



CONR - 1 AF/AFNORTH

Continental United States NORAD Region – First Air Force (Air Forces Northern)

Office of Public Affairs

1210 Beacon Beach Road * Tyndall AFB FL 32403-5549

(850) 283-8080 * FAX (850) 283-3376 * DSN 523-8080

afnorthpa@tyndall.af.mil * www.1af.acc.af.mil * [twitter@1staf](https://twitter.com/1staf) * [Facebook@AmericasAOC](https://www.facebook.com/AmericasAOC)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Release 11-02-01/001

Feb. 1, 2011

Are you a reflection of 'Air Force Blue'?

Commentary by Chief Master Sgt. Joseph E. Thornell, AFNORTH Command Chief Master Sergeant

TYNDALL AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. – Each day, when you wake up and put on the uniform of our great Air Force, do you ever stop to think about the awesome responsibilities fundamental to the privilege of donning Air Force blue?

Over time, coupled with societal changes, it seems to me that our Air Force Core Values are becoming increasingly more difficult for Airmen to follow and comply with.

Our Core Values are three simple statements that contain deliberate intentions, focused responsibilities and specific actions necessary to serve in the profession of arms -- a profession each of us voluntarily committed to under oath with the full knowledge that giving one's life may be necessary.

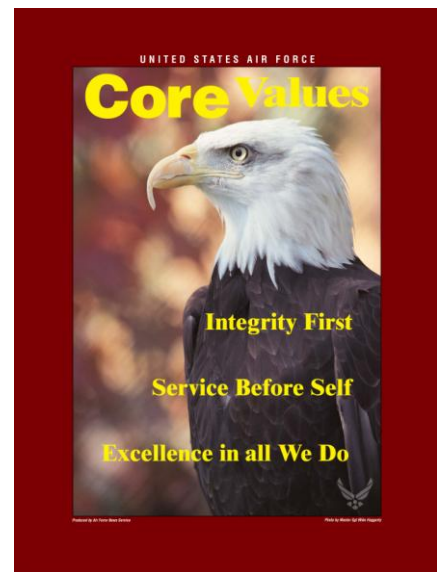
Our Core Values are the blueprint of our professional and personal behavior. Exercising those values every day strengthens and prepares us to make sacrifices indispensable to our vocation.

The Core Values are:

- Integrity First
- Service Before Self
- Excellence in All We Do

Recently, we have witnessed numerous public examples of Core Values violations across our force from strategic-level leaders to tactical-level Airmen. These infringements damage the Air Force reputation and stature and taint public perceptions regarding our great profession of arms. I find myself asking that thorny question, "How did these Airmen get to this point in their career?"

I believe that the changing society we live in plays a large role in moving some Airmen in the wrong direction. Society is focused on pleasing the majority, providing methods to reach the American Dream, but spends little time focused on ensuring its citizens are people of strong character, solid morals or resilient ethical fiber.



– more –

2-2-2 VALUES

There was a time in our country when these were the principal focus areas for our parents, as well as the education and legal systems. But in my mind, validated by recent failures, it seems the focus has been diminished at the hands of societal change and drive for personal gratification.

Often times we hear that the Air Force must reflect the society that we live in. This is an absolute truthful statement with regards to diversity of skills, gender, race, religion, and socio-economic status. This statement does not imply or mean that our Airmen should be participative or reflective of the weaknesses in ethics, morals, and values that exist outside the gates of our installations spread across the American landscape.

America as a whole is outstandingly supportive of the service our military members give. I believe one of the reasons Americans are so supportive of the military is because we still represent a belief structure -- our Core Values -- that they long for but cannot seem to recapture. We are seen as the role model, the example, the standard bearer and the symbol for what is good and just about America. We are who and what they want representing America.

Military service is a 24/7/365 responsibility. Our service members serve in a military-centric environment for 8-12 hours of each day. They are also immersed in mainstream America 8-12 hours per day. Our challenge as a service and as leaders is to make sure that what we teach, provide example of, and require of our Airmen in those few hours each day is 100 percent connected and representative of the Core Values.

We must hold them accountable to living the Core Values during the mainstream America hours as well. For supervisors and commanders, accountability can be as simple as asking the question, "Does that action or event reflect Integrity or Excellence?" If the answer is anything but a resounding "yes", a Core Value failure has occurred and the Airman requires revectoring.

Strong Airmen will easily recognize that compliance with the Core Values is easier and more productive to their lives and their service. Compliance becomes one of great value and personal and national pride. They will quickly feel that Integrity, Service, and Excellence when practiced constantly make life much easier to live and bring true enjoyment to their service and life experience.

Tomorrow when you wake up, put on your Air Force blue and look at the Airman in the mirror, will you see an someone immersed in and representative of our Air Force Core Values, or one who represents something different? We live in very challenging times and it is very easy to live a double life when it comes to our Air Force Core Values. We have each chosen to represent our great nation through our service in the U.S. Air Force and we must live that representation in accordance with those values. To do otherwise is contrary to *Integrity first*, has nothing to do with *Service Before Self* and is not reflective of *Excellence in All We Do*.