

Podcast 6.mp3

Speaker 1 Hello.

Speaker 2 Everybody. Welcome back to the debrief podcast. This is Aaron Jansen, joined as always by the 97th Air Mobility Wing Command Team, Colonel Baker and Chief Flores. We have a special guest here this afternoon, Major Caleb Eglee from our wing front office. Welcome, Major.

Speaker 3 Well done to my left. Thank you.

Speaker 2 Command team. Welcome back. How are you, gentlemen? John.

Speaker 4 We're doing great. Thanks. Thanks for having us. Excited to be on this edition. We've made our way up to the field grade ranks, and I think we're going to have a great, great guest and a great podcast today. I'm feeling it, Chief.

Speaker 1 Oh, absolutely. We were talking before we started recording and I thought, wow, we recorded about we did a record about 10 minutes of great material there. So, Erin Jantz, I mean, he's got a little fidget machine in his hands. He still has his coffee cup.

Speaker 3 And I'm I feel honored to be in the presence of this coffee whip that I've heard it so much. And now I finally get to see it.

Speaker 1 It's worth 10 minutes of conversation before.

Speaker 4 I know I'm I'm sad that our listeners out there don't get to don't get to see their routine. There's a routine that happens where every dance takes a slow sip from said coffee cup and really, really relishes it.

Speaker 1 So do you always wear glasses?

Speaker 2 No, not always. That's the difference. Yeah.

Speaker 1 You look a little smart. Yeah. Thank you.

Speaker 4 That was the effect is go really has nothing.

Speaker 2 I'm looking a little wiser this afternoon.

Speaker 4 Yeah, well, Major Agler should be. Should be honored. Flattered that Herman J has put on his glasses so he could increase the level of perceived intelligence here.

Speaker 3 And I wish I thought of that. I can always use the help. Yeah, I'm. I am honored. I've been paying attention on the podcast, and I've. You've you always have perceptive questions. So I'm open. I'll bring week today. That's my goal.

Speaker 4 Did you did you listen to the previous podcast? Did you did you brush up or.

Speaker 3 I did brush up. I got I, I was I was paying attention. I heard how well they've done before. So I was like, man, I got to go see the heavy hitters. I was, I was I think we

were talking about it. The I have appreciated one. I appreciate it. Like I think my highlights were getting to hear some of the back story that that some of the deep cuts of the that the command that I hadn't heard just being up in the front office and I get a lot of exposure and getting to hear from crew chiefs. Thompson was was awesome. He is a lot of like that is the real deal yeah sorely missed and then it's just been it's been interesting just getting to hear different perspective from different walks of life, different backgrounds.

Speaker 4 Yeah, that's really the whole idea. I mean, that perspective and a little bit of what other people's walk looks like, the debrief, that's where we started. The whole thought process was, you know, what happened and why it happened and how do we improve it for next time. And so there's there's a lot about life you can talk about in that conversation.

Speaker 1 And speaking of improvements are episode two Guest Staff Sergeant Scotty Shoemaker just got picked up for officer training school for a UPT undergraduate pilot training slot. So talk about it. I would say improvement because the east side is very near and dear to my heart, but it's always good to see a very solid enlisted member go become yeah.

Speaker 4 A personal goal. And I think we we talked about some of his life goals when he was in here and what he was after and just being great in the job that he was in. And it's all it's all panned out.

Speaker 1 You know. And I had no and I had no idea how humble he really is. When he got picked up for officer training school, he he then revealed like the 15 obstacles that were in his way for him to get there. And that'd be another story for another day. But it was very proud of the young man. But, sir, are you a steward of the game? That's you know, I started looking at. Sure. That he's a true student of life, whether in the jet, whether as a leader, as a as a as a father. It's pretty amazing to see your preparation and how you go about your business and you bring that to the front office, that continuity, plus a bunch other things when it comes to you. Just the loving.

Speaker 4 So yeah. And while the front office is of course the pinnacle every second of every day, you just, I know wake up and go to the front office. But there's a lot more to your story, I think, and I'm excited to hear more about it. But you you started off gosh, well, tell us tell us a little bit.

Speaker 3 So I think I couldn't agree with you more, sir, as it's been, it's been a challenging it's been a good challenging being, you know, working up in the front office with you two gentlemen, being being stretched definitely is definitely next level of responsibility and oversight. But it's also been super rewarding being able to see and interact and hopefully advocate for, for people across the wing and get to see. Know about background. I'm. I'm a I'm a military brat. My dad was career coast guard moved all up and down the east coast here nine times. We ended up in Colorado. And I was always people always go to Coast Guard and Coast Guard in Colorado. And he was in a rowboat now out in the lake somewhere where on site he was he was working a joint a joint job at Peterson. So we ended up there. He ended up retiring. And then we went with we were transplants there. So I had to become a Denver Broncos fan. So I was a little bit disappointed in Minnesota on your cup. Then we'll let it slide.

Speaker 2 Yeah. I am sorry I acted like somebody is going to see it. It's just us.

Speaker 3 I'm sorry I had to sit. And then I went to the. I went to a small engineering school at the base of the Rockies, otherwise known as the Air Force Academy, right after my dad got out. And then I joined from there. And then what fun for you. You went to MacDill, did a ton of kind of Disney family. Family had a family at Disney down there. So things to do for you know, when seems like everybody does and then went to Fairchild for just under a couple of years and wanted to come here. We were excited about the opportunity. We were we we purposely volunteered and a little bit early actually to get here.

Speaker 4 What led you to we've talked a few times about Alta Altus, a great place. It is. And the amazing community that we have amazing airmen. What what what drove you to want to come this way and.

Speaker 3 Rather difficult for I mean primarily family that'll that'll be a good one so I know I think any of the any of the the folks out there be able to empathize but when you've been deployed a lot I was gone I was averaging about half a year and I would I say I think I was compared to my peers. I was low time. So I was with you guys in deployments. There is there is a distinct I I'll say this when I got here the difference between my oldest oldest of three so I got seven five and a half and two and a half. So my, my oldest when we got here are my my relationship with him has improved just months after being here because I was I was home. I could be their parent to be around. And my youngest, who was born here, like we have a different relationship. It's a little bit just there's a little more familiar just because my son got to do with five deployments and a bunch of two guys and my youngest just never knowing me, but anything got home. So that was the biggest reason to be here. But in addition, in addition to the obvious, I think, I, I genuinely I'm like, I like flying the. 135 I really do. I enjoy instructing. So it was a chance to do both of those things. And at a very, very high level, I say I enjoy coming here because it's I want to be where the smart people are. And I can tell you, I have been here for three years. I've interacted with a lot a lot of really smart 80 years, officer enlisted who flew across three different airframes just no, no. The game inside now. A ton of experience, a ton of background. And I knew, like, if I could come here, like, I would get challenged. And it was an opportunity to step up and to do see if I see and those kind of things where you have to you you can't be sloppy. You have to know the game. So it's been awesome to be challenged that way.

Speaker 4 CFC Certified Flight Instructor.

Speaker 3 Combined Flight Instructor Course goes back to you goes back to when we had the we had one three guys in B-52 here. I think the a little bit of a heritage and chief chief will know this but the the 135 had a background where it was we were. Cause we were having mishaps and seeing fatalities with instructors on board. So see if I see you. Was that was that hey, we across the force, you take a look at how we train instructors, how we how we improve our game, how to make it a better how do we make the instructor corps better. And it wasn't just the 135. We also with the two but long story tradition going back to the sack era and it's it's it's it's a cut above and it's it's it's one of the most fun things I get to do here because it's where you get to nerd out. You really get to know the inside and out. You get to challenge people and you get to see instructors get get better. We've had a lot of folks I think we have a lot of folks here that I've helped train in one way or another, and it's really cool to see them go through, get better, go back home and then come back here. Now they're training. They're training other airmen, so.

Speaker 4 Well, you call it nerd now. I call it being at the top of your game, having having seen you in action throughout a night, sortie through your combined flight instructor course,

if I see training and really executing an instructor, sortie in the way that very few people can was pretty awesome and impressive. Impressive to be a part of. And I think we did we like extend that one.

Speaker 3 So we shut down the field. I don't think I don't think that that that the tower guys appreciate it but we got all the training done. We got the students there.

Speaker 4 Zero 0 to 15. It was a good one and it went it definitely gave me appreciation for what y'all are doing day in, day out. And it's pretty incredible. As fun, as great sortie.

Speaker 3 We take, I think I think the 54th and we takes a lot of pride but like pilots and booms and the booms are they're sharp and they're they're I they don't let things slide as in the best possible way. So it's, it's, it's that toughness that that we really appreciate and that all people to a high center you got to you need.

Speaker 4 It when you're well one just to be the best in the world at what you do but also you're flying 1958 1963 model aircraft. Got to be top of your game. They fly great. They're awesome. They're they're amazing for the season jets that they are. But you've got to be on your A-game to fly that airplane. Have you with me directly by.

Speaker 1 I have not flown with me directly.

Speaker 3 I got to fix that.

Speaker 1 We need to fix that. I mean, hopefully we have a little attitude at the wing to be able to go do that. So, you know, sorry, I'm having a little debrief moment when I went through, see if I see as a student, not as to become a CFC instructor, but as a CFC instructor myself, I mean an instructor trained by CFC. I, I was nervous. I mean, a 60 day chain up time before I actually got here. I was living and breathing Toews and AFIS and all the supporting documents. And when I got here, you're absolutely right. They won in the pits. Are they still do that or not? They won the pit. The very first thing they cover is the history of see if I see. And I think they do it for a reason because they want to make sure that they set the climate and culture right away. What you're signing up for. And it almost sets like you beam with pride. And if you feel like it's not just about you being an instructor, but to I'm going to earn this cake. Okay? Code is what they put on the flight orders to signify that you're an instructor, but you going to earn are going to be proud of it because of the legacy that you got. You guys and gals have left and you also deliver. Every time I see the CFC patch, you know, we were patching uniform to recognize units and everything else. With that, I recognize greatness right there in a very, very high standard. And when we told people all its Air Force base has some of the best instructors are what they do. CFC is right up there. It really is.

Speaker 4 A great and I love it. One of the things I love about this conversation is this gets to and I know we've hit on this before and some maybe around the edges of it is this idea of how our airmen really do desire to be held to a high standard. I think sometimes we confuse ourselves or like I've heard the conversations before about, you know, how hard do we push in and backing off on standards. Or maybe sometimes, you know, a team or a particular group can be reluctant to, you know, to really uphold that standard because it's hard. And sometimes I think people can talk themselves into thinking that, hey, you know, this is this is either too hard to maintain or that's not what people really want. But I've found every single time that that is absolutely what everyone they that's what sets them apart. So

what sets us apart collectively? It's standards. It's a discipline. It's knowing that, you know, you're one of the few people in the world that can do this job to the level you do and that you can impart that on others, which is, I think, where your heart's really at. It's pretty incredible.

Speaker 3 I think I think going back to that, too, it's it's also a matter of communicating the why going back to and as as leaders, I think in a few places I've seen across my career is it's not just about, hey, it's hard because reasons. It's hard because here's why. Let me explain. In our case, it's very simple. See if I see why we need to train, because we have an aircraft that if you don't pay attention, you could very easily end up in an unsafe situation, especially with people who are unqualified or are trying to teach you. Right. Similar stand up for standards across in any explanation I think is it is a chance to go why is it this way if I and the ability of someone to accept why something is a high standard is there it directly correlates I think to the leaders ability to communicate and buy into the the reason why the standard exists and it's in that part I find it's incumbent on me not just to go well this is a standard, but to go, this is the standard and here's why it exists. And B and I think the flipside of open to you. Okay, let me let me understand is this here for a good reason and be willing to have that conversation. But we got to get after the why. And that's what I think as an NGO we owe to those people.

Speaker 1 So sir, have you just your first we talk about virtual town. We train 70% of our mobility Air Force aircrew here, your first aviator, whether enlisted or officer, I do think we brought you on here because of that. But more so because you're a better officer than you are aviator, which is hard to believe because you're pretty darn good aviator How do you say which the lessons learned as an aviator are translated to you to be a better officer in general?

Speaker 3 I like to think the things that make Caleb. Caleb are skills that travel, right? Building, mentoring, teaching, those are skills that that I'm passionate about, that I want to take. And that line naturally lends itself to being an instructor and excellence itself. You I think there are a lot of things that we do that in our career field that lend itself to being a leader. One of the big things I think that I appreciate with the 135 has given me that that true resource model mentality. It's very different in the 135 and I think maybe some other communities because what we have what I would consider a low power differential that between us and the boom operators, I trust the boom operators of my life and have been saved more times that I care than I care to count. If I'm being honest because I've had it, I've just had a phenomenal boom operator. So that ability to to have that that conversation with the people on your crew, hey, where are we at? Where are we going? Is this the right call? And being able to send and receive input from everybody, that's been huge as a I think as an aviator, but as a 135 pilot, I've appreciated that need to I think as an aviator that need to understand the rules and figure out how to have a have a very good understanding of what is actually in the rules and be able to understand where where is it, what does it actually say? And being able to speak up and either defend or be willing to to move and receive input has been is a huge thing for I think that aviators bring to the fight so and anyway in anywhere across the Red Cross our Air Force I think having an understanding of that being able being able to receive that input.

Speaker 1 Any examples outside the jet?

Speaker 3 I can think of a few. I think finance, I think is a big one. So as a as a flight commander, having folks that are saying, hey, I'm having issues with a DPS voucher. As

somebody who, you know, being able to grow that skill of going like, well, hey, I know that Jtr exists. I know that there's business rules, I may go find it. Here's the way that we here's what needs to be done. Here's what we said. Here's I will make phone calls to the right person like that. That's an easy example of being able to find that. I think another example is being able to awards and decorations. I've done an exact game for a while, but being able to figure out, Hey, what exactly needs a lot of people when I see when awards come down are a little bit scared off by the minutia and this looks like a lot of work. And, you know, there's a lot, man, there's a six and a bio and all this kind of stuff. There's been in my expertize, my experience, expertize, experience, it's been, can I look at this? What is it? How do I empower other people that say, Hey, if you do this part, I'll do this part. Understand you understand the background of it. Being able to empower other people to succeed is something that I think I've seen. I've used that kind of, you know, the rules to your advantage.

Speaker 1 This sounds like a very deliberate approach to all tasks, is what I walked away with.

Speaker 4 I agree. That's a we. I think we collectively I'm sure part of what you're saying is we see that in your day to day, the way you conduct yourself and the way you work. I don't know if we said it at the beginning. You talked about the front office and Major is an executive officer, which means he is basically responsible for making sure that the command positions and that the the wing front office and the wing functions functions administratively, that it functions relationally and that, you know, we're taking care. I call that taking care of airmen, you know, those administrative functions that need to happen day to day or what what he does. We see it day in, day out. And it really is some of the same skills that you're putting to use are the same skills he's using on the flight deck with the boom operators who, by the way, I do agree or my term is that it is the pinnacle of flight crew integration. And there are some fantastic, fantastic group heads out there, many, many, many that I could talk for hours about. But but seeing the way, particularly on that airframe that the boom operators and the pilots interact is it's it's there. It's remarkable. It's remarkable. There's a lot to be learned. There's lots of case studies we can do on that that you could you could really deep dove on. I'm curious how you got into the flying business. Did you always want to do that?

Speaker 3 No, I grew up. Well, let me say this. And I'm sorry if my dad is here in this.

Speaker 4 Oh, you didn't give a shout out.

Speaker 3 I went to my dad, retired Coast Guard, and so he did. He did cutters. He's he think he had six different ships that he was on or commanded. He I knew from an early age that that was not my thing. So I knew what I didn't want to do more. So sorry, dad. If you're listen up, you know. But he didn't cast a vision for me. I got I got early on, I don't think I ever envisioned a time when I wasn't going in the military. And that's just growing up around and growing up, you know, having cousins. I come from a military family, fourth generation, you know, great grandfather was Army Warrior One. My grandpa was in one of the Marines, one of the Navy back in the day. And we to my get you know, my dad in the Coast Guard, I'm in the Air Force. I think my son has to go in the Navy just to keep the friend going. Had the coming from military family seeing growing up going to a military my dad worked at the Coast Guard Academy back in the day. So just seeing it growing up, I always kind of had that vision and then I got my dad's jobs, ended up taking us to Air Force bases. We lived on Air Force bases. I did Drazi Civil Air Patrol got the c c aviation. And

somewhere in there I got the I got the I got the boat for the flight. Hence that that was that was that was the dream. And there was only one place where I could go to academy and still flight. And so I guess I was going into the Air Force Academy and that's how that that ended up happening. That dream did not come true. But I think I ended up right where I where I wanted to be. And I loved you. And I'm doing.

Speaker 1 I'm trying to picture you pre contact in 18 right now that.

Speaker 4 No same is.

Speaker 1 Not the same.

Speaker 4 Yeah. So the ship driving part wasn't, wasn't your jam, but it sounds like there's probably something there with what your dad inspired you and instilled in you in terms of, you know, leadership and in terms of setting a setting example as a role model for you growing up.

Speaker 3 Yes, absolutely. Having having retired those takes that but I'm a writer as doctorate wrote a book and if I want something for if I give it to him to write so learn from a very early age. Communication is key. So written communication that skills is a big deal. Just everything was a leadership lesson. Growing up with my dad. My dad is still one of the most kind of upright people I can think of. So I added a very strong role model for for leadership an officer shipping fatherhood come comfort.

Speaker 4 It's awesome powerful.

Speaker 1 But it's.

Speaker 3 I'm I'm grateful to have been raised in a home with two loving parents and siblings and having having a family dynamic where we were all together.

Speaker 4 That's fantastic. Absolutely fantastic. So you're so greatest quality of your dad.

Speaker 3 My dad. My dad is one of those people who isn't afraid of anybody. And he's he's he's tenacious. So I find myself having to do I'm I'm not that way so by nature.

Speaker 4 Well so this is for the audience we were talking about this was in the 10 minutes before we started. So I happen to have seen you on the jujitsu mat. I happen to know that you have a wrestling background and I happen to know that you are incredibly tenacious when you need to be.

Speaker 3 The I like to think of it as as a meek meekness, you know, you know, meekness, achieve.

Speaker 1 Meekness.

Speaker 3 Reserved strength. It's strength under control, not weakness. Meekness is strength under control. So I strive I strive for meekness, strength, strength under control. I guess, if I could put it that way, but.

Speaker 4 I'm not sure it was fully under control. On the on the jiu jitsu mat last time I saw you and made your rush rolling around. But it maybe for you, if you had some gas left in the tank, that's impressive. So that's how you ended up on your path?

Speaker 3 I yes. And I think I had I had and we were talking about this a little bit the other day. I'd like to think that my career, my current leadership career has been. I have a few like high, high memory moments. And I think the the first one that I could think of, I was trying to think back. I can think of three. I think the first one was was in addition to I have a loving wife who's always been there. Um, my faith is characterized by, by, you know, a savior who believed in me at the right moment from yeah. And, and like I said, we talked about with my dad. Absolutely. So I have some all the time. Every time but a few. Hi. Hi. Hi. In back moments, I was actually civil air patrol. You're discussing like, hey, what's it look like to go and go to go to a commissioning program? I remember and I voice in a group setting like I don't know. I don't know if I could cut it. Like, you know, little, little 15 year old kid vaguely was like, I don't know if I can cut it at at an academy. I don't know. That's for me. And we had we had a1c and C McDonald who who is in the honorable Eric BOLLING Air Force Base back when it was just air aerospace and the the honor rights there, we had a few airmen that came and helped out and just increased the level of professionalism immensely. But so he was one he taught me how to do guide on stuff back in the day, back when that was a requirement. But Agency McDonald pulled me aside. At the end it was like, hey, did you did you mean what you said about about not being able to cut it? And I was like, What? Well, yeah, I don't know if I, you know, just I don't have that confidence. I don't know that I could do it is like he's like, look, you could succeed whatever you wanted to do, you could absolutely go enlisted. I know you want to go to the military, but you're cut out for this this officer thing. And just for I just remember, just like, you know, 14 or 15 year old kid just going walking out of there on air because I had this agency who took some time, pulled aside the teenager and said, look, I'm going to cast division. And as I have I never forgotten that's been that was that was huge. Like that was, you know, somebody who you didn't have to say that. Who knew who who knew who had enough experience to know what it looks like.

Speaker 1 He once he. MCDONALD Yep. He's probably Chief McDonald now.

Speaker 3 He's probably. I have not you know, I've looked I've gone back, you know, trying to try to go back and find him. So I, I wish I could. A few other mentors I have.

Speaker 4 Well, if I if our podcast ever goes viral to a wide enough audience, who knows? You may be able to you may be able to track down retired chief McDonald or whatever he's.

Speaker 1 Doing to our 40 dedicated listeners. Please look into this one script course.

Speaker 4 That's a great story.

Speaker 1 That is an amazing story. Goes to show the rank is positional but the leadership's a person. Yeah, and he probably did. Reason you may not even realize that that little moment in time, what he shared with you was that powerful.

Speaker 3 Was huge.

Speaker 1 I tell you.

Speaker 4 Wow. In the end, this idea that mentorship goes up and down, I love that. I've always believed that goes lateral up and down. And a lot of times we think of it as, you know, unidirectional from top to bottom. The reality is that it operates in both directions and sideways. Pretty, pretty incredible. And that's a great example of a man.

Speaker 1 Janz has it in him to do something like that. So you can kind of sit over there. Oh yeah. We forgot to mention that.

Speaker 4 We did.

Speaker 1 He is are below one of our wing below the zone to senior airman. Airman. So I don't know. Around the floors here you think. Yeah, but we knew we were telling them before we went live that we actually knew the last recording, but obviously we can spot the beans. He was notified less than a week after. So I bet you were thinking, weren't you? I bet these two people know this.

Speaker 2 It certainly popped into my mind like the command teams have. They're going to be on the podcast. Maybe they accidentally just spill the beans or something. You just don't know.

Speaker 1 I appreciate your professionalism. You didn't let on at all that you, like any insider baseball here can offer.

Speaker 2 That was for my my superintendent, Sergeant Al. And I nag them like every day. I was like, oh, yeah, you know, you hear back from. But it didn't make it. And he'd be like, You'll know when you know.

Speaker 1 It's perfect advice.

Speaker 4 Getting promoted early is a huge deal, you know, that's something that very, very few people get the honor and earn and you earned it. And we're we were super, super, super thrilled to see your name and all the other names that.

Speaker 1 So I got to ask just because obviously so you work you do work at the wing and we know each other pretty well. Matter of fact, we wrote over here together, which was interesting, the people you write with or you're going to interview. But was there much interaction between you two major airmen chance before this book.

Speaker 3 Called Cold Turkey and other other than paid attention? And I'm like, he's got he's got a you ask good questions. So I'm looking over here it is as a notebook and I'm just an expecting.

Speaker 2 Older there are times when the command team comes in and it's it's more of them in an interview in the guest you know and debriefing and you know that's really nice sometimes know I've got my my questions my usual questions and some new ones but it's it's really nice to sit back and actively listen to the command teams conversation with our guest to.

Speaker 1 Never forget that technique. Because when you get when you go speak to different crowds, whether it a lesser attack or some other kind of professional development,

you always come ready with questions, but the hope is you never have to go to them. Yeah, because people or you're talking points because people are going to just facilitate among each other and you're just there to carry that on.

Speaker 4 Yeah. I find that hard sometimes that trying to figure out does the audience because our default default position is is to try to get them talking and try to not talk to add people. But we found sometimes they want to hear from you too. So as that balance of trying to figure out, you know, what are they, what do they want to know based on your experiences and when are they what are they eager to, you know, to be listening? But we really try to start with the with the actual listening. And you do you do a great job of that. By the way, even Jancee, you really you really do. And then you I made your f I said you come in just with the right question at the right time.

Speaker 2 Yeah, but speaking of questions, I've got one for you, Major. I was going to ask I wanted to ask you, have you other than your father, have you had any other active duty men, active, active duty members that have influenced you in your career or in your career path?

Speaker 3 Absolutely. And I'll I'll I'll stick to a theme just a little bit. I've had, um, I can think of in a lot of ways what the way I would characterize my leadership progression is, um, people, people believing in me at the right time. So I think it's really easy for someone to believe in you, and you're doing really well. It's very easy to vote for a winner, right? Everybody's going to vote on what's the best odds will know. Put my money on it. But it's very, very few people who will look at somebody who's struggling and go, that's that's my person. I'd bet on them. So I've had and I can think of a few leaders here who are like that, who are who I would think I would shout out to a girl, ask you if you just left. Really appreciated working under the USS with him. Now, Lieutenant Colonel Davidson, he's over at the terrorists I knew of when he was Major Ben Davidson while we were deployed. And I can think of a few times when when he went out of his way to to to mentor and take care of me. I'm going to I'm going to to get back to your question of what I would say is I've had I can distinctly remember an uppity I had a flight commander captain then Captain Harry still to. Was he was he was a former Air Force Academy honor guard guy. You know, he was he was tough. He was he was very sharp. And I just remember flying with him, and I just I could not figure out part of the reason I didn't make it to the the whole the whole flying thing did not did not come easily. I'm living proof the Air Force can teach any monkey to fly heat. And I was struggling to get through my first solo. And I just remember walking back in, and he he was like, Hey, how are you feeling about this, man? I has. That was a bummer, right? I just can't figure this out. And he goes, your knees fix. And I just, you know. What do you mean? He's like, Yeah, I can. You have good attitude. You want to.

Speaker 1 Learn.

Speaker 3 You're. You're you're giving me your best effort. Like, I can teach that kind of person to fly. Like someone who comes in here and doesn't know things like that person. There's not a lot. I can do it. But you're an easy fix. And I just remember going, like somebody who saw that I was working my tail off trying to get better to to recognize that it was just like, okay, thank you. Like, I can like that. That was such a breath of fresh air. And I've had different people throughout my career who've done that. But that kind of believing in someone like that at the right moment, I think that's the privilege of leadership, is that you, whether you're in a formal leadership position or not, but if you're in a position with people, you get the ability to those in your sphere of influence, the ones who are. It's easy

to find that people who are doing well, but finding those people who are struggling or who need that extra TLC or who are under the right conditions, are going to just thrive like that has been that has been something I've I've been on the lookout for and then wanting to try to, you know, who's who's the person in my purview that I need to believe in at the right moment because that is a true privilege. Right. And that's the person that is going to end up going far. And for who do you advocate for that? Nobody else is going to help. So I have a I've had a lot of moments in those in my career where it's like not like people believe in you is awesome, but that those kind of like low moments or someone someone spoke in my life just kind of and encouraged me and blessed me. It's it's huge.

Speaker 1 You get so much insight to who you are. And now I get it. So part of being in the front office, they're trusted agents of you guys. You guys and gals are brought in to a lot of the tough conversations on decisions that we make for airmen. And, you know, major agle always roots for always the ERs on can we support the the member if there's something there and I always wonder where they came from and wow that makes that makes perfect sense. And we absolutely need leaders like you that find the diamond in the rough or the person that just needs a little extra push along the way. That's awesome.

Speaker 3 So that's that's been one thing. And again, going back to what's what's great about working in the front office that I get to, I get to you get to see a lot what we've talked about the chief but yes, my if if I have a if I have something that I keep in my cross-check, it's something I got to work on that the standards that we're talking about, it's, it's. You got all this? You got to hold the line. You can't always go. Well, we should take it easy. Well, we can let this slide like some. Sometimes you can't do it. And I guess if I. If I were to say, like, just justice, always mercy to the maximum possible like that. But if I find a way to what is the what is the least? At least owners option in terms of getting to what we're where we need to be to satisfy justice and also take care of what needs to happen for them, for the member. I just justice in the little sense that what what needs to happen in this situation.

Speaker 1 So yes, sir, we talked about this too. But your instructor, I think you said your instructor upped that, gave you the feedback that you have a great attitude and I truly believe you have a great attitude that gives you some altitude so you have some space to fall to be able to do because everyone roots for that person. And I think we talked about you had a situation similar to another person, but your outcome was different. And I think a lot of it was I think we talked about what are you doing the 99% of the time that there's no conflict. Are you being a good teammate or do you have a great attitude? You bring good energy or you toxic and you're toxic. You better be really good at your job because people are can't wait to knock you off the pedestal because you're toxic. And sometimes it's hard to what to say pin things on people because no one's looking for that. I've had some very I was frankly say aggressive leaders that never messed up and they were really good at your job and they're polarizing. And even I think a good follower would be drawn even to those kind of leaders. As long as it's not a legal and moral and ethical, what is your redeeming quality? But when something goes south going forward, you do think like they didn't have much altitude for their attitude to work out. Now the debrief for me was like, why was I in a position to give that leader feedback once I was in their circle of trust to perhaps mention like, Hey, you're very effective, but you recognize how you're kind of creating a blaze of destruction here. So we're pontificating, but I think it's great.

Speaker 4 I think one of the things that's important about what you're actually saying about, you know, who's that person? That is not the easy it's not the easy choice. A lot of times it's probably going to be somebody forged in adversity. Yes. When they do get to a

better place, they tend to be amazing people. Yes. Amazing people. Yes. Because, you know, they've been to hell and back. A lot of them got scary. Thompson A story with Chief. I mean, the guy's been to hell and back. You wouldn't it wouldn't follow that guy in battle, you know, who wouldn't want who wouldn't want that guy on his team, you know, to go fight? You know, that's that's that's who I'm that's who I'm putting on my roster, right? I mean, and think of the people who had to take some bets on him. Yes. I had to, you know, make that choice at different times. And yeah, I love it. There's so much to that. And I think part of that's the amazing this is this is the essence of. Why we lead and grow ramen.

Speaker 1 Makes you wonder if we can get better at that. Like, I'm really not soul searching, but I'm definitely just really. Your story has really got me to think, ah, do we do a good job of recognizing that hidden talent that's struggling and get him to. What do you think, sir?

Speaker 3 Oh, I just this is some Colonel Baker had said early on, I wrote down, I was like some some simple, some some some things. You should be simple, but they should never be easy. So that just because it comes across and this is the this is the thing to do, right? This is well, here's a screw up. Here's a here's the punishment. That's the going rate kind of thing. Like that doesn't mean that that it's an easy decision. It should be something that's looked at, understood, what's the repercussions, what's the backstory as much as you possibly can. And I think that's I appreciate that because I think that that walks that that to me speaks to to walk that fine line like, hey, like there is there is there is a going rate, if you will, for a reason when something happens and there is repercussions when somebody can't meet them. But how are you then? How are you making sure that you understand the backstory of what's going on and how can we make that person better? Is that is that person being afforded every opportunity to to get healthy? And I'm I'm part of my story is that I'm really grateful for kind of at a low point in my career where I had a lot of adversity. I had I a squadron commander that that that that on me and gave me the opportunity to get healthy right didn't held the line kept me you know kept me accountable and 100% but came back and and and gave me the the opportunity to succeed in getting the opportunity to climb way out of the hole. Right. And that's why I've been when able able to do that for others and pay that forward has been that is part of the reason. Like I said, it's the privilege.

Speaker 4 That's what that's what makes it all makes it all worth it. There's nothing nothing like growing a team and growing airmen to accomplish an amazing mission. There's nothing like that. That's the essence of what we do. I think really it's incredible. It makes all the really hard, sticky stuff. The times we don't get it right. Right. Makes that worth it and it makes it worth it. It's 100 fold. A thousand fold. It's not even close. Sometimes we get bogged down in this in the sticky stuff and it can get a little painful, but.

Speaker 1 It's good stuff. Yeah.

Speaker 2 There's actually all this leadership talk. It actually leads me into another great question for you. Right. So, yeah, so you recently got the Airlift Tanker Association Young Leader Award. Can you educate me on what in our audience on what this is? And you know, and then I'd love for the command team's response to, you know, hearing about that and knowing that, you know, one of your airmen got that award.

Speaker 3 Gosh darn it. I thought we were going to get through that, you know. So I think if I had to point to some of the background, we do a lot of good work over in the 54th plane

that was over 2020 until we kicked off. So we we were doing a lot of good work and the shop I was in was in the middle of it so that the I can talk to you a lot about the, the, the, the scheduling team over there and kind of the woes of like trying to ski, trying to schedule around COVID. Like, goodness gracious, that was that was not a fun time for anybody at the to you but I think that that was going can put in. The other thing I'll say about that is one lieutenant colonel ask you at the time was was adamant about making sure that I had a package that got put in. So if I could drop another, you know, leadership axiom is that if you have the time to write an award, you have time to write an award for somebody else. So I've I've always been the benefit of of really good leaders who've and I've never I've never had to go out and write an award for myself. It's always been somebody either writing for me or telling me to write one put, put me in. And so I've always stood by that axiom. Like, if I if I have time to write an award, then I have time to go find somebody else who needs help and write write some stuff. And so I've been I've been the benefit of, of, of really good leaders who take the time to to know their people and, and fight for us. So and you ask for what is it like? It was your situation at the Airlift Tanker Association from the Air Mobility Organization. And it's the. It's a it's a it was a huge deal to me. Very, very surprising thing. There are a lot of really, really sharp people up on the stage and a lot of people were winning awards for the lot. A lot of valorous acts and big things were talking about the NIO. And then Captain Negley was walking across the stage and very like I was, I was humbled to be in the those that kind of that kind of pedigree. And those are those are real sharp people.

Speaker 4 And so it's he's you know, his humility is coming out. It's it's really the best of the best across the mobility Air Force. And, you know that pretty clear that you earned your earned your place among among those folks. And I think I think this interview bears out some of the qualities that he's got that really, really translate to leading airmen and making a difference across teams and this community in this base. I mean, I see it. I see it. I certainly see it in the front office. But I can see those same qualities that have translated to success, that squadron group, you name it. That's why airmen that's why airmen want to want to follow you and we'll follow you.

Speaker 1 Yeah, they didn't. I don't. I don't really know you. Then I think I saw you. So part of winning these awards, a you're in service dressed the entire time while you're at the at the convention was that definitely stands out when you ask questions and everyone else is in flight suits are those ups and but I think if I can say. One thing about me directly is that the award, even knowing Dan and knowing him now, it brings so much credibility to word system and how you gather words and we can inflate him sometimes. He's absolutely the right person to win an award, not just because of what his actions or what his team did, but the kind of officer he is. The character, the things you can't see sometimes. I just have a I really have a belief that that stuff oozes out in other ways. But because of the passion of the writer that's willing to put in the work and to make sure that you get recognized. And that's pretty it's pretty amazing. But yeah, since then I get it. I'm like, because I know you obviously, but you're the first one to ask very intellectual questions to all the guest speakers. And so we get our money's worth sending this guy to actor because he has all the great questions and a lot of I'm sure do outs for people. Some really. So the executives are really enjoying that. But you know, but all of that made sense when it came to that. But that was our introduction to. Well, you interviewed him, sir, but that was my introduction to me. Drag me was that. But it was phenomenal to watch in action.

Speaker 4 Yeah, it really was. And I think it's interesting, one of the things, one of the themes we've hit on in this particular debrief is the importance of value of writing and the

importance and value of, you know, you talk about your dad taught you to do that and how you were forged in, you know, different jobs learning how to do that. But, you know, it is taking care of people and effectiveness through the written word is well, it's kind of changed in the medium. You know, we like to think it's changed a lot in the medium and it has in some ways. But the ability to articulate in the written word is still super important.

Speaker 1 So we could get you to ask me, hey, I'm going to have a flight, chief. That's probably going to have ten years on me. 20 years? What's the number one impact I can make for my airmen when I get there and learn how to write? Learn how articulate, articulate your thoughts. You should have the decision space and the space to be able to take care of those things so they can go. Continue to do the work in the trenches.

Speaker 3 Yeah, yeah. I think I think people get scared off by that too. And really it comes down to effort. That's really what it is. I don't think you become a great writer just by doing it. Some of some of you probably didn't have dads who got gifts of red pens because he went through them so much. But for for the for the rest of the population, I think it's just been and what I found in my Air Force writing career has been doing it first go asking for help, going and finding those people another name drop to major day library and I appreciate I remember him when I was angry and Captain Dave Lybrand taking my first crack at my OPR going, Hey, Dave, can you can you take a look at this? And him going very politely as a graduated squadron group, that going, okay, cool, what's down? Look at this. And then tearing it all to shreds. It was it was just awful. So but that that is how you get better is you go find those people who are the the the NCO or the senior NCO who who knows how to write who's been there. They hate them a lot of times. It's just that for the alty or the or the the CTO who's got to write and EPR never seen one taking a first crack at it going, Hey, this is this is what I think is important. Did you did you got any information? Did you know when the deadline was due? Did you start it early enough? Did you go find the person you knew, what they were doing? Did you did you socialize it down the chain and then go to the person up the chain? And did you ask feedback like those kind of things take absolutely zero effort and skill in writing, but that's how you get better at it, that that iterative process. And it's just that that kind of stuff is not is not skill, it's just effort.

Speaker 1 The instructor's coming out on him.

Speaker 4 It sure is. And that's that's good with pay in the room here. All right. I think they can appreciate this chance, chances, a airmen chance here is a production machine in the in the media space and in the article space.

Speaker 2 It's a reflection of our office. And I think and same thing with my coworkers. My coworkers all pump out great top quality products. And all I can say is hopefully we reflect on or reflect upon our great leadership too. And it's great leadership on us. And I was supporting that Master Sergeant Allen when we were talking about getting our art writing torn apart because there's a senior NCO that destroys all all of my writing to the audience.

Speaker 4 Can't see it, but he's got it back there.

Speaker 2 He's all that a record. He destroys my my articles and my products too. But it's only to develop us as as writers, too, and make sure we learn now.

Speaker 4 The fountain of love.

Speaker 2 But. But, gentlemen, we are. We are coming down to near the end of the podcast. Usually I this is where I open the floor for our guests. Major, if you do have any more shout outs. This is that time as well as the floor is yours to have. Any closing comments.

Speaker 3 Mm. I think I hit most of my shout outs the, the here. I will throw one out to the, the group and squatter and exact teams that I get to work with and see their products as a, as one of those jobs that if you do it right, you really are taking care of people for all the reasons that we talked about. So all the group execs and all the all the squadron who are out there, it's it's important work. And I'm I'm grateful to be be begin, begin the hard questions here. I mean, James, I appreciate you taking it easy on me. But but it's it is a privilege to be able to lead and it's a privilege to be able to work with with really great people. And both here at Altus and just over the course of my career, I think I am the benefit of people who are one really, really good at their job and to have taken an interest and and mentoring and helping me get better. So I'm, I'm the current company, current company included. So I really appreciate the opportunity to come up.

Speaker 2 Yeah, of course. Command team.

Speaker 4 It's been awesome. They're really insightful. Clear to me. Clear to me that the qualities, the character traits that you have, the background that you have, you've really you've really put that all together to be successful. I think your insight into some of the real nuances of leadership is significant, significant for your experience level and some of the things that you picked up. And you don't get that without being introspective and thinking a lot about others and looking through the lens of others that that's that's the way you really decode good leadership and effective leadership is you have to look through a lens. It's not yourself. I think that's one of the keys. And I think from my view, it's pretty clear he's that's what this guy has been doing and among many other great things. What do you think?

Speaker 1 Yeah, I know. It's amazing how, you know, we don't have a lot of runway ahead of us. I mean, next year can be retirement time. Even for me as a command chief is just it's amazing to know we have leaders like you that will continue to carry the baton and take care of our of our sons and daughters, which to me, is the most sacred duty we can ask a fellow American to do so. Um, you're a great soul. You're a great instructor, you're a good officer. And it's going to be an honor to continue to hand, hand you that flag as you move forward. People like you made me think the Air Force is going to be in good hands as we continue to move out.

Speaker 3 So it's high praise thanks to you.

Speaker 2 And again, Major, it's it's going around the room, but thank you for coming on to the podcast. I, I'd say, uh, you were your top notch, you know, top notch.

Speaker 1 Guest. This is the first time you give them praise. Yeah.

Speaker 4 As Mr. President.

Speaker 2 Yeah. And I really appreciate your stories and your your openness with the command team and myself. And it it was just a pleasure having you out here.

Speaker 1 That needs to meet your PR agency. Stated top notch.

Speaker 3 Uh, that's the hardest crowd. Yeah, but I really do appreciate.

Speaker 2 That now, but thank you. Thank you, command team. Thank you. I would say that is a wrap for episode six of the Debrief podcast. Thank you, everybody.

Speaker 1 This.