

BEYOND ^{The} ~~Mobility~~ Manifesto

LET'S GO!



Bothered Warrior Trolls

I am overwhelmed by your response to the Mobility Manifesto. I asked you to Go Faster. No more talk, no more admiring the problem, and no more lamenting our cause...**Expect and Demand Victory, Win or Die!**

You aimed the pointy end of the airplane at the threat, set an aggressive throttle setting, established mobility swagger, and accelerated the Air Force into the future.

You showed the world courage, tenacity, and an aggressive will to win. And the command showed our adversaries Joint Force maneuver at speed, breadth, and depth.

You proved that the Tyrannies of Geography in the Pacific are not an insurmountable boxed canyon, but a challenge to relish, to dominate, and to win. The Joint Force exudes strength because of You!

Your skills as Warriors, Leaders, and Innovators are unmatched. Your actions spoke loud and clear. **YOU ARE THE MAGIC!**

Now we must debrief, take stock of it all; what went right, what went wrong, and what we need to do next.

Nothing can hold this command back when we are determined! Seek situational awareness, seek mission, seek integration, and **GO FASTER!** We must create **irreversible momentum and a Warfighter's mindset.**

It is an honor to lead this Incredible Team.

LFG!

A stylized, handwritten signature in white ink, consisting of the letters 'M' and 'M' with dots, representing General Mike Minihan.

GENERAL MIKE MINIHAN
Commander

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Unraveling the Journey

AMC Strategy

**“Victory will be delivered on the shoulders of
Mobility Airmen and Victory Starts Now.”**

- AMC Strategy, March 2022

In March 2022, I published the AMC Strategy. The clear target: **Mobility Air Forces able to communicate, navigate, and maneuver at the tempo required to win inside the first island chain and anywhere else.**

After one year at the controls, I realized that the strategy, while necessary, was not sufficient on its own. To achieve our objective, we needed a shift: a shift in culture, in mindset, and in attitude. While our Airmen were courageous, tenacious, and demonstrated a will to win, their kit, their freedom of action, and their Magic were held back by a slow and bureaucratic system. The gauntlet needed to be thrown.

Mobility Manifesto

“We are in a crisis. Our historical air mobility dominance is threatened, risking fatal consequences for the Joint Force and our Nation’s strategic imperatives. To fight out of this crisis we must drive the future, and not be driven.”

- Mobility Manifesto, October 2022

The Manifesto asked Airmen to bias toward action and wreak havoc. The Manifesto opened the aperture to think big, fast, and move out to recapture our roots as a warfighting command geared for combat.

In the process, Airmen, Aircrews, Squadrons, Groups, Wings, Numbered Air Forces (NAFs), AMC Staff and the 618th Air Operations Center (AOC) aimed the **pointy nose of the airplane at the threat and accelerated the Joint Force into the future.** We planned, experimented, tested, made mistakes, learned, and improved. Across our total force and with our allies and partners, we conducted the largest exercise in the history of the command: Mobility Guardian 23. AMC developed new ways of doing business, better methods of working together, and rediscovered that focusing on the big fight leads to many wins at all levels.

Beyond the Manifesto seeks to capture the good and bad of what we learned and chart a new course. **A course that culminates in irreversible momentum and a shift in mindset. We will become a force that thrives in uncertain times, grows from disorder, and meets the time on target no matter the challenge.**

Beyond Mobility...Toward Maneuver and Lethality

After Operation Allies Refuge (OAR) we took a different view...Mobility has the final say. The Joint Force wins or loses on AMC's back.

From Kabul to the Pacific

The historic airlift out of Kabul in August 2021 was worthy of inclusion in our legendary Warrior Culture. In less than three weeks, AMC crews, ground personnel, staffs, and support teams moved more than 124,000 evacuees from Afghanistan. In under 12 hours, Contingency Response Airmen deployed into an airfield under attack by foreign terrorist groups, braving extreme danger from mortars, sniper fire, and ground attack to create a foundation for the lifesaving actions by our Joint Team. Aircrews flew over duty day, created air refueling tracks where none existed, and acted on their own initiative to save lives in the air and on the ground. Aeromedical Evacuation crews provided critical care to wounded Marines in the back of C-17s as AMC reworked a refueling bridge to get them back stateside. Impressive efforts by mobility experts at Al Udeid and Ramstein buttressed this extraordinary effort alongside mobility hubs throughout the Middle East, Europe, and the CONUS. AMC led the action: from on-the-fly changes to Command and Control at the 618 AOC, to contracting teams scouring local sources in Qatar for water to keep evacuees alive in the summer heat.

The reality of OAR led to a change at AMC.

Although AMC always performed feats to deploy and sustain the Joint Force, it was an after-thought: A planning assumption that looked like magic. Mobility and Logistics separated from combat and relegated to business-speak "supply-chain," "just-in time logistics," or "defense industrial base."

At Kabul, no element of the Joint Force could do their job without AMC. Without connecting our transportation to combat, the Joint Force was vulnerable, disconnected, and lacked agility. Much like the successes at Berlin and Khe Sanh or the failure at Stalingrad, airpower in the form of airlift, air refueling, and skills at running a logistics operation on the ground will make or break the Joint Force's ability to win.

AMC rediscovered Maneuver and Lethality; the connective tissues between Air Mobility, the Joint Force, and Victory.

Maneuver and Lethality

Maneuver /mə'no͞ovər/ **1. Employment of forces in the operational area in combination with fires and information to achieve a position of advantage with respect to the enemy.**

- DoD Dictionary of Terms

Lethality [lē'THalədē] **Capable of causing death.**

- Merriam-Webster

Maneuver, Lethality, and Combat Effects Matter Most

In the post-script of our Nation's largest non-combatant evacuation operation, we debriefed what we achieved and where we struggled. We looked inside and asked the tough questions: How ready are we for what's next? Are our minds sharp? Can we meet the fuel and airlift demand of the Joint Force? How good is our equipment? Can we take on a Strategic Competitor? Can we have an honest discussion about the reality of combat losses? OAR proved that the paradigm of "hub and spoke," so effective for Air Mobility for the past 80 years, must evolve. AMC and the Joint Force could no longer confine the MAF to a pure focus on logistics. Maneuver is the new paradigm.

AMC will become a force focused on combat effects. On order, Mobility forces must be able to assume the mantle of supported command, from logistics and information to fires and command and control, while operating to support other elements of the Joint Force simultaneously.

Our Big Questions:

Can we explode into the Pacific with the mass, tempo, and sustainment needed to enable the Joint Force to win? At a more fundamental level, can we shape the environment to our advantage?

Our Most Important Finding:

The best position is a position of advantage. The best advantage is an unfair one. AMC needs a shift in mindset, a change in thinking. Beyond our stovepipes of airlift, air refueling, aeromedical taskings, and contingency response...Beyond outdated definitions of logistics and combat coded.

Mobility Guardian: The Proving Ground

**“If you are comfortable with the amount of risk you are taking,
you aren’t taking enough.”**

- AMC Commander's Order #1/8, February 2023

Mobility Guardian was the mechanism to pull the command forward from over three decades of supporting operations in the Middle East to strategic competitions that demand maximum effort from our force.

Mobility Guardian had two phases:

- Operation Mobility Guardian (OMG23): A 20-month process of planning, experimentation, and examination of risk at the unit level.
- Exercise MG23: A large-scale exercise with the Joint Team, seven Partner Nations, and the entire AMC Family working together across thousands of miles in the Pacific—from Hawaii to the Philippines and Japan to Australia.

Our quest from OAR to the capstone event of Exercise MG23 was to validate our identified gaps as a force, experiment with new tactics, techniques, and procedures, and use thoughtful measures to expand our comfort level with risk. Rather than waiting for combat to force us to jettison the rulebook, we chose to determine what was risky and what was not in the structured environment of peacetime.

The force was challenged to **Explode into Theater**, to **Sense and Seize** opportunities, to make our adversaries consider our actions, and to focus on **Lethality**. The experiments at the Squadron, Group, Wing, NAF, AOC, and HQ AMC were as varied as our mission sets.

Refueling tanks with C-130s...Check. Determining how long crews can fly under the safe conditions of peacetime operations...Check. Dropping supplies to the U.S. Navy...Check. Expanding the MAF Command and Control architecture through ChatOps...Check. Making the case for more funding and better platforms at the Pentagon...Check. Training with Marines to improve their foothold in the Pacific...Check. Rapidly shifting Contingency Response forces from the opposite side of the planet...Check. Sustaining our forces in theater to show the adversary we can play an away game and the long game...Check. Delivering palletized effects from our platforms...Becoming vital elements for victory and delivering on our promise to our Nation and Allies. Check and Check!

Across the force, our team found innovative methods to make do with what we already own. Nowhere was this more obvious than in our embrace of all sorts of methods for delivering fuel. From the first-ever engine running defuel into a tank for the U.S. Army to a vast expansion of our defuel capabilities across all AMC assets, we delivered energy for the fight.

Mobility Guardian harkened back to the largest exercises of the Cold War with AMC leading our international partners, the Joint Force, and the Combat Air Forces. MG23 was an exercise executed without restrictions or assumptions. We allowed the force to experience fog and friction, without “White Cards” or the wishing away of logistics.

You broke the myth that the Pacific was too big, too far, and too vast. Our Allies are in step, and our potential adversaries are on notice.

You made the Joint Force and AMC more survivable, more connected, and more agile.

But the future is not certain or ideal. To sustain our momentum, we must examine what we learned over the past two years. We must trust ourselves enough to face the gut-wrenching truth. We must come to terms with important facts about our weapons systems, our tactics, techniques, and procedures, and ourselves. We must take these truths and reorient ourselves, our command, and become the Joint Force Maneuver.

Mobility Truths

We learned what Mobility, Maneuver, and Lethality look like in Combat.

1) Airmen are the MAGIC

New technology is great. Well-trained Airmen are better. Well-led Airmen are unstoppable! No amount of funding or new platforms can solve our most difficult problems...Only Airmen can. Airmen taking risks, Airmen experimenting, Airmen looking at the environment and making the mission happen will always be our secret ingredient.

Our history of combat operations is no longer the past but the present. Normandy 1944, the airdrops and resupply at the Chosin Reservoir during the Korean War, the resupply of ground troops all over Vietnam, the 24/7 tanker alert under Strategic Air Command to keep the bombers ready under the nuclear triad, and the seizing of the airport at Baghdad in 2003...they are AMC's reality today.

Airmen connected to their combat roots are the key to irreversible momentum. Airmen empowered to move beyond reacting...to think, act, and execute to shape the environment are the foundation of Victory!

2) Air Mobility Command is THE Joint Force Maneuver

We give the Joint Force an unparalleled advantage over our Nation's competitors and adversaries. The ability to flex from delivering supplies during a humanitarian crisis to becoming platforms for long-range fires and ISR-T (Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance, and Targeting) ***allows AMC to show the world our Nation's resolve and, if needed, anger.***

AMC has always been subject to the needs of the warfighter and the challenges of operations across the globe—from bad weather and elevated threat levels to procuring diplomatic clearances and navigating around closed airspace. OAR, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and MG23 taught us that the 618 AOC is the crown jewel of Command and Control for the Joint Force. ***The 618 AOC is the heartbeat of our operations***, providing an ability to shape the environment and react to unfolding events...***Impacting all seven continents, every combatant command, and every mobility mission set...EVERY DAY.*** It is the touchstone that will ***Never Sever from our Mobility Airmen***, regardless of who owns them and where they are.

First-mover advantage for our adversaries is no guarantee of success. Overcoming friction and hacking the mission is part of our DNA. As a result, we have an innate ability and the global presence to *sense* changes in our adversary and the operating environment and *seize* opportunities in quick succession. ***AMC provides time and space to the Joint Force—preventing the most Dangerous Courses of Action from evolving into the Most Likely Courses of Action.***

The more integrated we are across Nations, service, platform, AFSC, or rank, the better our ability to provide maneuver for the Joint Force becomes.

In just one day during MG23, our force refueled French, USAF, and Australian fighters, supported an A-400M from the Royal Air Force with fuel on a record-setting endurance mission from the United Kingdom to Guam, airdropped Special Operations Forces into the Pacific, and loaded USMC gear in the Philippines. Later that week, we unleashed offensive firepower from the back of our aircraft and transitioned to rescuing a stranded civilian boat, saving lives and proving our agility.

We make the Joint Force more powerful. We allow our joint partners to plan creatively, to think in bigger steps, and to dominate time and space. ***Distance is a planning factor, not a wall. It is the barrier our enemies feel safe behind that we can exploit with lethality and speed at a time and place of our choosing.***

We are platform, task, and AFSC-agnostic. Give us a mission, and we will get it done!

3) Tempo: Our First Moves Set the Pace for the Joint Force. Our Next Moves Set the Stage for Victory

Without connectivity, fuel, transportation, and basing, the Joint Force will wilt in the heat of combat. When we move, when we act, when we take the first step toward the threat, the Joint Force can follow. This is a shift in paradigm from the tried-and-true method of building up larger bases and supplies and then delivering supplies forward. ***With AMC in the lead, the Joint Force can act now—not tomorrow!***

4) Mass over Time: The Secret of Sustainment

Sustainment is the winning formula to maintain lethality and maneuver for the Joint Force at the mass required over the long distances of theaters beyond CONUS. A force unable to prosecute mission sets beyond a few days and weeks will cede precious time and geography to our adversaries. Flying, Fixing, and Supporting aircraft over days, weeks, and months requires foresight, planning, and adjustment. Sustainment must be a joint endeavor and effort—across all modes of transportation and services; the tempo and timing of AMC buttressed by the logistics capacity of the Joint Force. **Most importantly, sustaining our Airmen's physical and mental capabilities to execute our missions will take center stage in a more protracted conflict.**

5) We moved with speed and scale into the Pacific. We have the potential to explode into any theater on the globe and grow stronger!

In the past, planners and warfighters tended to view the Pacific as too hard a problem to solve, constraining their thinking and creativity. Worldwide operations are baked into the DNA of our Airmen, and our command flourished when given the challenge in the Pacific. The ability to maneuver rapidly and surge where needed, as needed, illustrates a new shift in mindset, from defensive and steady state to offensive and unpredictable. ***We now know that AMC can put 60+ aircraft in theater and prosecute the full spectrum of missions for the Joint Force in short order anywhere in the world, all while maintaining global operations everywhere else we are needed!***

6) Command Relationships (COMREL) Matter

The seams between Combatant Commands, the 618 AOC, individual units, small teams, and Airmen magnify as operating distances increase. Determining how best to posture forces, run cargo, direct base efforts, and establish the tempo for flight operations can often run counter to established lines or authority. COMREL demands a proper concept of employment, must survive first contact with the chaos of conflict, and then adapt as required. ***Dynamic operations require a combat force that can perform its mission with minimal direction from higher headquarters.***

7) Command and Control (C2) is the first casualty of warfare.

The planning assumption that C2 of logistics has its act together is wrong. AMC's lack of connectivity prevents the Joint Force from being able to act at tempo and scale, degrading survivability.

The distances of international operations, coupled with shifting areas of responsibility, create gaps in the ability of AMC and the 618 AOC to command and control deployed forces. ***The transition from deployment to employment is the most difficult for operations, and C2 follows the same.*** Recognizing that C2 will break down in the initial stages of any operation creates a planning assumption for future operations and allows AMC to mitigate risk.

Through OAR and MG23, we learned that the fast pace of information exchange demanded in conflict drives users away from systems that use structured data, such as JOPEs. These systems provide robust information sharing and solid analytic capability in peacetime but lack the speed demanded in war. ***To keep pace, leaders and operators will default to unstructured data*** such as texting or voice call. But this reaction, while faster, presents a significant risk for the Joint Forces from adversaries capable of intercepting/spoofing/disrupting unstructured data. We must find new ways to make use of the speed of unstructured data with controlled risk while also working to achieve connectivity in more structured environments within our operations and with other stakeholders, including commercial, joint, and coalition partners.

We need less science and more art in how we approach C2. We must plan and execute our mission with the knowledge that our C2 and the systems which support it will not survive in their current form in conflict—**regardless of how exquisite or secure.**

8) Our Fleet is Wounded

For those who Fly, Fix, and Support airplanes, the hair on the backs of our necks has been standing up for a long time. During OAR and our MG23 exercise, we put data behind that suspicion. ***Our inability to generate missions cost the Joint Force combat advantage and shifted focus to aircraft availability and away from maneuver.*** Cancelled upgrades, aging aircraft, sustainment challenges, and insatiable demands for lift and fuel have wounded our fleet readiness and made us more vulnerable. We waited until our major weapons systems were nearing obsolescence before pushing hard for a new tanker and a new airlifter.

We have made strides, measured in light years, in advocating for our survivability, connectivity, and agility, but we are far from secure in our airspeed and altitude. As our nation procures, tests, and readies the next generation of fighter aircraft, we must posture AMC to fight alongside them; otherwise, our nation's combat airpower will disintegrate without the fuel, the C2, and the maneuver mobility forces provide. Without change, ***we will have to fight with an imperfect kit, and the Joint Force will have to make do with the best we can give with it.***

9) Trial and Error Accelerates our Warfighting Capability

Combat requires operating at the edge of the envelope and at maximum effort for extended periods. Learning in peacetime is the best method to mitigate the risks of high tempo and high danger in war. During our 20-month effort of OMG23, we learned how to observe under peacetime what war will demand. For example, AMC tested a long crew duty day for C-130 crews well beyond the limits of our Air Force Instructions and learning the effects on aircrews. As a result, max endurance operations are now part of our standard lexicon, not an emergency waiver of the future. ***Learning our lessons in peace will prevent the losses that come with learning in war. We must take risks today to save lives tomorrow.***

10) Fundamentals in Peace Are the Key to Victory in Crisis and Conflict

Warfighting and employing in a fight with our pacing threats must remain priority #1 for all mobility Airmen. ***AMC Airmen proved that their training, and tenacity, and “mission hacking” go a long way toward advancing Joint Force lethality.*** Being good at your job, helping your team succeed, and leading in the absence of leadership are the most significant guarantees of success at the unit level. We must understand that the chaos of conflict is overwhelming; it boils everything in it down to its most fundamental state, the nuts and bolts of who we are. Every time we step onto the field, we are honing these skills, and every time we are called into the chaos of conflict, it tests our mettle. We must embrace the mindset of a warrior, trained to a peak, ready to fight and lead in the arena at a moment's notice. ***The most important fundamental is leadership: leadership of yourself, leadership of your team, leadership in a crisis, and leadership when guidance is absent.***

The Environment

Our Direction

“Our defense strategy must sustain and strengthen deterrence, with the PRC as our pacing challenge.”

- National Security Strategy, 2022

“The Department will prioritize a future force that is **Agile and Responsive**: Rapidly mobilizes forces, generates combat power, and provides logistics and sustainment, even given adversary regional challenges.”

-National Defense Strategy, 2022

“As I’ve said many times, it has been clear to me for over a decade that China is intent on fielding a force that can conduct aggression in the Western Pacific and prevail even if the United States intervenes...We cannot sustain deterrence by standing still... If asked to go to war today against a peer competitor, are we as ready as we could be? What can we change in each of our units and organizations to be more ready? These should not be looked upon as theoretical or academic questions...Change is hard, losing is unacceptable.”

- Frank Kendall, Secretary of the Air Force, 2023

“I will never admit to being ready enough.”

-Admiral Paparo, Commander, US Pacific Fleet, 2023

Facts

Uncertainty, ambiguity, and chaos are the constants of future competition.

The data mobility operators rely on to make decisions will be denied.

Our adversaries will have positional advantage. AMC must fight through long distances to deliver the Joint Force. While this is true across all Combatant Commands, it is most acute in the INDOPACOM AOR. Multiple AOCs will have to operate at maximum capacity, CONUS and OCONUS; there is no global sanctuary.

Our nation depends on us to get mobility right. If we get it wrong, the world will lose. Great powers that cannot bring transportation to bear in support of tactical, operational, and strategic goals fail in war. The examples are legion from the British in 1781 to Iraqi forces in 1991. Amateurs study tactics, Professionals study logistics, and the Victors study maneuver! AMC’s ability to provide Maneuver gives the Joint Force the best odds of victory.

Strategic competition up to and including conflict will require the Joint Force to use AMC to its maximum capacity rapidly and for long periods of time. Operations DESERT STORM, ENDURING FREEDOM, and IRAQI FREEDOM had weeks and, in some cases, months of lead up time with large bases and infrastructure. How much faster and how much longer will AMC and the Joint Force be tested in a non-permissive environment? The speed and scale of our ability to react and then sustain will be the inflection point of our victory.

“We know that if we go to war, AMC will be the most relied upon force in the history of warfare.”

- General Mike Minihan

Where We Are Going...What AMC Needs You to Do

Victory is not assured. So, what will it be, victory or defeat, success or failure, the next greatest generation, or a footnote in history? Yours is a rare opportunity, a chance to seize the moment and take the lead in what will be future victory, or if unmet, ensures the path to a forsaken legacy. In this moment, we must come to terms and leverage the hard-earned truths of Air Mobility to overcome the challenges ahead. The outcome will pivot on our ability to harness these truths and facts for action.

We must:

Create Irreversible Momentum and a Warfighter’s Mindset

Irreversible Momentum

Through the bulwark of maintainers, port dogs, Contingency Response Airmen, airfield operators, fuels troops, and aviators we have secured our proud legacy; maneuvering the Joint Force, evacuating the wounded, airdropping soldiers into harm’s way, delivering fuel to extend the range and lethality of fighters, bombers, and our own from peacetime to wartime. AMC was Joint, Interagency, and Coalition before any of those terms were popular...We’ve made it look easy for more than 80 years! We reaffirmed our combat edge and our swagger. **AMC will not go back.**

For the Staff

Our force requires connectivity, survivability, and agility. Close those gaps so that we can meet the tempo and mass of combat. Embrace that we are combat forces first, whether they give us that name or not. ***Invest in our tenacity, agility, and Airmen to finish the job and Win!*** We are a force multiplier for the Joint Force, able to move between airlift, air refueling, ISR-T, C2, lethal effects, and sustainment with ease.

C2 is the coin of the realm in combat. Our mobility forces and platforms, spread across time zones and distance, are a command-and-control force multiplier. ***Our force must be 25% connected by FY 2025 with rapidly expanding capability programmed in proceeding budgets.***

The Next-Generation Airlift (NGAL) and Next-Generation Air-Refueling System (NGAS) must remain at the forefront of future force design, planning, and programming. Avoid the tendency to think in single mission or stove-piped mission sets. Our air mobility platforms must have the speed, range, and mission payload the Joint Force needs to win the future fight. We must articulate and emphasize the centrality of our Joint Force Maneuver role and its critical importance to future conflict.

To pull us through the next year, accelerate momentum with the move to the Joint Operational Mission Planning Center (JOMPC), 25% connected by FY 2025, and Next Generation Information Technology for Mobility Readiness Enhance (NITMRE), ensuring this preeminent C2 capability is ready for the big fight. We must modernize the 618 AOC through NITMRE to ensure decision advantage for the Joint Force and mobility operations. Develop COMREL, C2, and sustainment concepts of employment that survive first contact with the enemy, with complex command structures, and with degraded communications infrastructure.

Posture AMC forces around the globe to enable rapid movement, maneuver, and sustainment of the Joint Force.

Avoid the tendency to overcontrol with more policies, more rules, and more requirements. Allow Wing Commanders to work magic with their Airmen and their mission. It is the success of Squadrons and Airmen that ensures ours. **We must focus all our energy on supporting them.**

For Airmen

“Yes, trucks, too. We can cut the chassis frames in half with acetylene torches, stuff the halves in C-47s, and weld the frames together when we get them up there.... Give me five days and I'll ship the whole damned U.S. Army to New Guinea by air.”

– General George Kenney, Commander of Air Forces, Pacific Theater, WWII

A Shift in Mindset

OAR and the innovative developments we practiced during Mobility Guardian gave us a template for approaching future conflict. AMC is not just the delivery arm for fuel and cargo for the Joint Force. We are at the pointy end of the spear and will face combat.

You must shift your mindset to that of a warfighter

Offense is the essence of airpower and warfighting. ***Adopt an offensive stance instead of a defensive posture. Act in the absence of guidance.*** Lead in the absence of leadership. Go into crew rest, plan for the next mission, move the cargo off the ramp so you can download more later, service the Aircraft Ground Equipment (AGE), fix the Material Handling Equipment (MHE) that is functioning poorly during down periods, establish sustainable work/rest cycles, train your replacement...KEEP MOVING

Aggressively pursue the fundamentals of warfighting

The fundamentals are the foundation of lethality! Be great at your job and help your teammates get better at theirs. Do not stagnate or assume that policies, tactics, techniques, or procedures won't change or that they should not. You will be the first to know when they should, do not hesitate; we can't afford it! Improve them, make them better, focus on the simple, delete the complex. Keep the throttle at full power and do not let up...keep the momentum you have worked so hard to attain.

Challenge yourself and your team to get more from training, to spend more time thinking about how to fight and do your job, to spend less time on bureaucratic niceties and staff meetings. Get out and lead; we will follow! The Joint Force needs you.

The basic fundamental is leadership. Leadership has no rank and no AFSC. No one is coming to rescue you or your team—if you see something wrong, fix it; if you see an opportunity, act! If it needs to be done—do it! Prepare for the worst but fight for the best. Think, “What’s next?” Delegate your tasks, train your replacement, empower your team to make decisions at the lowest level possible. ***Leaders, know that the lowest level is lower than you may be accustomed to thinking.*** Teach your team to be confident in themselves and each other. Do not step back to the status quo, the “way we always do it,” the tendency to allow the day-to-day to overwhelm what is important. ***If we don’t get leadership right as a team, we will lose, and the World will suffer.***

Be Ready

Be ready to get out of town. This includes your training, your gear, and your personal life. We have lost our muscle memory from the Cold War—strip alerts, razor sharp readiness, 24/7 thinking about how to defeat the enemy, knowing the enemy was doing the same, the certainty that we could do our job in a big fight. ***Do not wait to hit the deployment line to discover you are not ready.***

Before you hit the theater ***shift your mindset from deployment to employment. What does my team do next?*** You may arrive tired, some of your equipment may not make it, or worse, all you will have only your team and what you carried in on your backs. ***If you find yourself lacking gear or teammates—beg, borrow, or create it, but get your mission done.***

Fight through Friction

Every war in history started with confusion and chaos on both sides. If you are confused, so is the enemy! ***Fight for Situational Awareness, Fight for Integration, and Fight for Mission.***

Don’t wait for perfect instruction or a wiring diagram to figure out what to do. We have gotten too much in the habit of asking for permission to do every facet of our jobs, from entering crew rest to cargo-loading start times. ***Destroy the sin of learned helplessness.*** If it is not an explicit NO or UNSAFE—assume you have at least tacit approval to do any action that helps move the mission. ***I would rather have a force chomping at the bit who we need to rein in than one we must prod to action.***

In many ways, success in warfare is not a matter of how well you can get it right the first time but how quickly you can adapt in the face of failure. Our ability to move out, take risks with new ideas, adapt, learn, and then re-attack with the earned knowledge of failure will underwrite our victories. We must be comfortable with the imperfect, ready to apply the lessons we purchase with each new effort, and confident that our Mobility Airmen are at the heart of our ability to do this at the speed that allows victory.

C2 and COMREL will be sketchy and evolving. ***Likely you won’t have communications, and it might be unclear who is in charge.*** When in doubt, stay on frag, stay on mission, then think what next?

Our Airmen must adapt to nonstandard C2 operations, ready to take the lead in the face of a C2 system under siege and unresponsive. We must partner the move-out mindset with an understanding of how to maximize Mission Command and Mission Type Orders.

What do Mission Command and Mission Type Orders mean for you?

In the absence of command or clear guidance, you must lead to help the entire team succeed.

Appendix 1 has a few excerpts from Admiral Ernest J. King, the Commander in Chief of the Navy during the Second World War. His short instructions on how to lead and how to take initiative as a follower in the chaos of combat, set the stage for the victories the Navy achieved in the Pacific theater after the disaster of Pearl Harbor. His words ring true today.

We saw first-hand the positive and negative aspects of Admiral King's philosophy during the complicated and far-flung efforts of Mobility Guardian 23 and the real- world challenge of Operation Allied Refuge.

Any struggles we had during the exercise were often related to the tendency, built over years of steady-state operations in permissive environments, of asking higher echelons of leadership for guidance, which slowed our tempo and ability to execute taskings beyond deployment. Our successes were on the opposite spectrum—moving out, properly assessing risk, and dominating!

When we are slow to deploy, slow to react, and slow to move, the Joint Force loses precious cargo, fuel, and time, BUT most importantly, it costs lives.

When in doubt, do your job, or if you can't, help someone else do theirs. ***Commanders and senior NCOs have a special responsibility to anticipate and lead their Airmen to do the same. Command Custody is paramount!*** History is replete with leaders who lamented their shortcomings in equipment, personnel, and authorities and LOST, if not DIED, rather than fighting and WINNING with what they had, however meager their resources. ***Lethargy and apathy predict defeat!*** As Napoleon said, "The moral is to the physical as three is to one."

Understand the Realities of Combat

Our job is dangerous. You are putting your life on the line. Think about the possibility of fighting in combat or having your teammates fight in combat. Read about war and the stress of those who have gone into combat before you. *Men Under Stress* by Roy Grinker is a great start.

The physical and mental toll that war places on those who Fly, Fix, and Support aircraft is tremendous. During the Second World War, sustained combat over a month nearly destroyed the mental and physical well-being of the Joint Force pilots at Guadalcanal. In 1943, 25 combat missions in bomber aircraft over the skies in Europe was rewarded with a trip home because the average life expectancy was 11 missions. The huge number of airlift missions required to support Linebacker II during the Vietnam War brought readiness in the Mobility Airlift Command crews and aircraft to all-time lows. More recently, the massive effort during OAR, just 21 days, stretched aircrews, maintenance, Air Operations Center teams, and contingency response teams units to their limits.

What does this mean for you? Combat demands a fee in physical and mental fatigue—in days not weeks, or months. We must be mentally hardened and prepared for the rigors of war. What you do now to prepare your mind, will ensure your ability to endure, overcome, and in the end come through whole.

Warrior Heart! Mind. Body. Craft. Understand who you are and arm yourself with the tools to remain resilient in the face of combat stress that is sure to come. Prepare yourself mentally, physically, and spiritually to do your job in the most demanding environments. Know your limits. Modern technology affords us the capability to monitor our health through wearables; learning your body's baseline of fatigue, sleep requirements, and fitness. At what time of the day are you most alert? How do you respond to longer periods without food? How long can you handle sleep deprivation? What activities allow you to refuel your tank? And above all, when do you need to call "Knock it Off" on yourself?

A Force that Grows Stronger from Disorder

“The Soviets made a major mistake, they gave us the opportunity to learn, and we learned the things that we used later.”

- Lt Gen (ret.) Howard Fish, Veteran of the Berlin Airlift

Over the last two years, we thought boldly, experimented, took risks, and learned the limits of what we can and cannot do. To those outside our team, we redefined what they believe can be achieved in such a short time. ***Through these efforts, we made ourselves more combat effective.***

As we build ***irreversible momentum and shift our mindset***, this type of risk-taking and effort will be rewarded with ***a force more capable of winning in combat.***

We laid the foundation of a force that challenges our adversaries to think of us not just as cargo delivery or a gas station in the sky but ***as sensors, shooters, and a team built for warfighting.*** We are now a planning assumption; our enemy must account for and plan against. We are the great asymmetry that keeps them at bay.

Rather than succumb to the Tyrannies of Geography in the Pacific or the local overmatch in weapons an adversary might have, AMC's Airmen are becoming a force that relishes the chaos and grows stronger in an uncertain future environment. We are on the offense, looking for opportunities, putting our bodies in harm's way, and boldly facing the threat.

Nothing is more powerful than an American Team that believes in itself!

Our biggest challenge is a return to our old habits, a failure to grasp our birthright earned in the blood of combat by our forebears. We are our own worst enemy, viewing ourselves as “enablers” “supporters” and “second-class citizens” of the Joint Force. Those old habits— although highly effective over the last two decades of steady-state logistics in a permissive environment—will lead to defeat. That force will succumb to the chaos and difficulty of fighting against our pacing threats.

We must never go back!

Generate your courage, aim the point end at the scary place and execute!

LIMA FOXTROT GOLF!



Glossary

10-Line - AMC staff process to drive irreversible momentum through September 2024, focused on COMAMC’s “Top 10” priority initiatives.

#	CC Initiative
1	Digital Infrastructure
2	INDOPACOM COMREL
3	POST MG23 GAP and POM
4	Explode Into Theater (OT&E)
5	Fusion Center: TF4 & Lab
6	Commander’s Staff Decision Support
7	NITMRE Data Int & App Development
8	25% by 2025 I-P Ready
9	Triple Gamechangers (Palletized Effects, Max Endurance Ops, Maneuver Battle Management)
10	Strategy Coordination Cell (SC2)

25 x 25 - AMC’s goal of delivering robust connectivity capabilities to 25% of its mission team, by the end of Fiscal Year 2025. The end goal is a connected system in which individual Airmen can use a device—one-handed if necessary—to sense and seize opportunities to deploy, sustain, and maneuver the Joint Force in a contested, degraded, and denied information environment. The initiative focuses on connectivity protocols with a common architecture via Beyond Line of Sight and Line of Sight data. This common architecture will have transfer paths that can move meaningful data and connect individual users via a federated mission system with the capability to evolve as speed, bandwidth, and technical means improve. See also Federated Mission System.

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Agility Concepts

Agile Combat Employment (ACE) - A proactive and reactive operational scheme of maneuver executed within threat timelines to increase survivability while generating combat power.

Multi Domain Task Force (MDTF) - A military unit or organization designed to operate across multiple domains of warfare, which typically include land, sea, air, space, and cyberspace. The primary purpose of an MDTF is to enable joint and integrated operations by seamlessly coordinating and synchronizing actions in various domains. It often involves a combination of conventional and special operation forces, as well as capabilities from different branches of the military, working together to achieve strategic objectives in a complex and interconnected battlespace.

Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO) - A strategy that focuses on establishing and operating forward-deployed bases in remote or contested areas to enhance a nation's military capabilities. This concept prioritizes strategic mobility, enabling rapid deployment of forces to respond to emerging threats or opportunities. EABO emphasizes distributed operations, spreading smaller, more agile bases across a theater of operations to increase flexibility and reduce vulnerability to anti-access and area denial (A2/AD) challenges from adversaries.

Distributed Maritime Operations (DMO) - A strategic framework employed by naval and maritime forces to optimize their operational capabilities across vast oceanic expanses. Central to the DMO concept is the decentralization of command and control, enabling individual units and task groups to function autonomously while maintaining a shared operational awareness. This approach enhances adaptability and expedites decision-making in response to evolving situations. DMO relies on robust communication networks to connect and coordinate widely dispersed naval assets, fostering real-time collaboration and intelligence-sharing. By distributing forces across a broad geographic area, DMO aims to reduce vulnerability to potential threats, emphasizing redundancy and resilience. This strategy enhances a navy's ability to project power, assert presence, and respond swiftly to various maritime challenges, supporting both deterrence and strategic interests.

ATOMS (Airlift/Tanker Open Mission System) - A vehicle to prototype and experiment with technologies and concepts to determine the future requirements for Command and Control of Mobility and Joint Forces. Built to rapidly integrated warfighting requirements into programs of record.

Bothered Warrior Troll - A term of endearment. A warrior who never feels ready enough for combat...always in the vault studying tactics...asks for another touch and go for practice...stays late to progress 3 levels to 5 levels...idealizes a "no discrepancy" maintenance log...seeks fast/efficient deployment line...establishes new TTPs for Ravens...creates new methods for running cargo ops...thinks about how to do their job better and faster. **Things that keep them up at night:** the pacing threat, fear of not being ready for war,

Glossary

the need for more training for their team, dreams about how to expand the Maximum on Ground by one. **Things they hate:** losing, inaction, learned helplessness, excuses, lots of guidance. **Things they love:** winning, hard truths, freedom of action, less direction from above, owning failure, overcoming setbacks, taking charge, playing second fiddle if needed, **Their Team Winning.**

Command and Control (C2) - The exercise of authority and direction by a properly designated commander over assigned and attached forces in the accomplishment of the mission.

Commander's Operational Custody - The ownership of outcomes by Commanders. Possessing situational awareness of the environment, the adversary, the force, and the risk level to prosecute a given mission set. The ability to seize the initiative and exploit opportunities.

Command Relationships (COMREL) - The interrelated responsibilities between commanders, as well as the operational authority exercised by commanders in the chain of command; defined further as combatant command (command authority), operational control, tactical control, or support.

Conceal/Reveal - Decisions about what capabilities to reveal to achieve an intended strategic effect, how to reveal them, and when, in addition to, what to conceal and for how long, in order to delay interaction with competitors or to provoke interaction.

Connectivity - The ability to link organizations, weapons systems, or combatants using information systems to interpret or act on the environment. Connectivity implies the ability to transfer meaningful data and present it in a fashion that provides Decision Advantage at a time and point of need.

Data, Unstructured - Human language that machines cannot use without additional translation and transformation (e.g. Chat messages on a cell phone)

Data as a Service (DaaS) - The layer of data fabric that aggregates mission, enterprise, and tactical data at multiple security levels within the DoD Cloud environment.

Data, Structured - Machine-ready data elements that feed logistics and C2 systems of record. Structured data conforms to a model and has a definitive structure.

Decision Advantage - The ability to collect data and interpret information at a speed and volume greater than an adversary. Decision Advantage requires persistent connectivity and the continual transformation of data into useable information. Since AFTRANS decisions empower 1000's of logistics decisions across multiple facets of the operations of the Joint Force, AFTRANS requires an operational C2 engine that informs decisions at multiple commander echelons at a relevant tempo to generate desired effects, especially when under multi-domain attack. See Operational C2 Engine.

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Explode into Theater - The period from Indications and Warnings that trigger deployment actions until all Air Mobility Command force elements reach initial operational capability as defined in the Execution Order.

Federated Mission System - A communication system designed with an open-source, distinct, separated, interoperable, and interchangeable set of components as the baseline of a communication system. This structure allows for the rapid development, upgrade, and modification of a mission system by replacing elements such as data transport, cloud computing, software, hardware components (e.g., displays), without replacing the entire system.

Fusion Center with Task Force 4 (“TaskForce”) and The Lab – A team with a suite of technology focused on the fight with peer adversaries. Task Force 4 looks across all AORs to identify possible future opportunities for exploitation. The Lab observes the actions of Task Force 4 and then researches, tests, and onboards new technologies and TTPs to improve planning. The combination of Task Force 4 and The Lab gives the AMC Fusion Center improved planning capabilities and the ability to identify and create Decision Advantage.

Learned Helplessness - A state of being in which an individual believes they have no control over their situation and that any effort to change is futile. Lacking agency over outcomes—positive or negative—in a person’s immediate control. Manifested in units and larger organizations with terms such as “support” “enabler”, or “non-operational”.

Maneuver - Employment of forces in the operational area in combination with fires and information to achieve a position of advantage with respect to the enemy.

Maximum Endurance Operations - The pre-authorized ability to fly extended Flight Duty Periods utilizing multiple crews, in-flight crew rest, go/no-go pills, and other counter-fatigue measures.

Maneuver Battle Management - Utilizing our redundant communication systems, our near persistent airborne presence and developed tactics, techniques and procedures Mobility platforms can augment theater battle management systems.

Mission Command - A philosophy of leadership that empowers Airmen to operate in uncertain, complex, and rapidly changing environments, through trust, shared awareness, and understanding of commander’s intent.

Never Sever - Mobility capabilities must employ redundant communication systems on the ground and in the air to always maintain connection to our global Command and Control nodes to ensure the Joint force can move at the required tempo and scale.

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Next Generation Airlift (NGAL) - The next generation team of airlift and spacelift platforms delivering the ability to rapidly deploy, agilely maneuver, and persistently resupply the Joint Force at scale required to deter, and if deterrence fails, defeat any adversary in any theater.

Next Generation Aerial Refueling Systems (NGAS) - The next generation team of tankers delivering fuel and data to the Joint fight, enabling access despite the tyranny of distance and persistence in the face of threats while supporting critical deterrence and homeland defense demands.

Next Generation Information Technology for Mobility Readiness Enhancement (NITMRE) - A time-phased approach to rapidly improve the aging systems of the 618 AOC using low-cost/no-cost solutions. NITMRE expands the MAF C2 architecture through 1) Asynchronous communications 2) DaaS and 3) The fusion of unstructured and structured data with machine augmentation to sense and seize dynamic opportunities that inform operational decisions. See DaaS, Decision Advantage, Operational C2 Engine, Sense and Seize, and Unstructured Data.

Operational C2 Engine - Connecting sensors to decision-makers across all lines of operation to inform decisions. Left of operational warning and flow of joint requirements, AMC's Virtual Warfare Center and AFFOR Fusion Center senses the operational environment to inform the joint planning process and emergent options for COMAMC and CDRUSTRANSCOM. Right of warning but left of validated requirements (e.g., JOPES, GATES, GDSS), AFTRANS makes sense of conversations and collaboration across the Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise and publishes relevant insights to the AFTRANS DaaS. As crisis emerges, the engine continues to sense-make sense-act through tailored applications connected to the DaaS that inform the Decision Layer (e.g., Commander's Decisions Support Staff, ChatOps, Task Force 4). See also 10-Line.

Pilot + 1 - Operating AMC aircraft with one pilot and one other crew member to deliver lethal effects, prosecute maneuver, preserve combat capability, and leverage crews for max endurance operations.

Triple Game Changers - Strategic and theater capacity that enhances the maneuver and lethality of the joint force across intercontinental distances and all threat environments. See Rapid Dragon, Maximum Endurance Operations, and Maneuver Battle Management.

Glossary

Rapid Dragon - Palletized Effects - The delivery of kinetic and non-kinetic air vehicles in large quantities from US and Ally air mobility platforms to support a variety of missions to include strike; decoys; jamming; intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and targeting; contested resupply; and humanitarian aid. This concept has been developed and demonstrated by the Air Force Research Laboratory Rapid Dragon program. The strategic approach and rapid development of this capability creates additional dilemmas for potential adversaries and will ensure AMC delivers victory for America as well as deliver hope worldwide, wherever, and whenever needed.

Sense and Seize - Understanding the posture, capability, and actions of adversaries and other relevant actors, while maintaining energy state and environment of Mobility Air Forces. Adjusting MAF energy to act in concert with Joint/Coalition teammates as a proactive force. Leaders of Mobility Forces employ Sense and Seize concepts to aggregate forces to deliver and enable lethality, disaggregate to increase survivability, and then reaggregate as the evolving battlespace requires. Viewing every situation as an opportunity and a risk, Sense and Seize drives towards decision advantage and then identifies, targets, and exploits temporal and spatial changes to take advantage of those situations and win.

Warfighter's Mindset - Proactive view of personal and unit Will to Win, and readiness. Sharpening the mind, body, and craft to best operate in combat.

Wearables - Electronic devices that monitor heart, breathing rate, physical activity, and overall health over time. Assists in establishing a base of knowledge about an individual's health.

Appendix
Excerpts from Admiral Ernest J. King's Philosophy of
Command - Second World War
 Serial 053 of 21 January 1941

Subject: Exercise of Command—Excess of Detail in Orders and Instructions.

1. I have been concerned for many years over the increasing tendency—now grown almost to “standard practice”—of flag officers and other group commanders to issue orders and instructions in which their subordinates are told “how” as well as “what” to do to such an extent and in such detail that the “Custom of the service” has virtually become the antithesis of that essential element of command— “initiative of the subordinate.”

2. We are preparing for—and are now close to—those active operations (commonly called war) which require the exercise and the utilization of the full powers and capabilities of every officer in command status. There will be neither time nor opportunity to do more than prescribe the several tasks of the several subordinates (to say “what”, perhaps “when” and “where”, and usually, for their intelligent cooperation, “why”); leaving to them—expecting and requiring of them—the capacity to perform the assigned tasks (to do the “how”).

3. If subordinates are deprived—as they now are—of that training and experience which will enable them to act “on their own”—if they do not know, by constant practice, how to exercise “initiative of the subordinates”—if they are reluctant (afraid) to act because they are accustomed to detailed orders and instructions—if they are not habituated to think, to judge, to decide and to act for themselves in their several echelons of command—we shall be in sorry case when the time of “active operations” arrives...

Serial 0328 of 22 April 1941

Subject: Exercise of Command -- Correct Use of Initiative.

Reference: My confidential memorandum, serial 053, dated 21 January 1941 -- Subject 'Exercise of Command -- Excess of Detail in Orders and Instructions.'

1. In the three months that have elapsed since the promulgation of the reference [paragraphs above], much progress has been made in improving the exercise of command through the regular echelons of command -- from forces through groups and units to ships. It has, however, become increasingly evident that correct methods for the exercise of initiative are not yet thoroughly understood -- and practiced -- by many echelon commanders.

2. The correct exercise of the principle of the initiative is essential to the application of the principle of decentralization. The latter, in turn, is premised on the basic principle known as 'division of labor', which means that each does his own work in his own sphere of action or field of activity.

3. What seems to have been overlooked is that the exercise of initiative as involved in 'division of labor' (as embodied in 'decentralization') not only requires *labor* on the part of those who exercise any degree of command, but, as well and even more particularly, on the part of those who exercise initiative. It also seems to have been overlooked that the correct exercise of initiative is applicable not only to operations but to administration and, as well, to personnel and material matters.

4. Initiative means freedom to act, but it does not mean freedom to disregard or to depart *unnecessarily* from standard procedures or practices or instructions. There is no degree of being 'independent' of the other component parts of the whole -- the Fleet.

- a. It means freedom to act only after all of one's resources in education, training, experience, skill and *understanding* have been brought to bear on the work in hand.
- b. It requires intense application in order that what is to be done shall be done as a *correlated part of a connected whole* -- much as the link of a chain or a gear-wheel in a machine.

5. In order that there may be clearer understanding -- and better practice -- in the exercise of initiative, the following paraphrase of certain passages in the reference, together with appropriate additions, are enjoined as a guide upon all those concerned in the exercise of initiative:

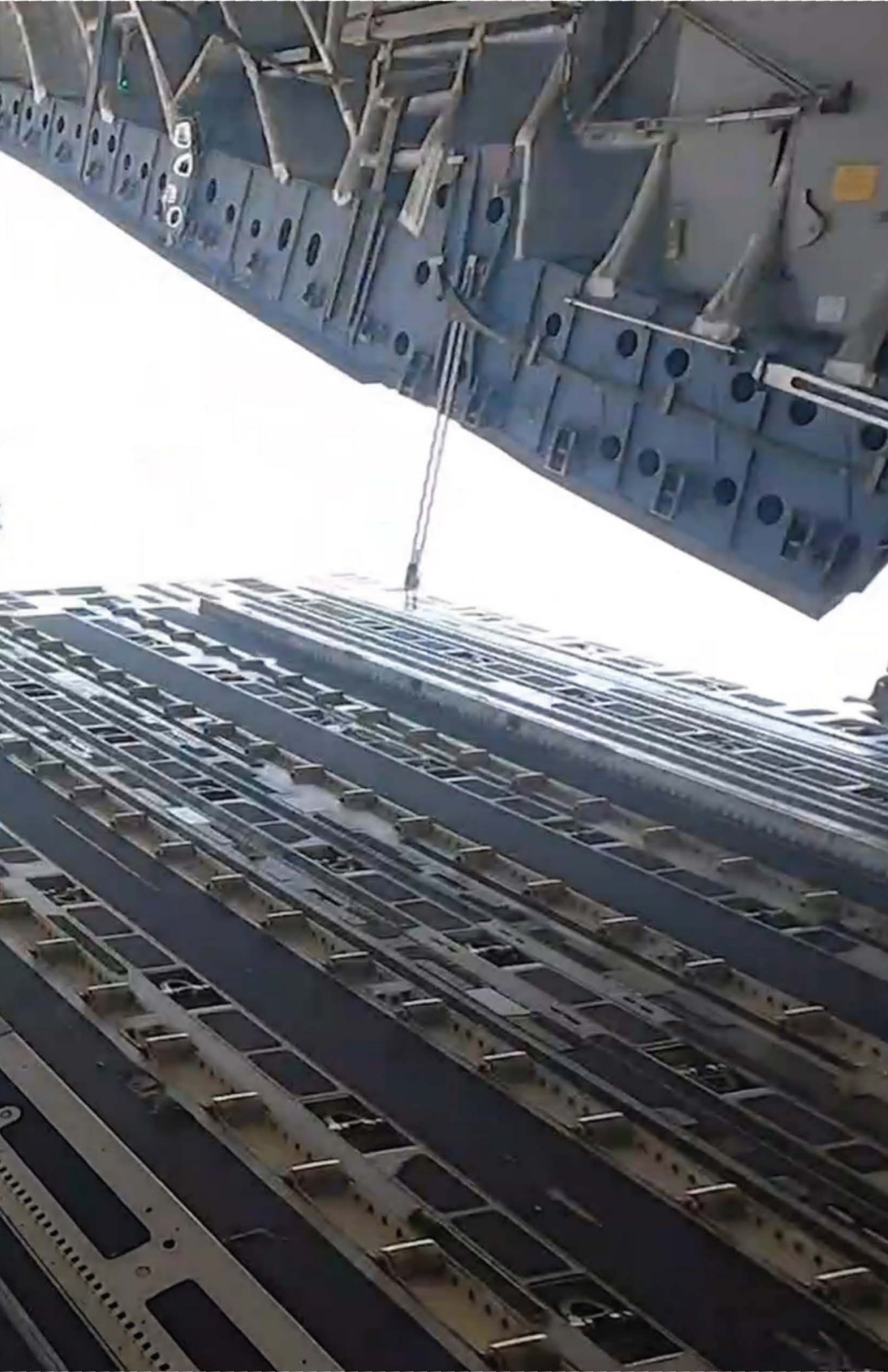
'... active operations (commonly called war) require the exercise and the utilization of the *full powers and capabilities* of every officer in command status';

'Subordinates are to become "habituated to *think, to judge, to decide and to act* for themselves";

It requires *hard work* -- concentration of powers -- to exercise command effectively and, frequently, even harder work to exercise initiative *intelligently*;

When told 'what' to do -- make sure that 'how' you do it is effective not only in itself but as an *intelligent, essential and correlated part of a comprehensive and connected whole*."





WE WILL NOT GO BACK

CURRENT AS OF JANUARY 2024