Conclusion

On 7 March 1943, Maj Gen Carl A. Spaatz sent a pivotal letter to Gen Henry "Hap" Arnold, the commanding general, Army Air Forces. In it, he stressed that "the air battle must be won first . . . air units must be centralized and cannot be divided into small packets among several armies or corps." This advice is as true today as it was then. America's total airpower resources, now including space assets, work together to meet national objectives and to shape our future security.

Air forces operate to control and exploit the vertical dimension. In doing so to achieve military objectives, airpower is realized. It has, however, often been difficult to define the concept of airpower. In the early years of military aviation, air arms tended to be seen as mere auxiliaries of land and naval forces. As such, the air component operated primarily to support surface force as an extension of such existing capabilities as observation or artillery. As airpower has matured, its potential as a dominant and decisive element of warfare has become more apparent. The means of exercising airpower have also grown and include any system that can be used to wage warfare in or through the air, such as manned and unmanned aircraft (fixed and rotary wing), missiles, balloons, and space vehicles.

Air and space are very different environments in which to operate and fight than the land or sea. Hence, air forces have quite different characteristics, strengths, and limitations from land and sea forces. That in turn means that air and space power has different applications at the different levels of war, demands specific skills and expertise, and, as a result, requires that those employing air and space forces be proficient in the airman's profession.

Operating in the boundless expanses of the atmosphere and space, air and space forces possess unmatched speed, range, maneuverability, and perspective. Such characteristics provide a full range of capabilities to control and exploit air and space in achieving our nation's objectives. Their employment options are measured in hours rather than days or weeks. Air and space forces operate daily over global ranges, from aircraft transiting continents to spacecraft circling the earth. From their elevated vantage points, air and space forces furnish a perspective that provides commanders a full-dimensional picture of the globe.

While land and sea air arms control and exploit air and space in support of surface objectives, the United States Air Force provides airpower capabilities across the full range of military operations, not only those in direct support of surface forces. Thus, unlike the air arms of land and naval forces, the United States Air Force is an air force, rather than an air component.

Through atmospheric and exoatmospheric operations, the Air Force controls and exploits the third dimension to achieve military objectives that in turn achieve national aims. The Air Force operates globally on a daily basis in the air and space in fulfilling national objectives. When an Air Force cargo plane touches down in a remote area of the world, it is not just an Air Force aircraft that is seen, but the United States of America.

The Air Force is a team within the joint team, providing a synergy vital to the theater of operations. The Air Force has the demonstrated ability to gain and maintain air and space superiority and that superiority remains a vital enabler for the joint force. As well, the Air Force provides on a daily basis the rapid global mobility required during any contingency and the long-term resupply of deployed and deploying forces. The Air Force is trained and equipped to provide a global attack capability and deterrent potential critical to maintaining national interests. Air Force space and information systems, and the architecture supporting the integration of all these tools, allow joint forces to dominate the information medium. The flexibility the Air Force offers the joint force commander through air and space superiority, rapid global mobility, and precision employment—all enhanced by information dominance and agile combat support—provides a system of capabilities.

Integrated theater air and space forces provide joint force commanders with a dominant and decisive maneuver force. Air forces operate in the vertical dimension to achieve positional advantages and, with unmatched speed and tempo, to outpace hostile forces. Air forces can rapidly respond to changing combat scenarios to attack cross-dimensionally (air against sea or air against land) to achieve asymmetric advantage. Unlike surface forces that generally maneuver in two dimensions only, air forces provide joint commanders a vertical flank that extends over the entire theater. Rather than the piecemeal employment of separate air components, theater air forces, when integrated in employment, can achieve decisive advantage by

controlling the breadth, depth, and height of the battlespace. When employed with unity of effort to achieve decisive effect, air forces are often the most effective and efficient combat force to attain theater objectives.

The Air Force is committed to fully integrating the decisive capabilities of air and space forces into the emerging operational joint force concepts. By integrating the strengths of air, land, sea, space, information, and special operations forces, joint forces can dominate the range of military options—a full spectrum dominance. Integrated theater air operations, employing all air forces at the joint combatant commander's disposal without regard to service or national affiliation, provide for rapid, responsive, and flexible forces to achieve tactical, operational, or strategic maneuver. The flexibility of air forces provides a means for quickly countering unexpected threats and for exploiting fleeting opportunities for advantage. Moreover, the flexibility and versatility of air and space systems provide military forces adept at conducting rapid, sustained, and integrated operations from dispersed locations.

Everyone in the Air Force is responsible for instilling in their subordinates an understanding of the role of air and space power. This understanding must go beyond the narrow technical aspects of a particular career field to include an appreciation for the significant contribution an integrated air and space force makes to the nation. *Air and Space Power Mentoring* serves as a framework for beginning or continuing that obligation. Through the use of this guide, the mentor can tailor sessions to achieve a logical and sound mentoring program. From the menu of items presented here, the mentor is free to develop his or her sessions to meet the needs of those mentored. From the nature of airpower to the joint environment, *Air and Space Power Mentoring* covers the spectrum of our profession of arms. Although this guide provides a suggested framework, it is the knowledge, experience, and maturity of the mentor that is critical.

Mentoring should become a way of life for Air Force leaders. There are no "squares to fill" and the task is never complete. Mentoring is an ongoing obligation that follows the leader from assignment to assignment. No class, lecture, book, or notes can replace the mentor's wisdom. Mentoring is an individually unique program. The manner in which one mentor proceeds will likely differ from that of others.

Mentoring is as different as the individual mentors. This guide, however, provides a common foundation from which to build a program of critical importance to our Air Force—air and space power mentoring.

> *As a guide, the mentor shows the way, but is never so far ahead that the followers lose sight of him or her. The key is to ask . . . questions that challenge group members to think, to analyze, and to probe for meaning. Learning how to learn from experience means learning how to think. The mentor is a catalyst, the outside force that inspires action. The mentor acts as the . . . the spark to ignite other's initiative. As a catalyst the mentor helps the group see in a new light a vision of the organization.*

Kaye and Jacobson, "Mentoring: A Group Guide," *Training and Development*, April 1995.

Air and Space Power Mentoring Guide

Editor in Chief
Lt Col Johnny Jones

Air University Press Team

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Emily J. Adams

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Peggy Smith

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