



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

REPLY TO  
ATTN OF:

Your Supervisor

SUBJECT:

Professional Military Education

TO:

A New Lieutenant

Throughout your career the acronym PME (Professional Military Education) will ring in your ear incessantly. I have heard many people discuss the importance of PME as a means to stay competitive for advancement. I cannot argue with this philosophy because it is basically true. If you neglect your professional military education, i.e., filling the PME squares, you will be at a competitive disadvantage compared to your contemporaries who are filling those squares. But there is an equally important reason to map out and pursue an aggressive PME program for yourself -- you just might learn something! I was motivated to prepare these letters because you lack one of the luxuries that I enjoyed as a lieutenant; the luxury of time to learn by experience. These letters may help you in some areas, but PME can help you learn a lot more about the Air Force and the professional military skills you will need for a successful career.

If we view the Air Force as a commercial company, we can draw the parallel that all successful companies invest their resources in a manner to maximize their return on investment. When you consider that the Air Force alone spends millions of dollars to sponsor resident, seminar, and correspondence PME programs, they must expect some degree of return on so large an investment.

This should certainly indicate to you the importance the Air Force places on PME and give you a little motivation to take advantage of this career enhancing opportunity. If we look on an even broader scale, we see that the Army and Navy have equally successful PME programs and attach similar importance to them. With these thoughts in mind, now is the time to enroll in Squadron Officer School by correspondence. Successful completion of the correspondence program doesn't preclude your selection for the resident program at Maxwell AFB. As a matter of fact, it could enhance your selection opportunity to attend SOS in residence. Under current rules, once you complete SOS, you will be eligible to enroll in the Air Command and Staff College (ACSC) correspondence or seminar program after a few more years of active duty. In addition to the Air Force PME courses available to you throughout your career, you should also consider the PME courses of our sister services and the National Defense University when planning your long term program.

PME is an extremely important part of your professional military career regardless of how long you plan to stay in the Air Force. PME completion is necessary to keep yourself competitive for advancement, and more importantly, it is a ready source of information which can help you improve your duty performance now. If you are not enrolled in SOS, stop reading these letters and go straight to the Education Office to sign-up.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Paul G. Patton".

Paul G. Patton, Colonel, USAF  
AN OLD LIEUTENANT