



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: Your Supervisor

SUBJECT: A Way Of Life

TO: A New Lieutenant

I have reserved this subject for last because this is the bottom line: The Air Force is a way of life.

A friend of mine once said, "If the Air Force were just a job, we are not being paid enough". If you joined the Air Force to become materially rich, you will be disappointed because it won't happen here. If however, you are willing to define riches in terms of priceless experiences, precious friendships, meaningful responsibilities, and rewarding opportunities to excel in the service of your country, then you can become a millionaire. The Air Force is more than just a job. It is, in fact, a way of life.

The experiences that await you will be absolutely mind boggling. When you leave your present assignment, you may find yourself hunting and fishing somewhere in the far reaches of Alaska, sunning yourself on a sandy beach in Hawaii, retracing the foot steps of the Apostle Paul through Turkey and Greece, or visualizing Hannibal and his elephants as they crossed the Alps. Although it is possible to attach a monetary value to these experiences, the enrichment to your life far exceeds the price of an airline ticket and guided tours associated with such experiences when viewed outside the blue suit.

The opportunity to make true and lasting friendships with persons in and out of uniform is another of our intangible but extremely valuable benefits. The rigors of Air Force life, like remote assignments, family separations, combat duty and long hours mold us into a very special group of people. Certainly these hardships are not the aspects of the Air Force that make it fun, but, by sharing these experiences, you will make life long friends. You will have opportunities later to travel across the country and around the world and never be a stranger. You will be frequently and pleasantly surprised with letters, phone calls, and visits from those who have shown you hospitality in the past. Although you can't spend it, the golden glow of true friendship can be more precious than all the gold bullion at Fort Knox.

In a U.S. News and World Report article, the editors focused on the changing attitudes of middle managers in the corporate world. Among the most startling changes in attitude in this group was the tendency of most managers to place emphasis on job satisfaction, challenging work, and adequate leisure than on financial rewards.

The Air force cannot match the pay of the corporate world, but it does offer job satisfaction in challenging positions with responsibilities for newly hired junior executives unheard of in the corporate world.

Finally, I contend that there are those who place a high value upon service to their country. To them the Air Force is definitely more than just a job; it is truly a way of life and I challenge you to view it as such.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul G. Patton". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

**Paul G. Patton, Colonel, USAF
AN OLD LIEUTENANT**