

Episode 4 w CMSgt Thompson_1.mp3

Speaker 1 Hello.

Speaker 2 Everybody. Welcome back to Episode four of the Debrief podcast of Airman Jantz. And I'm here with the 97th Air Mobility Wing Command Team, Colonel Baker and Chief Flores, and we have a special guest this week, Chief Kari Thompson, from our very own security forces squadron here. Welcome, Chief.

Speaker 1 Thanks for coming by, sir.

Speaker 3 Defender defenders. Let's go. That's right.

Speaker 1 Here. Let's go.

Speaker 4 This house.

Speaker 2 Command team. How are you guys? How you guys doing?

Speaker 4 We're great. We're just talking about before we came on, please week. Yes. Great to have Chief Thompson with us, but we're.

Speaker 3 Excited now. You guys kicked off this morning with a rock march. How far was this year?

Speaker 4 6.2 miles. Something like that.

Speaker 1 6.2 miles. I hurt Roger.

Speaker 4 I said you were moving fast, but your team was moving fast. You know, a.

Speaker 1 Lot of guys just ran. Just ran the whole thing.

Speaker 4 But we were out there together at the at the opening ceremony, and the kickoff was really nice. It was a great way. That's a great way to start a week.

Speaker 3 Absolutely. That was my first career field in the Air Force. And I think I mentioned previously, my heart will always be as a defender some of the best times and some maybe not. So good times have happened as a cop. But like you said this morning, sir, they got to watch the first line and a lot of times the last line of defense as well.

Speaker 4 The only line of defense.

Speaker 3 So I think we get giddy every time we're runner or defender nation.

Speaker 4 Yeah, we do. And that's telling them, you know, I really have a special place in my heart, too. I mean, you've lived it and had the privilege of leading defenders with the defender flight and scored command, and it was just really formative. I will always have that profound respect for the defenders and what you were able to do. What you bring to the fighting is awesome.

Speaker 1 You guys hit me in the heart.

Speaker 4 Yeah, you got you know.

Speaker 1 You got to do that. I'm supposed to be the hearts of cops. You feel like, man, I'm so appreciative. Like, especially for you guys. I don't think you guys understand how much it means when you all show up. And I mean, just go out and about and y'all show up everywhere. And I don't think you guys understand how much it means to those guys seal like that. And so just for me to you guys appreciate that.

Speaker 3 Cash and give you don't give compliments like Harley statue you doesn't know how much that means to us.

Speaker 4 Here. Yeah absolutely appreciate that. And yeah, we absolutely mean it and yeah defenders you know, we talk about this all the time, but the defender community is tight. You know, they're not there's no freebies to gain trust with the defender unit. No, it's not. It's it's serious business and for good reason.

Speaker 1 But I think you hit the ground running to a believer. Now, I can't remember what it was, but it was like change of command here, you guys. Come week one, they were out on the mid shifts like I think it was like midnight 30 or something like that. You guys went out there and I.

Speaker 3 Think it was the first month.

Speaker 4 Yeah, yeah. Maybe later way out there. That same connection which today they had the berets on. Hey, how awesome is that. They look, they look sharp.

Speaker 3 Then they all look.

Speaker 4 Great. That was the first thing I notice walking up a formation of defenders who brazen it.

Speaker 1 Not only you sort it, I pulled in a parking lot near us and now they're gathered up. And I looked and I was like, You know what? They've all got a beret, like, because everybody's wearing the the tactical hats now and stuff. So, yeah, it was good to see, you know, in that type of formation that those guys had that thing. Like, I love it, the blue break.

Speaker 3 It was definitely inspiring.

Speaker 4 It was, you wear yours all the time.

Speaker 1 All the time, sir. Like a number one. My hair too big for a tactical cap. But number two.

Speaker 4 My wife, they make extra laws.

Speaker 1 They do well. My wife, she a she was a security forces augmenting. And I think that's what sold her on. And she liked the bracelet. Give it up. We call it defender Sundays when I get to form it and, you know, put it on and get it all shaved up. You remember what I'm talking about?

Speaker 3 Oh, yeah. We talked about that this morning. The pride in your we can have a pizza. Pizza Brie like a Chef Boyardee Chef Boyardee one or you can have a security forces minted cap, I mean. Brie So I definitely got one of the best ones here.

Speaker 4 There's a lot of heritage in that.

Speaker 1 It is like the I mean, back in the day I originally came in, in 95 with 97, the commercials merged. And as you see the beret right now, it's got a defensive force flash on it, the defenders of the force that they see. But it's a you know, it was meant to distinguish it. Prior to that. It was a the air police security and not security. Police were air police and they had a white helmet to distinguish those guys. And so it's it's meant to distinguish you from the crowds. You know, I know it's something to be said when you put a kid on, you could see the guns. You could tell. But like in a crowd, when everybody is going crazy, they can really identify with them radios and what you can do for them.

Speaker 4 So yeah, I like it. It looks cool and yeah, it's clear. I mean, she looks like a defender. So it's a great morning. Has a great week to week.

Speaker 3 Sure week. Good images. Yeah.

Speaker 2 It was great weekend. Great weather. Holy cow. I can't I can't complain about, you know, only only the way. It's only that way. But other than that gorgeous weather playing hockey is and playoff hockey right now that's going on shout out my hockey fans. Appreciate you. We're here for you in Oklahoma. So but yeah, it was great. No complaints. And then today. Easy day. Top it off with the podcast.

Speaker 3 You thought 106 degree temperatures was a great weather.

Speaker 2 Yeah, fine by me is certainly interesting. Better, I think. Better than or better than below freezing and a, you know, -20 wind chill. That's fair. That's fair. Yeah. Yeah. But hey, Chief Thompson, you mentioned you joined in 95, correct? Yes, sir. I want to kind of get a little bit of your background on why you joined.

Speaker 1 Oh, wow, man. So, you know, originally 95, I'm originally from a washed up county, Arkansas. And I just like a lot of people that have their own stories about, you know, opportunities and all that. Truth be told, I was chasing a girl. I see a she had this girl she was telling me about. She originally like I was about to go into the Air Force and I was like, what is this Air Force thing? And so she really hit me to it. And, you know, I've got an identical twin brother, too, so I start talking to him about it and he was like, Oh yeah, man, I want to fly. I was like, okay, that's cool. We're like, Hey, let's, let's, let's hit it off. But yeah, it was a, you know, just peers in high school talking about it in school. My brother was big, a big influence in my life. It was like, let's let's go for it. You know.

Speaker 4 We all we had we got to meet his brother last month for some professional development and some interaction that you were having with the defender, some leadership perspective stuff, which I thought was really cool. I get the sense that y'all are really tight.

Speaker 1 Oh, man, yeah. We are like, yeah, I mean, identical twins. Like, we shared the same room until I was 17 years old. And man, I get to thinking about it and it's like about

maybe four or five years ago, an opportunity to purchase some land out about where he lives to like actually like go back and live them. So, man, it's just so exciting to think that I'll be able to, you know, live with him again. Yeah. Yeah. But, like, we're a peas in a pod. I mean, when he came down, he actually stayed in touch, right? When I was like, Hey, man, we can go get a lodging room. But right now I'm living in a and fam camp as a transition for us and I have a 26 foot travel trailer know. Yeah I'm a stay in the trailer was like man.

Speaker 4 Well I'm a 17 old.

Speaker 1 You know like oh man but yeah. Yes, sir, we are, we are. We are, like, locked in with each other.

Speaker 4 Y'all grew up in a small town in Arkansas.

Speaker 1 Yeah. Washtenaw County was an unincorporated town. Like, so the the the city we're actually from in that county is called Camden. And it's about maybe 9000 people. So 9 to 12000 people, depending on who's taking count, you know? Yeah, we are. Yeah, we grew up same town the whole time, never moved, you know, stay in the same house from and I don't know, since we were like maybe ten years old, you know. So even when we go back, you know, we're in the same house, you know?

Speaker 4 So family still there? Yeah.

Speaker 1 Mom, Dad. Still in the house. Got a sister. She lives in the same town. All my uncles and aunts are all down there, so. Yeah, I don't.

Speaker 4 They listen to podcasts.

Speaker 1 Yeah, they're going.

Speaker 3 To be all know.

Speaker 1 They're going to get this and believe it. It's going to be like the funny thing about it is that like, you know, because two identical twins from the small community do like that to go do their for us. The funny thing about it is that like when we go back home, everybody knows, you know, because it's so small, so like this might end up on dog going like over to the radio station one or 4.5, you know, not that they played over and over again, but yeah.

Speaker 3 You know, you mentioned they're tight. I had a couple conversations with Colonel Thompson and I told them, I think it's so cool that she Thompson has a colonel brother. And he said, I actually think the opposite. I think it's so cool that I have a chief brother. Yeah. On the other side. So I see a lot of admiration to see absolutely.

Speaker 4 What kind of stuff don't get into girl, right? Yeah.

Speaker 1 You would ask something like that, Colonel.

Speaker 4 If there's any dirt out.

Speaker 1 There. Oh, man. The dead bodies are still buried, sir. Like, so now we are just like, we're athletes. We, you know, small town. We ran track and played football. Like, I

mean, of course we did the twin thing, what people didn't understand, identical twins, stuff like switching classes, trying to, you know, have teachers out there like, you know, which one are you carry your gear, you know, and then, you know, nothing insane. And I think I want to put it on a podcast, but I like listening. So we had our fair share that had to wear appearance at the arena, seeing and saying, like you to cast. Yeah, I got to cut this off. I got to cut it out, you know. So I bet same stuff.

Speaker 4 Well, it sounds like y'all we've talked about in our very first podcast, we talked about sports growing up and it was really influential in my life. It absolutely instilled some things and set some passing conditions that I'm convinced and my pet, my path. I would not have been successful without it, but was.

Speaker 1 Fortunately.

Speaker 4 I played baseball, football, wrestling.

Speaker 1 So you're a busy.

Speaker 4 Hole and everything. Little everything. Yeah. Wrestling. Yeah.

Speaker 1 Come on. Do some competitors with the with the defenders I keep.

Speaker 4 Well you go get them get them back out there. I'm I'm all in. But yes. That's awesome. You grew up.

Speaker 1 What about sports? You too.

Speaker 3 I'll play sports later in my life. I played eighth grade. I played football and basketball. Basketball is actually pretty good. Five seven, but got older. And really, I'm the guy that hustles. So that's why long distance running became the perfect sport for me. I mean, I'm willing to suffer and loans. I mean, I've been slow. That's the perfect.

Speaker 4 He is not.

Speaker 1 Not at all. Not at all. I was out on the track one day on a Sunday. I was like, okay, this is going to be my long day. I'm doing it for Miles. And I think he let me about like six times. And I was trying to do for him, I was like, Man, it's so bad. I didn't even say hi or anything. He just kept running like.

Speaker 3 I waited a couple of times. So he's debriefing right now? Yeah. I apologize.

Speaker 1 No, you don't.

Speaker 4 Okay, so you did some sports. And do you think that helped you in your path to the Air Force?

Speaker 1 I do like it made it. I was just having as cold as crazy as I was just having this conversation with my commander about it. Like then like it seemed like for certain rituals, they recruited that type of person. The person that, you know, we're used to the suffering, as you say, chief, and, you know, the person that was like fine with teams and yeah I think it. No kidding. When I got into basic training, it wasn't it wasn't that difficult physically for

me, you know. Yeah. I really in especially when I got into security forces, it was something that I was glad that I went through. You know, prior to, you know, because you saw people struggle through different things that probably weren't a struggle to if they had, you know, what those did those sorts of things, you know. Yeah. So and no, it didn't.

Speaker 2 So for somebody who was chasing a girl, when you joined.

Speaker 1 Us.

Speaker 2 And going into security forces, what made you stay and ultimately be be a lifer, you know?

Speaker 1 Wow. Lifer. Yeah. So fun, right? Well, actually, I didn't have that sort of you know, I didn't have that sort of idea to stay in as a lifer. I actually separate. You know, I was in about eight and a half years. I was a staff sergeant. You know, I was hired to oh, if I if I was, you know, deployments would do the roof and, you know, security forces. I was trying to decide what I want to do with my life. So actually a separate I went to the reserves and retrained. I was a calm troop in a reserves up in Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station. And but it just not a defender was in me, you know, it was a it was a little longer, too, to that point. And, you know, I had some people say some choice words to me about like what not to do in combat because I was a prior defender, you know, so wrote me a little wrong way, pushed me back into this, you know. So I really wanted to like after I came back in, I said, you know, what are and I'll come back in active duty as security force. And I became a military working dog. And and I was like, you can't beat it. I mean, you got a dog with you every day. Like, I mean, you never have a bad day where you can just, like, you know, grab a dog and just walk, you know? So yeah. And after I did that, I just I was all in at that point, you know, I had seen it, you know, I was active duty for a while. I was able to get out and I saw the civilian side, you know, as a reservist. But you really you know, I was a traditional reservist. So, you know, when we want type thing and, you know, when I saw the, you know, on the outside, like just the civilian sector, I wasn't ready for it. You know, I wasn't ready for it, you know. So when I came back, you know, told myself, I'm to do it. I'm gonna do it the right way to go, you know. And I was all them in it. Yeah, it was. And then when I came back in, I just saw, you know, I had a couple of goals that I set and I said, I want to be a security forces flight chief. I want to be a master sergeant, you know, cause I had a master sergeant that was really influential in my career. And I said, I want to do that. I want to be able to, you know, take these troops. I want to be able to, like, show these troops a credible leader. I want, you know, all because I want to Master Sergeant, you know, you know, God rest his soul. Gregory church on your past about we kept up for a while, but he passed about maybe five years ago. And so I had a pretty rough, rough life after I got out. But, um, yeah, I saw that and I was like, I want to do that. And then as you progress, you start seeing like the scope of influence you can have in different type of positions. And I saw a senior master sergeant and I said, you know what? To see him as a sergeant is like the flight chief. The flight chief. So I want to be that guy, you know, and, you know, and I was able to hit that market as I'm a see your master and I'm like, all right, cool. And then I saw a chief and I was like, Oh, man, it's like he had the name was being around. He had an orange or red light. Every time I looked at him, he had that. Or I was like, Oh man, this guy. Like, he commands a room when he goes in there and like, you know, I say, man, like, if there's anything I want to do, hold it, you know? So I just saw those leaders that I can't want to, you know, model myself after, you know, and it just made me continue to push him. And here I am.

Speaker 2 You must have read my mind, because I was literally going to ask you, you know, about becoming master and then senior and then chief.

Speaker 1 So, you know, I had it.

Speaker 2 I had it there and I was like, wait, what do you do?

Speaker 3 I know that's a good cop right there. Yeah, yeah, yeah. She's a little bit better, you.

Speaker 4 Know, so.

Speaker 2 So but I'm curious if your leadership philosophy changed and how it changed as you went from master to senior to chief?

Speaker 1 Oh, man, not at all. Like it was all because I talked to you about that one flight, if I had and it was a give it to him, in fact, that he had. I mean, I just man, I really believe, like, if you just give a damn, like, you know, you care about the people, the people you're around. People are are people who's going to get this done? They're the ones going to get it done. And you really got it in your heart to heart care about their well-being. And so no, like it hadn't changed since then. You know, it was a couple of nuances like that. I had to realize that, like, sometimes care reform is you had to cut them loose, you had to let them go, you had to push them on it. No, you had to hold me accountable for certain things. You know, I'm sorry for in trouble.

Speaker 3 You find a passion. Yeah, yeah.

Speaker 1 Just like. Yeah, and like. And if it was anything that I did a little different that I had to think about a little bit differently, it was it like a, I think like somebody always say you got a feel vegetable sometimes, you know, in man, like holding them accountable to stuff, man. So like it was a, you know, of course caring for him, but sometimes caring for him is saying like, you know what, you're messing this up, man. Like, come over here. Let's let's have a frank conversation. You know what? I don't believe this is for you. For you. We got to move in a different direction, you know? So that's about a little bit of change. I have all my philosophies.

Speaker 4 That's really cool. I think that's one of the fundamental things that sets us apart as an organization is the ability to do that and understand that people need different things at different times, right? It's something that we've talked about, I think even on this podcast before is, you know, what is a what does a brand new airman need? What type of leadership? They need versus somebody who's got maturity and experience under their belt. We have different levels among our erm and I think you're hitting on some really fundamental components on how we, you know when we use the word love from time to time and how we demonstrate that love is matters and it's, it's, it's not static. Yeah, it is very dynamic.

Speaker 3 So I got to ask for to Chief Thompson, you've had a lot of leadership experience, a lot of airmen, and we both know, well, I have a touch and go recruiting forces. And you've done this business for a very long time. Well, you had a touch and go and come. I feel you've told me this before, but I got I got to ask, how do you balance compassion with accountability even today?

Speaker 1 And that's a tough one. You know, like my going in is always that that first part, the compassion, you know. And I always try to think like, you know, when you say accountability, I always try to think to myself, like, how can we make more airmen accountable as opposed to holding them accountable? You know, so like I really think about like, you know what, making sure that those guys understand like a you have a part to play in this, you know, like people are dependent on you everyday and it's very simple. It's very easy for me to pass on that message because I'm so serious about it, you know? So I'm more so try to make sure that they know that they're accountable as opposed to holding them accountable, you know. So, you know, and it's a it's a it's a fine line. You walk, man. It's a fine line. You walk the air and sometimes you get it wrong, you know, sometimes you miss. And but, you know, you always want to defer to that compassion piece. But to make sure that they understand it like a you must be more accountable, you know, as opposed to me having to hold them accountable some place for. I don't know, we all do. Yeah, but I try to try to push you to be more accountable as opposed to holding. I don't know if that even answers what you're asking, but like that's what I try to do.

Speaker 3 Yeah. So it certainly gets to the essence of it and I mean it really what I take away from that is that you believe in people, right? But you also believe in good or discipline. And that's almost like, you know, they're saying you're going to get it wrong. Get it wrong on the people side.

Speaker 1 Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Speaker 4 I thought you were going to ask at some point when this goes back to the question on previous podcast that chip for his ass when you were talking about your history of service and how you joined for one reason and then you found and I think you kind of hit it right there in the middle when you came back as a military working dog. But you got to ask your question.

Speaker 3 Yes. You ready?

Speaker 2 If you.

Speaker 3 Want. I want to see if you took my debrief.

Speaker 2 Yeah, I do. I wrote it down. So there's a difference between the day you enlisted versus the day you joined the man?

Speaker 1 Yeah. And it for me, I think Colonel Baker already said it. Like when I came back unit second time when I was out and I came back, I was fully, you know, I was like a man. I wasn't a chicken, I was a dog. I was the whole, you know, like a I don't know if you guys.

Speaker 3 That's that's that's a that makes sense coming from Arkansas.

Speaker 1 Who like you know the chicken they like they spin out eggs but they still rolling but the hog is committed because they're getting slaughtered and ham and eggs, you know what I'm talking about? So, like, I was I was committed at that point. I don't know if any of that makes sense to you guys. The leg it it's a commitment level and when I came back in I was so serious about it like all because you know, as I said earlier, you know, heights of a

life and folks are dependent on you, you know, so you had to you had to really like, you know, not take this thing for granted. Not this is not a game like America's business is for real. And man, like, it sets you apart from a lot of different people, man. And like. So, yeah, the day I joined when I came back and I was committed to this thing that and I'm still committed now, still trying to hold up. You know, I saw Colonel Baker on a truck this morning, like when it passed, everybody. You know.

Speaker 4 I did not. Yeah, you did. I did. I did well or nothing. I mean, they'll take me to.

Speaker 3 Colonel Baker's a sneaky, sneaky, good athlete. He likes to play it off as he's just one of the boys because he hangs in there and he's usually on the higher end. Worse activity.

Speaker 4 Sneaky than good, apparently.

Speaker 1 Oh, man. Like.

Speaker 4 I love getting out there when we can, you know? That's the way I wrapped up with.

Speaker 1 Yeah. So the Citadel team team said.

Speaker 4 Oh, we did it. Sure did. And it's good.

Speaker 3 So debrief item for you. You mentioned you went to call and that kind of fell flat. And for you, you were a staff sergeant?

Speaker 1 Yes, sir.

Speaker 3 So Chief Thompson could go back with all the knowledge growth experience back to common in that time in place, you think? Chief Thompson could do well in that community.

Speaker 1 Yeah. Yeah. It's still at the end of day, it's people, you know. And, you know, I was I was a little short sighted. You know, I'm pretty sure you guys can imagine this security forces and was very like. Daring to reckon with, like, you know, the no nonsense. And, you know, I didn't understand, like just nuanced, you know, leadership is very nuanced, as you were saying, like levels to it is different as a senior and still dealing with it, you know. And you know, I wouldn't I was not ready. I could tell you that right now wasn't ready at that time. So as I sit right now understanding it, it's a different way to go about it. Oh, yeah, yeah. I've been all over it, you know, you know, cyber doing space stuff or something. I don't.

Speaker 3 Know. Yeah, I think so. You think so? You think you put them in Common Squadron? You'd be successful?

Speaker 4 Absolutely.

Speaker 1 Yeah.

Speaker 4 Without a doubt. Yeah. Yeah, I think we could pretty much plug in anywhere, and I think he'd be successful because I think you're you're master. The fundamentals are and maturity and life experience that you bring to the table right now. It's just kind of it's it's just so evident in the conversations that we're having. I wonder if maybe I was thinking through when you talk about the evolution in that journey was there and this is a personal question, but we're on the podcast. But was was there anything formative going on in your life that led to those changes?

Speaker 1 Who? Man Yeah, like. Yeah. You know how it is when you obviously are dealing with a lot of that stuff in a man. No loss of real good friends and you know, guys like as he transitioned out, you know, that, you know didn't didn't transition well you know and it was one of those things where like I had to, you know, take a break, take a step back, you know, take the proverbial knee, you know, and, you know. So, yeah, life was a life was giving me all the had, you know. Yeah. Even when I was out, you know, I told you I was I was active duty for like eight and a half years before separating. And, um, like when I got out, I got out for all the wrong reasons. I was, you know, tired, fed up. And so, like, while I was out for those two years, I didn't have a job. I was. No kidding. I was. I was on food stamps, you know, social services, me and my son. And yeah, it really put a lot of stuff in perspective for me, you know? So, man, come back a hell of a question. You. Yeah, put a lot of stuff in perspective for me and it. It really. It really made me realize what's important in life. You know, how to prioritize what you actually what you're actually doing with yourself. You know what you're doing for your family. Yeah. So, yeah, I was going through I was going through a couple of struggles like, you know, a lot of people do in this thing. I'm not sure you to have your own struggles, which I've dealt with in various points you guys career. But yeah, I was homeless for a little bit, you know, I got to know I lived in some people's basements and yeah, but yeah, I was going through a couple things, but it really made me like, you know, laser focused on let's get this back on this, let's go back in this thing and get it right. You know, let's, let's, let's do it for real this time. It's not this is not a plaything. This is people are depending on you. You need this. So what do a couple of things there, sir.

Speaker 4 Well, yeah, that's a that's a that's a heck of a heck of a story. And I think I appreciate your humility and sharing that. You know, a lot of I think a lot of people you have this presence about you that speaks to a lot of life experience. Good. I mean that in a really good way that it it comes across as a lot of maturity and it comes across as somebody who has a perspective that's unique and that drives interest in, you know, from a person to to want to know more and figure that out. And I think a lot of people who have seen adversity in their life, I think, tend to relate in a little bit of a different way. And so sometimes sharing that story, I think, is probably going to be really powerful for somebody that's out there that, you know, that there's a path. And in it it's it's not it's not always easy. There's not just.

Speaker 1 An is this is like just about almost therapeutic talking to you guys about this because, you know, at certain levels like you don't get up to opportunities. Nobody's asking the chief like, you know, what's going on with you. Nobody's asking the colonel I was having and it's all about like, you know, their own. So appreciate you asking those type of things.

Speaker 3 Yeah, it's trying to rebrand the therapy, the therapeutic debriefing. I don't know. I think we got around to something there.

Speaker 1 It's like, yeah, that one's a man. Oh, man. Just thinking about that. I hadn't thought about something like that.

Speaker 3 And then we talk about Saturday.

Speaker 1 Yeah, we talked about that later.

Speaker 3 Yeah. I think you talked to Chief Thompson. He has. And I talk about presence a lot. Like he I think he's the zenith of presidents because you can tell right away he's he's dealt with adversity without even having to talk about it. And he's relatable. And I think any airman from any walk of life, especially our enlisted folks, I mean, some of us come from some backgrounds and, you know, officers, too, as well. But a lot of our he's definitely and I think right away they can see relatable to you and your story and they can trust your words because you walk the walk. Yeah.

Speaker 1 It was hard for me. Yes.

Speaker 4 Yeah, it really is. And you know, that's that sometimes we've talked about this idea of. Well, what we've talked about before in the podcast, which is lowering lowering the shield kind of moments and especially in your business that you're in, is really, I think, particularly hard for defenders because of because of the roles and responsibilities.

Speaker 1 Cross-Dresser.

Speaker 4 Have. So you all have shields up almost all the time. But you bring up a good point. And it's it's not because anybody at this table feels sorry for us at all, but there's not a lot of opportunity for folks to lower the shield sometimes. And, you know, we we have very important roles and, you know, important jobs across the board. So there's a time and a place. But I mean, I think this is probably a time and a place that can be helpful to a lot of people because this will get captured and somebody or somebody listen to it and it.

Speaker 1 For an act. It definitely made me feel good, you know, just to, like, talk that through. I mean, if it is somebody out there who's got those type of things going, I just one thing I can say to them is just a man. Just keep your feet moving, you know, like don't get stagnant, you know? You know, keep pushing yourself. Reach out to folks like and like. So like you were talking about earlier with my brother and how close we are. Like, that was my man, you know, that was a guy, you know, he was always asking like, what's next? What you're doing? What's next? You know? And, you know, he really helped me out of a dark place, so. Yeah.

Speaker 4 That's who helped you. Helped help get you through it.

Speaker 1 Yeah. Yeah, I mean, I do, man. Like. And I hope you don't listen to this. Well, yeah, he's cool. He's. He's ready to, you know, keep your feet moved.

Speaker 3 When he hears this, he's going to say, I knew it.

Speaker 1 Like I never told you that.

Speaker 3 Hey, just going off script here for a second, and we haven't done this to any previous folks just because you're a chief and you mentor quite a few airmen, leaders,

officers, which are leaders, too. But what's your what's one of your feel good stories like I rebuilt an airman or you helped somebody through a tough spot.

Speaker 1 Oh, man. So while I was in home, while I was in and Jay Baer, previous to this assignment, I was a miner previous to mine, not I was in Alaska. Jaber And then I had a kid like Man and he was doing like all the wrong stuff for all the right reasons, you know, like, you know, he was using this government travel car to go buy his kid diapers, you know, like wrong thing to do, but for the right, you know, that type of deal in like a, you know, sometimes things comes across across your desk you like you know, you look in like, ah, what are we going to do with this one? And not even thinking about the person behind it, you know? Man and this kid like finally got to talk to him to do he was living out of a travel trailer in Alaska. This is like October, November going into like crazy season. I was like, that was your school was like where you fly? Like, at this point in time, I'm a sea master sergeant, you know? And so just to take the time like in this, he was telling me, I think he tried to hit me in the heart. He was telling me like, hey, I'm going to be a dog handler. And I'm like, Oh, yeah. I was like, he just, you know, had a pull on I'll say something you like, okay, you just trying to. But he was so serious about it. So was so mad. FIFER And I'm sorry, not for Peterson, but actually calling Peterson like in a way it was felt it was weird, but oh yeah, he so just helping that kid like, hey, man, you understand? Like, there's plenty of base housing all here. You don't have to live in this travel trailer that you written for, like, whatever. You know, a man like you want to be a dog, and that's a way to do it. You hadn't said that to your supervisor and no kidding. Like, so got the guy straightened out and then it was just he was the only one I really just thought about because he after he graduated military working dog school, we actually reached back out to him. It was like 80. I just wanted to let you know, like all this, you know, made it and, you know, it was a and so he did a whole little like they do and he was in a after he became a dog handler, he went to Alice and that's when he actually reached out to them because he want to talk about like our relationship and that type of deal. Oh yeah. So yeah, man. Like, hey, man, I hope you're.

Speaker 4 Still out there. Yeah. Oh, yeah, yeah.

Speaker 1 He was last I knew, he was down in a joint base center, so he was down south Texas, I think joint base and Antonio then, you know, but a and we'll make sure you hear this but like yeah, he he really he really did something to me when I saw him. Like, just something when you took an interest in him, you know, and then, you know, got him on the right path. Macer is, like, super vigilant, know which way to go with it.

Speaker 3 And now I feel like those are the stories that keep him, help us, keep us in service. Now, let me hear that. You're like, we're making a.

Speaker 1 Difference. Yeah, yeah, yeah. It feels good. Like the people, you know.

Speaker 4 Yeah. I think those are the best to grow an airman component. Well, I can't. I can't think of it. Raw airman component is more powerful than that. You know, to to see somebody thrive and succeed is you just really.

Speaker 1 Yeah.

Speaker 4 This is really, really special. So.

Speaker 1 Yeah, at least for you guys are bringing up all sorts of memories.

Speaker 4 Yeah, we got a debriefing. Well, this is the fourth one. We're not asking anymore.

Speaker 1 We got all good.

Speaker 3 Jancee need to answer. And by the way, to our listeners, this coffee cup is here.

Speaker 4 I still have. You see, you have to show Chief Thompson.

Speaker 2 Yeah, I showed him.

Speaker 1 You did a little bit of home wrecker.

Speaker 4 See, we've even improved that now. He does it before the show.

Speaker 2 Yeah. Yeah, it. But you mentioned you've been deployed several times. Do you have any, like, let's call it happy or just fun stories that are appropriate for the podcast? No. Oh, okay.

Speaker 3 Great. Just for great disclaimer for the podcast.

Speaker 1 Oh, man. Like, you know, I was deployed my very first you know, my second deployment. I was deployed during a during 911 in Kuwait. And, you know, it's not it's not bad, I promise you. But like I used to be able to travel off base over there, like when you're deployed. But then, of course, after 911 went down and all that, and I just remember like the guys when everything the dust settled and everything you Yemen I remember guys coming back like eight because I was the NCO at the time. It was like you could drive off base and I was like, Hey, Aunt Toms, no, you can't go on base. And like I you are you, sir. And I had to have like a, like an hour long conversation with the kid about going off base, come to find out, like, dude had like a wife downtown that end up getting like left outside the fence or whatever they we had to like get flown back to the States. And it was, I was like, man, what are you thinking, man? Like. But I thought that was pretty funny afterwards, but it sounds pretty serious. But like, yeah, I was. I couldn't believe it, man. Like, you had a wife already who was going to visit every weekend off base. And then if 911 happens and she stuck down there in a hotel was like, Dude, what are you doing, man? So I don't know if that's funny, but it was funny to me afterwards. Like, man, you almost like that's your wife locked up in Kuwait, man. No, no, that's good.

Speaker 2 Another thing I wanted to touch base on and we kind of touch on, like, hard decisions. But I wanted to ask you if there were ever any hard decisions you had to make as a leader that you really made an impression on. Decisions after that that you had to really consider. Oh, this event happened. Well, how would you change how should I change my philosophy in the future? The way I make these decisions in the future?

Speaker 1 Yeah. Um, yeah, it was, man. It was here, like when I had to give advice to my commander on like that. You no showing that love like that. All that hard love and to where we have to move on from our move on from some things and like that was a hard one I mean to were like you know that decision was so hard like I wasn't sleeping, you know, afterwards, but it was what was needed. And so, you know, we had to make the hard call

and it was made. And if it was one thing that I look back on it, I actually had this conversation, my commander earlier. If there's one thing I'll look back on, I wish I would have had been better at communication, but I it in not like a U.S. presence or it like I'm a terrible communicator. Like for my first like three or four years in the military as security force members, I didn't even talk on the radio. Like, I got asked one time, like, hey, man, like, I didn't I didn't speak, you know, until spoken to that type of deal, you know? So it's very hard for me to commit. It takes a lot of energy for me to communicate. And I just wish I would have better communication, better relationships prior to making that decision. But, you know, decision at the end of day was always the right one. It was the right one. You know, I could have had gone about a little bit different. Like communication was, you know, I was very matter of fact, you know, I this is this is what needs to happen and this is why it needs to happen.

Speaker 4 You just you just captured the essence of the whole podcast, the whole debrief pieces, which which is when we actually started this, like, the very first thing we did was, I think, look up the definition of debris. And it's like figure out what happened, why it happened and how it can improve it for next time. Yeah, I think you just, like, totally encapsulated it.

Speaker 1 Like, it's my, my outlook, you know, my orient observes, I network. I just understand, understand, decide of that and try to talk communication in there somewhere.

Speaker 3 I'll say your public speaking is on point. Yeah. I mean, when you have an ops operations group squadron commander by name requests you to do the next class just so you can hear you speak one last time at the graduation dinner. I think that says something.

Speaker 1 And those things do it for me. I don't know about you guys, but like, yeah, I just young and personally, I just want to make sure they understand like, hey, guys, like, this is serious business, you know?

Speaker 4 And he and he. He wants to brag about the volleyball game.

Speaker 1 You are so great. I think we're 22 and oh, 20, 21. Maybe I can.

Speaker 4 I can remember. I still have not. There has been no follow up from my. Yep. Implicit. No, my explicit challenge. Yep. To get the Eagles out there with the Chiefs or some. Volleyball, you know, but I understand you got to do the airmen versus chiefs and all need to keep that and keep the integrity on it. Right. But it's still the offer still stands. And if you all want to call the Eagles out there, we have to augment with some some oh five string and get some lieutenant colonels in there that may or may not be good. They'll probably be good and see what happens.

Speaker 1 I mean, after it's over to kind colonel retain about it after that day that you threw that out there and she looked up, it's you swinging and this is kind of retained five foot I don't even know. But in swinging six foot go figure you know and a and man can't retain with the name of was like this is not happening if you guys can imagine her if she has a strong Boston accent. Yes. Yeah. Oh, my God. It was hilarious. In a way.

Speaker 4 She'd be great out there. She'd dig digging them all over the place.

Speaker 3 And so I'm a little hurt. I feel like we were representing all 40 year olds at this game. Not just chiefs were like.

Speaker 4 I'm saving the sun in the air and y'all beat up on the airman. Y'all throw the gantlet down on him. Y'all are the reigning champions. So I'm rooting for the underdogs. I'm, i, i it plays out every time, y'all. You'll get up there and you take your trophy, and I defend the airmen. Just. It's just the way it works. We'll see. Maybe this next class and.

Speaker 1 We've got a game on Monday.

Speaker 4 Yeah, we all practice, don't you?

Speaker 1 No, not at all.

Speaker 3 Just show up, make it happen.

Speaker 1 We get out of bed like this and you know of for this. This is excellence is walking.

Speaker 4 Well that. Yeah, I agree. The the A-list A-listers are just there magical magical moments you want to connect a little bit.

Speaker 1 I would have loved done that last night, man. It's just I don't know what you guys get to speak a lot. You guys get like I mean like, I mean, but I don't I don't get those opportunities. So when I do fight, man, I'm going to take advantage. I'm going to represent respect for chiefs, for senior leaders on base. Now, I'm going to Redmond now, and I'm so serious about those guys understanding like how important of a of a of a task that they just accomplished. You know, first line supervisors, I know we've all have had one. I'm very influential here, so I want them to feel it from me.

Speaker 4 Yeah, I think you don't want to leave anything on the set at all.

Speaker 3 Yeah. I mean, most critical position in the Air Force, that frontline.

Speaker 1 Supervisor, the backbone or.

Speaker 3 Staff sergeant, since that's who our airmen that just joined the first three or four years. Impressionable mind, malleable. That's there you go. They will stay for the chiefs, I think they say for their the quality of leadership and training they're getting from that flight supervisor, as I hear.

Speaker 4 You about your squad leader and like you're yeah you just headline.

Speaker 1 I see you.

Speaker 4 There. That supervisor that.

Speaker 1 Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Speaker 4 That's a.

Speaker 1 Minute. It'll make or break a unit, you know, like those guys an on Air Force is coming out with a lot of different stuff to help support those front lines. Yeah, but like, it just starts again. If I were to circle back with that, there's got to give a damn about those guys. You know? You really got to care about the person, you know. Yeah, I understand. Yeah.

Speaker 4 Yeah. And it's one thing to say it, it's another way of display it to to really truth, to really back it up. And I think there's, there's there's a lot of folks who are very well intentioned, mean and are sincere, but it is sometimes just hard to actually demonstrate that to our airmen, you know, and that's why I think to your point, like what he's talking about is not leaving it on the field when you have the opportunity to interact, engage with them.

Speaker 1 Yeah, it's like I'm for security forces, like, you know, all day long, those guys, they'll just sit out there on the flight line, you know, going about their day to day when that one time that we need those guys to hit it, you need to be on it, you know, so those opportunities don't come that often. So when you do have that opportunity, it's time to play ball, you know? So the opportunities that you guys give me to do something like that, it's time to play ball, you know? So, man, I love that. Yeah. And even though you play, you don't play in a lot.

Speaker 3 You are here now and I'm going to miss next week, too. I went to the go to the Air Force Academy graduation this week, which I'm excited for.

Speaker 4 But yeah, he's he's getting a second salute up there.

Speaker 3 I think that's the plan. Yeah. No.

Speaker 1 Wait a second.

Speaker 3 Yes, this Mikayla Becker, Lieutenant. Sorry. She's about to graduate the Air Force Academy. And her. Her father, one of my best buddies, Brad Becker. He'll be here first. Salute, retired first sergeant. Oh, yeah. I think I'm going to be the second salute because their little family member is going to lose some service. But yeah, absolutely flattering.

Speaker 1 Those yeah. Those things feel good, right? Like, you know, just I remember I did a first salute with a downhill sort of troop, you know, where I see it? Like one thing that I want to accomplish. I wanted to do a OTS package for a guy and I didn't want for. His name's Kyle Grant. He's a second lieutenant. Still undergraduate pilot training out in South Carolina. Shot bleep him and his wife with me. And I'm like, I got to get my first look, man. I was so cool to go down there.

Speaker 3 Oh, here's one of your airmen.

Speaker 1 Yeah, he was that on love honor.

Speaker 4 That is. That is amazing. Yeah, that's. Yeah, I was.

Speaker 1 Traveling with Twin Peaks is and he called him like a Saint Senior at the time. Like I'm about to a commission. It's like, what are you doing? Like, oh, my. First of all, to get my first one from, you know. And I didn't even get to do that with my brother when he

went out. Yes, I was deployed, you know. No. Yeah. But that was the first time I got to do that, man. And it's nothing like it, you know, like and I got to, you know, give me chills thinking about it. But like for the longest time, you know, he starts out I'm senior and he says, you know, he's steady calling me, you know, senior. And, you know, Sergeant, at this point in time, I got salute and call him sir. Like that did something to me, you know, like a salute and say sir to him, you know, that's powerful. It was a it was a chance.

Speaker 3 Have you had a salute? It's always it's some of those look of the draw. Yeah. So I had my first salute as a chief when I was going through Central of your school that a Randolph Air Force Base lieutenant was walking by, and I think we're inside. And he said, Chief, would you mind coming out and be my first saluting? They gave me instead, gave me the chills. I said, absolutely. Went out there and snapped them a sharp salute. He saw me back and he calling me. He gave me the dollar. Yes, yeah.

Speaker 1 Yeah, yeah. And it's got his name on it. Like I just looked at mine and I.

Speaker 3 Was extremely grateful. I think I gave him whatever coin I had. So sorry for the previous commander. They gave me their coin, I promise. I put it to good use, but I over telling you did it. I did. I did. I did a degree fighter for me. Always have some chips coins to give these on your ts. But what I was most impressed with was not the silver dollar. It was his his exuberance and like just zest for life. And I said, Sir, more than you, give me this coin. I appreciate your attitude.

Speaker 2 So we're wrapping up, wrapping up the podcast. And Chief Thompson, I really want to just let you have your moment, give you your closing comments. Any anything you'd you'd like to add just to finish finish it off today.

Speaker 1 Oh, man. Like, first off, you know, the obligatory you got to say thanks to the command team for inviting me out for this one. And I hope I can convey my message well with with everyone. But man, if it's anything I could say to you guys, if you're wondering about, you know, you ask a question about leadership philosophies and all sorts of things and man, like one of the biggest things I will tell you a few things I'll tell you guys is like your attitude, man. It means everything. Like, you know, sometimes you just can't control how things happen to you, right? Like I couldn't. Control, like some of the stuff that happens to me, like, but you can't control how you react to things, man. I think that's been said a lot. But man, it is it is so profound to understand, like, how much you really can do yourself just by having a great attitude about things and inner and comfort zone. Like, don't be scared to try it, you know, don't, don't be don't be scared to try. You know, sometimes you make a mistake, you have to get up and like it dust off by your command, chief, and see like I missed the mark on. Now let's get back at it. But don't be scared to try cause now folks just sit in their comfort zone all day long. And like, I think I was talking about you once. I was like, I mean, Flores. Flores was here. Like, I would say something like, you know, if you study, just run a ten minute mile, you'll never get better, you know, like, so you got to get outside their comfort zone and push yourself, man. So, yeah, so those two things really mean a lot to me. I always, always have the guts to try something different, you know, outside of your comfort zone and having a good attitude about it, you know. So yeah, man, those are my big, big things that I want to make sure everybody understand, you know?

Speaker 2 And I mean, just before I go over to the command team for their closing comments. Any shout out to I guess I.

Speaker 1 Mean, I would be remiss if I didn't give a shout out to my number one fan. My wife, she's my sister, Kristin Thompson. Yeah, she's my sister.

Speaker 3 It's a the original Paisley's chief.

Speaker 1 There it is. Yep. Started it out. Yeah. Yeah. Big shout out to the wife. She's my number one support. I'm her number one fan as well. Like, you know, you got to had a good wingman. And then, of course, like, you know, Lieutenant Colonel Gary Cute. So he just took it in his first meal. No. If I told you guys, he just took his first command maybe about a month ago. So down there I want to rob Georgia. So big shout out to him yeah a geared you listening man a a get ready I'm coming down here in about a week or so, man. Fire up the grill like we smoked meats and all that stuff and, like, talk about who's the best at that. But like, yeah, I'll be waiting on those real me. Yeah, but yet huge shout out to those guys. And of course, like, well, I got to meet my family, man, my mom, dad. Like, I don't get an opportunity to say much about them too, but man, God, man, I don't think they understand how much they did for my brother or not. Oh, yeah. So my dad, if you guys listen to man, I just want to pass on my appreciation for how y'all brought us up and which I'll continue to do for our family, man. So, like, yeah, thanks for asking. Yeah. You shut out those guys.

Speaker 4 Yeah. I'm sure they're going to be proud of you. You're going to have a lot of proud people in Arkansas and in your family, too. That's pretty clear. You know.

Speaker 3 Our viewers, our listeners, sorry, are pretty savvy. I'm sure they're like wondering, did we skip it here? Right. Yeah, because we were never mentioned. So she was technically or senior in soccer. But there's a reason why we went all the way up. She Thompson I mean, we've known him for almost a year, but he's leaving us to two different pastures, obviously greener pastures. Donna maxwell and handled business down there, but we could not have let him leave without being on the podcast. And and I can spot off a whole bunch of things, but I think you you a lot of folks be able to walk away with a ton of superlatives just by hearing your story and your leadership philosophy and some of the things you stand for. I think that's really powerful enough for them to hear. So thank you, Chief Brother, for delivering this as we knew you would on this. And I'm sure a lot of people are going to walk away with a lot of good things from this.

Speaker 4 Yeah, I think so too. I think it's going to really come through in the podcast, the present you have the life experiences you have, the adversity that you've been through. It's remarkable where you're at and the way you lead airmen. It puts you in a very special place to lead from a from a very special place.

Speaker 1 Yeah.

Speaker 4 So, yeah, this has been this has been perfect to go right to the chief. We went senior NCO corps, but yeah, we had to get you in here before you go. Wheels up and get down to Maxwell. We appreciate you. We appreciate what what the defenders bring to the fight. You know, this guy's lived it, and I've had the privilege to to lead some you all before. But every day from from me to y'all and from us to ours is a privilege to serve with you all here. And it's been pretty clear throughout the whole this whole podcast is That's where your heart's at. Yeah, I know you're serving your team and.

Speaker 1 And I'm all in, sir. You're all here.

Speaker 4 And the airmen recognize that. And that's what they'll they'll probably follow you to hell and back.

Speaker 1 Let's do it.

Speaker 4 So that's why we put you up there and count us.

Speaker 3 Into I think Airman Jantz is thinking about putting in a cross-training package to be a defender. I'm actually like, I want leaders like this.

Speaker 1 So to see as bring him.

Speaker 3 And show you how.

Speaker 2 I know. I know Altice is definitely losing a good chief and Maxwell is gaining a great one. So again, I don't think we can preach it enough. Thank you very much for coming on and sharing with us your life experience and your stories and just thank you and best of luck at Maxwell. Safe travels and thanks, command team, as always. I think that is a wrap for episode four number.

Speaker 4 Four in the.

Speaker 2 Books podcast of Thanks guys.

Speaker 4 You're here. Thanks for.