraft. He was a crew chief on the 15th. And when I got there, he just said he had hot breaks. So we just stood there for 30 minutes and chatted and till we can refuel and that's how it started.

Speaker 5 Wow.

Speaker 3 So yeah. And then we got married four months later, got stationed at McChord and I was the only female at record at the time.

Speaker 4 And the fuels and the fuel supplies.

Speaker 3 And the fuel supply. So that was that was interesting. We did four years there. Then we went to Langley and that's when. I was inspired to become a PE instructor. So I was I got hired there at the Pew Center.

Speaker 2 What? What? PM You stand for.

Speaker 3 Professional military education. And back then it was the NCO preparatory course and the NCO leadership school. So I had a chance to teach both of those and then we merged and made the leadership school. So I had a chance to teach there as well. And then Lakenheath decided to replace their F-111s with the F-15s. So Chris got the assignment to Lakenheath, so that's how we got to England. I stayed there for seven years. Unfortunately, I had made Master. And then right after I sold it on, I got the phone call. You have to leave. Feels. I was very upset.

Speaker 4 Even though. But I do want to point out, even though at the beginning, when you're a rack and sacking that one through ten, you're like, I don't want to put fuel gas in cars for a living is, as you said.

Speaker 3 And it turned out to be the best fuel ever.

Speaker 1 It was like the city of Algiers.

Speaker 4 Love it. I love it. You know.

Speaker 3 This? Yeah. Yeah. They had there was an overdose of master sergeants and fuels, and I was the number two in all of your safety, was forced to retrain. So fortunately the Air Force did make me retrain. They let me do another special duty. I got selected to design curriculum for the senior NCO Academy. There, Gunter in the basement of the singers with, like ten other master servants. So that was fun. I started out on the senior NCO Academy team, and then they changed and we went towards curriculum. So there was a calm team, communications team. It was a professional, ma'am teams. And then there was the leadership team. I worked on the leadership team and I did most of all the German leadership school curriculum and the NCO Academy for EPS valuations. So that was fun. I also had the chance to analyze all the test data for all the schools. I think we had 13 NCO academies at the time, 71 leadership schools, and of course the one senior NCO academy. I did that for four years and then I was fortunate to be hired at community college, the Air Force. Maxwell To be the campus relations campus relations director. So basically what we did was. Well, we came to places like elitism and inspected the school atelier schoolhouses to ensure that the instructors were doing what they needed.

Speaker 4 For consistency, standardization, up to making sure that they're meeting the intent of the curriculum.

Speaker 3 And at that time, we had about 7700 instructors throughout the Air Force.

Speaker 4 Wow. That was kind of the heydays of our Air Force in terms of Manning. Right. It sounds like you.

Speaker 3 Yeah. And I happened to make senior CCF and I got a phone call and I still remember his name. She fashioned. And the first words out of his mouth is like, first of all, who the heck are you and why are you not in fuels? So I explained the situation and he's like, Well, guess what?

Speaker 4 Coming back.

Speaker 3 You're coming back and you're going to win.

Speaker 5 Yeah.

Speaker 3 And I think I'm the only person who ever got stationed outside that never heard one bad thing about this place. No one ever said anything bad about this when they found out it was coming here. So. Yeah, when we come here and. Actually, I came here by myself. Chris got stationed in Korea for a year. So as the kids came out here and the rest is history, did six years retired and.

Speaker 4 Made chief out here.

Speaker 3 In chief here.

Speaker 1 Let me hear you say you were the first I heard you were the first lady leader and as first chief.

Speaker 3 First chief in the SEAL Specials career field.

Speaker 1 Email from tremendous.

Speaker 4 And that's a that's amazing. Yeah. What a what a path to get there to like many it's not a straight line path it takes these these very interesting and incredible twists and turns and then you you end up exactly where you're supposed to be, clearly. I'm curious, as you and we can come back to that when you were talking about you were inspired to join PME professional military education. What was it in particular that.

Speaker 3 So I was selected to go to the ANC leadership school at Mar Air Force Base while I was stationed at McChord. And when I got to the schoolhouse, I found out that we had to make a speech and I was really I was petrified and having to give my speech was a really bad day for me. And that kind of inspired me to, you know, I really need to do something about this. And Miles, I just jumped at it and just become an instructor, I guess. Wow. So, yeah.

Speaker 4 So you were you took it as a personal challenge, personal growth endeavor.

Speaker 1 And I always tell people we tend to gravitate to our comfort. Yeah. And avoid the things that are hard and that is amazing to be able to do that. And I always tell my airmen, don't fear the reaper, you know, like jump right in and come up with a plan to, to take that, to get the thing down and chip away. And it makes a world of a difference. It really does.

Speaker 3 Yeah. Yeah. When when when I worked at that as a curriculum designer. The chief there, by the way, was the very first time I ever had a female boss ever.

Speaker 4 Wow.

Speaker 3 I was always the highest ranking. Bills herself emails so that she had she found out I was a math major, so she wanted me to take over the test analysis team because there was a lot of math involved with that. And so I was very uncomfortable with that. But that turned out to be probably one of the highlights of my time. So analyzing all the test data from all the schools.

Speaker 4 Yeah, that's that's incredible. Take a look at that part of the journey. My Grade G. First of all, making the decision to kind of go go all in on that is pretty, pretty amazing. Public speaking is scary for a lot of people. It's it is it's real. You know, it really does invoke anxiety and that's that I think we should be more upfront about saying, you know, that's natural and that's normal. And what I found a lot of times is that sometimes the advice is, well, don't be nervous. It's horrible advice. It doesn't it's there's a physiological reaction here. And so there's there's techniques and things that we can do to help. And I think yours was probably what we would call in some venues it format's exposure to, you know, to public speaking and just getting comfortable through that repeated exposure and then, you know, confidence and competence in your craft. And so obviously it's served you well and you've gone through a lot of different versions of leadership components. But that's amazing. I love that part.

Speaker 1 Plus, it lends a credibility to me, like that environment. Yeah, like I've always wanted to be a formal instructor for that reason that I just think it gives you that a certain polish, right? And I think you have a credibility with adding lending credibility to the system. You knew that we're going to be able to shore up that area for you and in your shows today. Yeah.

Speaker 4 There'll be a lot of people that if they listen to this and public speaking to something they struggle with, they will connect with this. They will be inspired by this. It will give them it will definitely give them hope and give them tools to to help them. And just to, I think, inspire them to, you know, be bold and be courageous.

Speaker 1 And I think the back to back you you faced an environment that was not comfortable and ended up being down the road. And I feel like perhaps that's been a theme in your career. It was you that was pretty amazing also. So the cherry on top when you joined was a high commercial with an year.

Speaker 3 Yes.

Speaker 1 And I would say you in high because you met your future husband doing a reshuffling next to an apprentice.

Speaker 4 And then went to Lakenheath together.

Speaker 3 And I also got in it.

Speaker 4 At that stage.

Speaker 3 Yeah, well, what was that like? Or. Excuse me. Anyway, I got a ride to school by a Navy pilot on the exchange.

Speaker 1 All right, you know what?

Speaker 3 I know, but there's an interesting story behind that Bill. I was I was an instructor at the party center and my boss said, hey, we want to put you in four step promotion. I was a staff sergeant. We want to put you in first step, but we also want to get you an F-15. Right? But we can't do both. Which one would you like?

Speaker 5 Good afternoon. Right.

Speaker 4 That's what she told us.

Speaker 5 I don't know, though. Okay.

Speaker 3 I just thought that was interesting that they would ask me that would I rather be promoted and get it right? I didn't get the step promotion. So they said, okay, now you can have your ride.

Speaker 4 Got you.

Speaker 1 So worked out.

Speaker 4 It worked out.

Speaker 5 I did it. What an incredible.

Speaker 1 Proposition. Cragin is doing that today.

Speaker 5 I know.

Speaker 4 Well, I think, you know, what do you notice is different between the time you know, your time of service and today? Anything that stands out to you, I'm sure some of the things are still the same, but it's.

Speaker 3 What you use. It's so different. Yeah. It's the attitudes. I mean, just the way we treat each other, just that's how we do it. Now is was not how we did it in the eighties and nineties. I mean, I've always been a firm believer that it doesn't matter if you're the person that takes the trash out or if you're the wing commander, it makes all the decisions. Everyone has value. And I always brought that up in my classes, too. But I don't think we really embraced that until recently.

Speaker 4 Yeah, that's that's a great that's a great perspective. And maybe or if if we did, you know, institutionally, maybe we didn't show it in the ways that, you know, that can always translate and translate today. But that's a that's a great point. I'm a I prescribe personally too and this is really about deal. But I do think there is absolutely something to that helping people understand that they're valuable at every level, no matter their job. And I take it one step further, I think everybody has to understand from a leader that no task is beneath them. Now, we all understand that at different levels. You can't do every task for every airman at every given time. I think we all fundamentally get that, but I think it's very powerful, very important that they understand and you understand as whether you're a senior airman, you know, leading a demonstrating to an agency or even as a colonel demonstrating to your CEOs and senior NCO, as Nancy goes, that, hey, I'm willing to fill sandbag. I will absolutely do it. If if we have got to build a defensive fighting position in this, what we're going to do, I absolutely do it. And I know that we all I understand that I can't spend every hour of every day doing it. But I'm just I'm taking what you said because I. I really believe in this because it it inspires a team and it adds value and people understand that. Valuable.

Speaker 1 So you you I still hear from you a lot, but you say you've got to walk the walk.

Speaker 4 Yeah, walk there. Walk. So true.

Speaker 1 That's true. Never outgrow that. They want to know you're willing to pick up a weapon, you're not foxhole with them and then you show humility and it shows you never get to disconnected from what's happening on the front lines. I think it's important to them when you're they know you're advocating in the right direction you. Right. And that's important or as a retired chief, you're you're given that basis in the right direction. I think it's important to. Yeah. So I got.

Speaker 4 To find this. Oh, there was an article when I was in Rothesay. It was part of the curriculum. And you may you may know this. You know, it may have been wider than in one of the aerospace studies classes. And it was called the article was called The Courage of Sam Bird. And it was about this captain in Vietnam who had a platoon that was just dysfunctional as all get out. And what he started doing was exactly that walking the walk. It was really little things like shining his boots when the folks in the platoon were not doing that and doing the little things like building out the maps with them and demonstrating those little actions that over time totally turned around that platoon in that company. I think he was a company commander. And so the article, unfortunately, I think he ended up as a

combat casualty and died in combat. But it really did like the whole company and platoon came around. So I need to we take this so far, but I think Gail hit on something really, really fundamental there. I got to go find the heart. Do you remember that? It wasn't anything.

Speaker 3 You know, I just remember one of John Maxwell's quotes well, was a good leader. Knows the way goes the way and. Shows the way.

Speaker 4 Mm hmm. Yep. That's awesome. That's great. That's a great one. I'm going to give out my. My notebook, my podcast notebook, and put that. Put that in there. That's really cool.

Speaker 1 Do you does any particular leader stand out to you through your active duty career or even as a as a civilian leader? That really made a. The difference in in the way you serve or or even going to making a career and making wanting to be chief? Yeah.

Speaker 3 Unfortunately, you know, in the beginning, a lot of my. Inspiration was from people that I didn't want to be like. Mhm.

Speaker 4 Yeah.

Speaker 3 Because I really don't have any role models. I will say this though, a lot of my supervisors and fuels took care of me. I will say that, you know, it could have been a lot worse. They just weren't used to having women in a career field. So it could have been worse. But yeah, a lot of minds drawn from what I did not want to be, but one of my one of my favorite leaders is to keep us, ah, the Air Force number five.

Speaker 5 Kayla Oh, yeah.

Speaker 1 And people like hot fries. Yeah.

Speaker 3 Yeah, I've met him. I met with him several times. He was the guest speaker when I made Chief. So just. Just a very inspirational person. Yeah. And then, of course, I have to include Chris.

Speaker 4 Yeah.

Speaker 3 You know, Chris became a first sergeant, and it was a cross-train. It was not a special duty. So when it became a special duty, the. Was grandfathered. So he did it for 11 years and. He just was just always an inspiration to me.

Speaker 4 That's cool. Shout out. So you got a couple of shout outs in there, which is which is great. So now we know at a minimum or at least have one more listener to our podcast. So Chris Hargis is going to he's going to dabble in it and check it out. But.

Speaker 1 You know, so there's a there's a quote out there that says, you know, people don't quit companies. They quit people. And I'm I'm amazed by by your resolve to survive the the bad supervisors, because I feel like a lot of our young airmen make decisions, life decisions, career decisions on on their experiences that they're about to rise. But it sounds like for whatever reason, maybe your upbringing, whatever the case, may be prepared you for those moments and you ever to have that perspective. And that's not what I want to be

like. So. Right. It gives me a point of reference to to go go away from it and be better. What advice would you give our men today that perhaps are experiencing that?

Speaker 3 Yeah. I drew a lot of my. Result, as you put it, to stay in the military. Because let me tell you, there were many times I wanted to get out, but. At any time. I thought I was being treated unfairly. That gave me just the extra motivation to prove them wrong. Right. I'm not going to get out because you don't think women should be in sports. Basically I'm going to stay here and just rub it in your face. It was my attitude. That s in a nice way. But yeah. The advice I'd give Aaron today and I, you know, I really don't connect. Well, I think with this younger generation, I don't know them that well like I used to. But I would I would say, you got to seek out somebody and say, hey, what should I be doing right now? So that I can be a chief. Ten years, 15 years from now. What's happening right now? What do I need to do right now to be a good leader? They need to seek somebody else.

Speaker 4 Yeah, I love that. And then on the flip side of that is, you know what, we want supervisors actively out in that space to our frontline supervisor talking about this all the time. And you got to Chief, you got to throw your story out there about the reason when when you were going through your reasons for serving and when you finally kind of got there. But in the beginning, is your supervisor who you didn't want to you didn't want to disappoint. You have a much more vibrant way of describing this. But that was it. There was a supervisor army.

Speaker 1 Yeah, especially this thing. So inner city kid and me talk myself and the core values in the army back to those where I served did not matter to me. But being a big brother, father figure like specialist came. That didn't matter. And just the way he carried himself, he was tough, was resilient. He could out rock you. I'll run you out tactics you. But he was kind and approachable and considerate and all those things I needed in my life at that point. And the thought of doing some silly. The look of disappointment in his face. That's what kept me from going down the wrong path. Another set of core values, which eventually I got there and I like to think a lot of our middle join for the core values. Eventually it gets ingrained in them, but until they look for those leaders that they want to be like and want to follow, that disappoint. And that's what I hope everybody gets. You know, so I always tell folks the most important leaders in your life should not be me and Colonel Baker should be your pride supervisor. And, you know, when 911 happened, I really thought. Because I was in during when 911 happened and. You know, I was scared at first, but then I thought, you know, I'm the best trained I can right now and our unit is super squared away. And if we go to combat, we're not going to we're not going to not pass the test because we're not ready for that moment. So was incredible feeling after that moment in time.

Speaker 4 Yes, a great part story. And I like the idea, you know, Gayle's advice of, you know, for the young airmen out there, go latch on to somebody, go hit your wagon. And it takes a little bit of humility. It takes time. It takes effort. But they will steer you. Right. We have we have lots of people that are in the supervisory roles that that are they're doing exactly what they should be. And for those that aren't there yet, we're we're aggressively getting them ready for that and pushing really hard for that.

Speaker 1 Yeah, fortunately or unfortunate, I think Gail just signed up for her inbox too, to grow quite a bit. Yeah. With your leadership requests.

Speaker 3 I think another piece of advice I would offer is something that Wise Chief told me one time. Whatever job you're doing, be good at it. So you good at it? Don't worry about what everybody else is doing. Do what you do and don't get noticed.

Speaker 4 That sounds that sounds that comes up a lot in AOS chiefs. Chief has said exactly that many times and I try to also push that out and just just. Be good at your damn job. We're talking about unquestionably proficient. That is a little bit fancier way of saying just be damn good at your job. It really is. It's it's part of the it's part of the wing vision. And that's exactly what we want. We talked about the unit effectiveness inspection and what do we want. We just want our airmen demonstrating their day to day excellence, being good at what they do.

Speaker 1 You know, when they go doesn't know. She says she has to connect with this generation that you had with them.

Speaker 4 Yeah, I think so, too.

Speaker 1 I mean, the fact that you recognize that we're we're kinder to each other. Kinder, but still, I mean. Right. I'm still going to go cross the war. That's what our business is. But the fact that you recognize that. There's compassion there visibly. And we try to treat each other with visible dignity, respect. She doesn't know this, but when I when folks get to find out, they get to work with her because we she has an assistant and protocol and usually a staffer, a Singerman. And they are giddy, as all can be, to go work with her because they know they're going to be taken care of and they're working with a retired chief, a wealth of knowledge there. And I don't know if you pick up on that or not. So I think you're a little more connected than you.

Speaker 4 Yeah, there's a lot of growth. I see a lot of growth in our augment to use to protocol. Absolutely. Definitely. I see that is visible.

Speaker 1 Dance wants to go there next. Yeah, it's great because I.

Speaker 2 Love my position. I pay, I don't want to pay. And you guys mentioned being good at your job. I love doing my job and that's the least I can do. I wouldn't turn down a job offer from you, although I would.

Speaker 5 Yeah, well.

Speaker 3 I go to school.

Speaker 4 Yeah, that's her. That's some advice. Third piece is.

Speaker 3 Go to school.

Speaker 2 Pull airman concept right.

Speaker 3 There. Yeah.

Speaker 4 Just, you know, have that. Have that. Extra experience in your in your bag before you separate is how it is that you go to school while you're in service is.

Speaker 3 Yes. When Chris and I were going to school, the online didn't exist. I never really date myself here. But the fact he finished his master's degree while he was deployed to Turkey where the online thing started. But yeah, I was always mad at myself for not doing it sooner when I before I had children, right? I was in the Air Force for 12 years before I had a first son. I could have a doctorate degree, but you're right. So, yeah. Go to school. Yeah. You learn so much from other people. Probably more from other people than you do your instructor.

Speaker 4 Is that. Is that thing, Gail, that I've heard put as you will never have more time than you do right now. So that idea that you're there's trade space somewhere out there in the future usually does not pan out. So I think I think you're kind of highlighting that. But but you did. But you did get it done. Not not easy.

Speaker 2 Gentlemen, Gail, if we can transition into your post-military career, I know there are a lot of there's a lot of time spent there as well. There's probably a lot of lessons we can get into. Can you can you explain what you've done so far after after separating from the Air Force?

Speaker 3 So how I got into civil service is kind of a funny story as well. I was at home enjoying my retirement, probably doing laundry or rearranging something.

Speaker 4 Put up lights for the Christmas display.

Speaker 3 Right? Chris had already secured his job in our civil service and my phone rang. I picked it up and all I heard was, Chief, what are you doing? It was at the time Colonel Thomas, now lieutenant general, retired. Thomas and I recognized his voice. I was like, Sir, I'm just chilling, hanging out, doing my retirement thing. He says, Why have you not applied for secretary position of doing. Well, you're not going to tell a colonel that it's because you don't want to work there. And I said to her, I said, honestly, I said, I want the inspection job that's being advertised. He's like, Oh, he's like, Just come talk to me. So I went in and talked to him and I was bent on. I was firm. I was not going to accept the job. 10 minutes later, I'm walking out doing the paperwork.

Speaker 5 So very simple.

Speaker 4 Well, General, that's another shout out. General Thomas, we got to get this to him. And then his powers of persuasion are clearly world class. That's pretty.

Speaker 3 Cool. Yeah. And I'm just really grateful to him because it opened up a lot more doors. You know, he wanted somebody that had military background. Obviously, a lot of people think, you know, that's something a chief shouldn't be doing. But I think that's exactly where I needed to be because he needed someone with my background. You know, I knew all the acronyms. I knew the how we were structured. So.

Speaker 1 Yeah, yeah, that position leads. I mean, there's no absolutely. There's no doubt about it. I. Let's be clear, though, when secretary and they do it through. A very skilled way that she's told you. Yes, but you don't take it that way. So there's a lot of grace. It's pretty impressive to watch those positions be very, very effective. Yeah. Or commanders.

Speaker 4 That's. That's really cool. So that's how you got that's how you ended up getting connected into civil service.

Speaker 3 Yeah. And then what's funny is. Civilian personnel said I wasn't qualified for the job.

Speaker 1 Of course they did. Just kidding.

Speaker 3 I guess I had to start out as a trainee trainee, which I thought was funny because who's going to train me? But it was okay. It all turned out for the best. And then I did that for seven years. And then under Colonel Carney, now General Carney. I really wanted to do something.

Speaker 4 Different, mix it up.

Speaker 3 I really wanted the protocol job because I knew Michelle was leaving. She'd only been here for 18 months and. So I talked to him about that. I was kind of scared, you know, because you don't want to leave your boss, you know? But I really did it.

Speaker 4 Seven years isn't a long time in the end.

Speaker 3 And so I had my whole speech written out how I was going to approach him, what I was going to say got into his office and I think I got five words out. He's like, Oh yeah, let's do it. Let's make you chief protocol. So, you know.

Speaker 1 That's your negotiator.

Speaker 5 Yeah.

Speaker 4 So so you you leverage General Thomas. You brought that back, whatever that was. So I, I am going to ask because this comes up from time to time with folks. You think that they are not ready for job or maybe they're they think they're not interested in a job and they go to the interview. Why did you go to the interview?

Speaker 3 Because a colonel told me to, you know, you can leave the Air Force with the Air Force doesn't leave. You know, I. I have so much respect for Colonel Thomas and. I thought there was no harm in going in on it. And, you know, it's just funny. It just seems like my whole career, everything happens for a reason. You find out something and you get upset. Like when I found out I was going like this, I think I cried for two days straight because my instructor knew he wasn't done. And I was enjoying it. That turned out to be the best thing. Now, see, there was seven years made, two ranks incredible.

Speaker 4 And there was the part that you didn't realize was going to open up for you. The opportunity. Yeah, I know. The reason I was born on that thread a little bit is because we I've heard this before where people in particular in different front office positions, you know, they, they say, well, I'm, I'm not interested or I don't want to do that job or that job's not for me. My thing is, you know, if that person or that leader is asking you to interview out of respect for them, the, the the, you know, the answer that hey, I'll come interview and you know, I think if you'd said, hey, I'm not interested or it's kind of unfair to that person that you know and respect. So it's another way of looking at it, right? The reason and you don't know what you don't know and there's so much they can open up to you. So it's a great I mean, there's an interview tip and a life tip in what you said. It's a it's kind of a pro tip. Like you may think there's there's this path, but you just don't know what opportunities are going

to open up. And if if this person that you respect is asking, then, you know, out of respect for them, go give it a try. What's the worst that can happen? And look, look, work. Look what came of it. It's incredible. Yeah, I love story.

Speaker 3 I always get lucky.

Speaker 1 So that's great. Know, I think your talents created those opportunities as well. And your body of work.

Speaker 4 And luck has been described as the combination of where timing and preparation meet. So if you want to look at it that way, maybe we can call you lucky in that context, okay?

Speaker 3 Correct.

Speaker 2 One one question for you, Gail, with this chief protocol position, I wanted to ask you, you interact with a lot of Air Force leadership, a lot of divas. What what really stands out from your perspective when when they're visiting Altus Air Force Base. What what can you see from them? What do you get like the vibe from them when they when they are visiting here?

Speaker 3 I think every diva that has come through here since I've been chief of protocol has been. I mean, it's almost like they're shocked to see how great Altice is right there. There. They just love coming here. And they talk about Altice the whole time and the airmen and how the base looks. And that's every day that's come through here. And we've had a lot. Yes. Because we had the KC 46 arrival ceremony two years ago. We had the chief of staff here and former chief of staff, the governor.

Speaker 1 So business has been good for you.

Speaker 3 Business has been great. Yeah.

Speaker 4 We do. For four for little old Altus. We do pack one heck of a. One heck of a punch. Which makes me really proud. It's amazing place. I think that's why you get that. You know, we are we're we're a tight knit group, and we're on this 8000 acre patch, but we generate a hell of a lot of air power. It's incredible. And one of our guiding principles is we treat everybody like like four star generals. And that's true. And I see that in the way you work your protocol. If they're a guest of the wing or a guest of the base, absolutely. We treat them that way. And we should because they're a guest. That's right. And we we show them what we're all about and the way we do business in Altus. And I think that resonates. That's why you see that with our.

Speaker 1 Yeah, I think that resonates with 1206. Colonel Dove chiefs come here who treat treated like a four star and they walk away doing for one value but also they're more vested in what we're doing here. And then on the other side is the the owning group, local group here, very impressed with the way the wing command team and really the base at AAJ treated one of their own when they come here. So really when it comes to the DV and our own airmen, they really respect that we're executing on our guiding principles are again, truly impressive.

Speaker 3 I would never want a TV movie here not wanting to come back.

Speaker 4 Perfect approach. Yeah. And we do we get a lot of we get a lot of repeat customers. Go get a lot of repeat customers. We get everybody. I love the, you know, the folks that come through when they're making a road trip from one coast to the next and they pop in. And I think you have a lineup of folks who every year come through a different times, which is really good. And then everybody in general.

Speaker 3 Retired general. Dollar or whatever they want to do. See family? Yeah. Yeah.

Speaker 1 Or, of course, mountain or perched on mountains. You know, advertising a little bit now.

Speaker 5 Yeah.

Speaker 4 So, Gail, did you ever imagine that on this on this journey, that this is how it was going to this is how it was going to play out, that you'd be making a difference every day, every week, every month, every year.

Speaker 3 I remember getting my first ID card, basic training, and I looked at the date and it said 20th September 1986. And I started to cry and I thought, I'm never going to make it. Cause you're so busy training, you're getting yelled at 24 seven. I thought, there's no way. And then. Yeah. 20 years. And I'm still here. Wow. And I wouldn't change a thing. Yeah, I'd do it all over again. And you know, I kind of felt bad at first because I'm an only child. So, you know, my parents I wasn't around my parents, but.

Speaker 4 And one of the one of the challenges and there's there's plenty I mean, in a in a a career that spans four decades, you know, there's going to be challenges associated with that, too. But I'm sure your parents were super proud of you.

Speaker 3 I hope so.

Speaker 2 Gail, I've got another question for you. You met you met Chris pretty, pretty early on in your career. How has he helped shaped you throughout your career and even into your into your civilian post-military career?

Speaker 3 Well, he he has always outranked me. So I was always inspired to to to get up to his speed. Right. So he made fun of his own senior airman. So I was like, okay, I don't make loans on senior airman. He made staff the first time I did this.

Speaker 4 But you can make blows on a senior airman. I did you imagine him on that one? That's good.

Speaker 1 You take a plane ride or something like that?

Speaker 3 Yeah. He got John Elway to undergraduate in NCO Purgatory School. I got it at leadership school. And then, of course, when he became a sir. Oh, my gosh. I need. I just needed him all the time because he he always had the answer, right? Like, if I was having an issue with somebody in the flight, he always had the answer. I could always go to him. But I got to tell this funny story. So him being a first sergeant, you know, he gets phone calls, two, three, 4:00 in the morning. Right. Almost every weekend, depending on what squadron you're in. And when I was at L.A., I decided to take the short phone for a

weekend. And I heard his phone ringing at 2:00 in the morning and I'm like, Chris, your phone's ringing. Get up. And he started laughing.

Speaker 1 He's like, That's your phone.

Speaker 5 Good luck with that.

Speaker 4 Let's have fun with that one. That's what you're going to need. You probably needed him anyway, so you might as well just get up.

Speaker 3 Yeah, I did. I had to call him anyway. I was like, I don't want to do this. But yeah, he's inspired me to. I mean, he's he's been the first to do everything, so I just kind of follow his lead. Yeah, it's awesome.

Speaker 4 Well, now you are still. Now you've. You've translated that to time at the golf course together. You do your your cruises and sounds like your. It was a match made in heaven.

Speaker 3 Yeah, we're lucky that we have the same interests, so. Yeah, we got lucky.

Speaker 2 Do you see do you see retirement anywhere in the near future at all? Do you see an end?

Speaker 3 There's definitely a retirement because we want to travel, but it's going to be a while.

Speaker 2 You're not just saying that because.

Speaker 5 No, because there's a scale. Oh, yeah.

Speaker 1 That's one of the virtues of a this truth to power.

Speaker 4 Yeah, that's true.

Speaker 3 Well, you know, we have to get our daughter to medical school. She's a senior, so she'll start school. That's for years. As you know, it's not cheating. So we need to get her done before we retire.

Speaker 2 That's great. Um, command team, is there. Is there anything else we've got for. For Gail while we have her out?

Speaker 4 I just. Gail, want to just tell you for me, to you. Hopefully we we give you feedback, you know, at intervals, but we really appreciate you. It's the whole experience. It's it's everything you bring to the table. And when we look at we talk about and I know you've heard us say this, but for the audience out there, we may have hit this a few times, but we talk about civilian airmen and we talk about how fundamental and how important they are to what we do in terms of depth of expertise, depth of experience, consistency, continuity, those things that really make us a stronger force. I really think you're the epitome of a lot of that. We lean on you for a lot of stuff. And so I just want to say thanks to you for just bringing a incredible perspective and a highly competent, highly competent capability to do our way. I mean, we I can't I just can't imagine how we would function

without you. So it's been great. There's been a great I've love this podcast, by the way, this one that been I've had a smile on my face whole time.

Speaker 1 Though, even with a huge smile walking out of here less than a week ago, everything Colonel Baker says. The interesting thing as a Comanche about travel a lot and I my my circle of of influence now or people that I talk to a lot of other command chiefs and if any of them served at Altus they asked me a couple of questions. How's Charlie? And then how's Gail?

Speaker 5 She's still there.

Speaker 1 Yeah. So she's she's world renowned. It's pretty impressive from my standpoint. You know, I feel weird calling you girl sometimes because you're chief. I mean, you might have retired, but you carry yourself like a chief. All the events.

Speaker 4 We get to see the uniform come.

Speaker 1 Back, you wear the mattress, have it, tailored it, and it fits like a glove, which is impressive. And I mean, you put yourself out there to still be all in as an airman. I mean, whether it's running your protocol bit or just being a chief or being entertainment. Yeah. Which is pretty awesome. I they say, yeah, you're going to play the keyboard. I dropped the mike. We don't need anything else. We know it's going to be a great event with great energy because as she brings to the table but same thing and we've had a couple of closer conversations and definitely speak truth to power. And I can tell you as a mentor, which means a lot, keep a straight and that's something that we we truly relish here.

Speaker 4 That's awesome. And then we usually flip the script back on on our guest and say, Do you have any question for the team? Or I don't want to rob your.

Speaker 2 Rob no dude host you all you all, you know, you know the process but yeah. Gail, do you have any anything for for us, for the community?

Speaker 3 Well, you know, I have to. Bring it back to you guys. Know, we're. We're only as successful as our command teams. Right. And I every day feel appreciated. Just watching. It was really, really hard to retire. 12 years ago I did not want to, but it was a decision. I had to make sure the salary. So being able to come back, civil service and being the chief of protocol, I, I just I feel like I'm still serving. Right. And it just brings me a lot of joy. I love being in the middle of everything. I don't like being in front. You all know that it seems kind of person. That's why I like protocol. So behind the scenes, you know, I just I love helping commanders with their, you know, their changes of command and the retirement ceremonies. I just love doing that.

Speaker 4 So and they have gone swimmingly. You know, we just you and the team just execute.

Speaker 3 That's amazing. I really enjoy it.

Speaker 4 It's clear. Passion's clear. Even in this.

Speaker 1 But do you have any questions for Jan? This was a.

Speaker 5 Script. Yeah. Guys.

Speaker 3 How did you get so good at your job? This is like the third time we've interviewed me.

Speaker 2 And it's simply, hey, it's great leadership.

Speaker 1 You know, every time your jazz has more microphones.

Speaker 5 And.

Speaker 4 Laptops, it gets more technical, it gets more teched up in here.

Speaker 1 Is.

Speaker 4 Shout out.

Speaker 1 This number is the longest time you've gone without mentioning. Yeah, that was Journey to the Matrix. Well.

Speaker 4 I have one for Jan's show. So, Gail, Steve talked about the generational connections. Do you see a generational connection there?

Speaker 2 With Gill. The funny thing is, I find myself as like an older soul compared to, you know, I'm the little I'm a millennial compared to that. Thanks, chief. Yeah, but. But I seem to connect a little more with, like, a lot of my friends are in their thirties and forties. They have kids, you know, they they're just a lot older than me. And I seem to connect with them a little more than the generation behind me. So, yeah, I see Gail around and it's an easy conversation. You know, I see people around at all of these events. You know, if I'm covering changes of command, which is like low key, one of my favorite seasons of the year because I love seeing the big smiles on everybody's faces, especially the families. You know, I see people there and I just know you. I'll have a conversation with you. But I know when I need to when I need to buckle it up and I need to do my job as well. But but certainly I, I have that connection with with certainly the older generation. And it's not difficult either. It's not difficult for me to come up with a conversation with them.

Speaker 4 So yeah, I see it. I see the connection out there and I've found that the generational there, there's some components to, you know, maybe how we communicate, how we, you know, how we use devices, other things. But I really believe fundamentally if we get generations, name your generation away from electronic devices when they're not being used to do our jobs in an environment of shared adversity, we we respond and react as a team the same way we always have. Sometimes sometimes getting to that can be a little bit of a challenge with with modern day distractions. But I do think we're I think we're we're just fine when when we can do that. And I think this this will be a path for continued connection and thought on that, on how we how we keep keep connecting. But it's awesome. So we got got quite a quite a spread of experience in here.

Speaker 1 So you last thing I'll say about about Chief is that, you know, the, the debrief thread that I pulled is like she always jumped on opportunity and it was always a phone call away. Apparently, everything that everything that happened was always a phone call. Yeah, not a yeah, not an empty virtual RPF message or something like that. So I think that's a

good point. People are seeking you out, which is important. I think your body of work creates opportunities for yourself. You're here.

Speaker 2 Yeah. One one last thing for this for you, Gail. If you are, you shout it out a couple of people already. But if you want to, this is another opportunity to give any more shout outs to the family. Anybody you'd like to that have made an impact in your life, you know, have really impressed on you?

Speaker 3 Well, definitely. Again, shout out to Aaron. He is a C17 maintainer. I'm 18, our son. He's 28. He is a very good bowler. I think most people know that.

Speaker 4 Like really good bowler. Like how many?

Speaker 3 300 skills? Yes, he's up to 30 to perfect 300 now.

Speaker 1 His goal is 97. Yeah.

Speaker 5 Hey, I going to tell him that. Yeah, that's a good one.

Speaker 3 And then he has for 800 series and he goes to Tulsa for tournaments and Vegas. So definitely a shout out to my, my med student out there soon to be med student Alyssa try to make it through her senior year. But no, you just get this. Yeah. And of course, Chris, all our best staff and our best friends, Terry, Crats and Charlene. We've been friends for the last 18 years, so. Yeah. It's great. Love them all.

Speaker 2 So now that's awesome. But a gentleman. Yeah. I think that's a that's a wrap for episode eight episode.

Speaker 5 Eight.

Speaker 2 Of Love It. The Debrief Podcast Command Team. As always, we really appreciate your time, Gail. We can't thank you enough for for coming on to the Debris podcast and really sharing a wealth of knowledge and some great lessons with us. We can't thank you enough from myself, the team, the command team for sure. We really appreciate it.

Speaker 3 A lot of fun.

Speaker 4 And you're glad you did it now. Yeah.

Speaker 3 Yeah. And I'm going to listen to all of them.

Speaker 4 Just just just like. Just like in your, you know, your public speaking. A play experience. Like, you're glad you did it when you got it.

Speaker 1 I think people were surprised how quickly become just a conversation.

Speaker 3 Yeah. Yeah, that's true.

Speaker 4 It really is.

Speaker 1 But I think we were already debrief writing for us and ruining James's exit.

Speaker 5 Yes. Okay.

Speaker 4 Thank you, Janice.

Speaker 5 Because now and and with. Thank you, everybody who's listening.

Unidentified That is a wrap. I think everybody here that's.