

00:00:05,270 --> 00:00:07,048 The Air Force has announced the creation of a new Information Operations Technical training school . Air Force Basic Military Training has an updated curriculum with a new focus on readiness and lethality . The first command , The Air Force starts here . Hey everybody welcome into the Air Force starts here . Thanks for the subscribe stream or download however you might be listening in if you get a chance to throw us a five star review , certainly would appreciate that as well . My name is Dan Hawkins from the Air Education and Training Command Public Affairs team and your host for this professional development podcast dedicated to bringing Total Force Big a Airmen insight tips , tricks and lessons learned from the recruiting training and education world , great podcast today Chief Master and josh Lackey , the command chief at Air University's barn center , which is out at Maxwell Air Force Base Alabama joins us and he's going to talk all about the changes being made in the whole of enlisted professional military education in efforts to get after CSF action . Order Airmen and competition , as well as Advanced force development here in A E . T . C . It's no secret that today's strategic competition environment is driving the need for us as a command to shift out of the industrial age method that we've been in for production to develop airmen in new ways . General Robinson has said it on multiple occasions and a lot of our Air Force senior leaders but we need multi capable airmen who are agile critical thinkers with the ability to act in a disaggregated environment separated from command and control elements and this goes directly back to Air Force doctrine publication one , which was released last year . That notes the need for airmen to be able to operate in that mission command construct . And so Chief lackey is gonna go into detail on the upcoming changes that are tied to competition being made , not only an airman leadership school but also across the whole of enlisted P . M . E . Including big changes to the senior N . C . O . Academy in the context of team building and the role it plays in terms of senior N . C . O . Responsibilities and placing importance on that . He also spends a good deal of time talking about how skills and P . M . E . That have had to move like some of the soft skills for example will still be able to be provided to airmen outside of the P . M . E . Construct as well as officer and enlisted PM ME training opportunities and the timeline for implementation of these changes . So let's talk e . p . m . e . episode 63 of the Air Force starts here , launches right now . Alright , so chief , tell us a little bit about yourself and how you ended up at the barn center , excited to be here . Thanks for the invite . Um Chief josh lackey , I am the command chief for the barn center of enlisted education um and I am recently arrived less than three months ago . So I'm very excited and to be a part of all the things that are happening in P . M . E . Some of my background . Um I spent a lot of time in civilian education on the outside and worked for the wood School , advancing studies at Boston College for a bit and hold a doctorate in education . Um And also uh force development has been a big passion of mine for my whole career . I started early um as a defense medical readiness training instructor , as a young G 45 out of Fort Sam , Houston camp bullets . And then um some of my other you know background , I spent time as a command , first sergeant at us Africom in Stuttgart . Um and then a first sergeant in and around Warren as well , so kind of bounced around a medic by trade . Um And so uh this has been kind of my uh my bent the whole time I've been in the Air Force is finding ways to get the knowledge that we need in the hands of our airmen at the right time , right place . So I'm excited to be part of the podcast today . Thanks for inviting me . Yeah , so I really found it interesting as I did a little bit of homework before uh we we talked today but you know airmen

today uh have a lot of competing priorities , you know and developing the airmen . We need for strategic competition really requires airmen who uh you know are not just tactically proficient at their jobs but that they understand the whole airmen concept and they're they're prepared . They're educated and trained for strategic competition uh for tomorrow's high end fight . So can you talk a little bit about enlisted , professional military education and and why ? Um the current construct might have been good now but we need to change it so that we are developing those airmen for tomorrow . Yeah , absolutely . It's a great question . So the first part I'll take is is understanding what that that high end fight looks like and and with my background as a medic um having been embedded with a lot of army units in Afghanistan during that fight . Um It shapes in colors how I view um preparation for a high end fight . And so the first thing is is that a C concept right ? Um is knowing that airmen have to be able to move and communicate in an austere environment with limited communication with limited command , team control um and be able to understand what the commander's intent is and what would be done in say a first island chain off the coast of china or in Poland or or any of those very austere environments where they don't have the natural support structure that we have here in the Conus or or on an installation that's already pre set . So once we understand that that's part of what we need . We we kind of back off and say whether two major components to that and that's one is collaborative practices but we have to build airmen that are multi capable , multifunctional . Um They can reach across what their specific job Fs . Is and see where where the need is and and reach in for expertise and reach in to provide expertise . Um And so building those teams that's a piece . And then the other piece too is um mission command autonomy um is being able to understand what it takes to develop a koa um to not just go hey this is my gut instinct . This is the way that I think that we should be moving but to to break down their thoughts break down their experiences and say what did I learn from this ? Um And what do I think I can use for this moving forward ? And so part of what we do for that is what in the army they call the military decision making process , M . D . M . P . Or in the Air Force we used the joint joint planning process , the JPP . And so um you know as we as we teach our our our airmen to think independently to be able to take a commander's intent and apply it down to , okay what would they do in my situation if they were if they were here now what would the commander do ? Um And so they have to have critical thinking skills and um that encompasses the eight elements of thought . What what other points of view should be brought to bear ? What evidence am I considering ? What , what is the inferences and implications ? What are the consequences of my actions ? Um And and so that helps them to assess risk vulnerabilities and to be able to understand better , what is the right risk to assess ? Um what is the right risk to to wait . Um And it's not necessarily always the one um that's the near alligator in the boat , if we're always looking at the three m target and never pick up our eyes to look at the 300 m target , that's the one that's gonna slam for us . And so it's given them some of those tool sets to be able to walk through that piece of understanding what it means to execute commander's intent or or what we call mission command and and and take the broad leadership from a commander whether its joint forces or Air force and and take it down to their very tactical level and say , how does this apply to me . Um And so what we used to do in the past in PMU is very rich and very structured and that worked for the force that we were trying to develop when I joined the Air Force , um There was around 615,000 people in the Air Force and and now we hover between 3 24 29 . And so there was much more rigidity into the structure of the force ? Uh There

was much more nuanced specialty specialties um with more specialty codes because we could get very nuanced into each individual effort and say you will do this specific thing , you will do this specific and very very well . But as we have broadened the scope of our mission and we have encountered at least two major adversaries that as the as the Secretary of Defense has stated last year um that it is not unlikely that we will go to war with . We have to scope our progression . We have to scope the education that we give these individuals in a manner that allows them to be more flexible And to uh and to fill in those gaps where there used to be rigidity , there needs to be more flexibility . We're fond of using the flexibility is the key to airpower phrase that we co opt from the Italian air force in in the 1940s . But it holds true now more than ever because those elements that are airmen need when they're fighting an enemy alone and unafraid are gonna be found in their foundational competencies that they get through E P . M E . Yeah , and I think those are kind of the things that we see in today's conflicts right ? Uh that the Russian invasion in Ukraine can see some of the ramifications of perhaps the training and education arm always not always operating like it should uh in this case with the Russians . So it's very interesting that you know we understand that and we're trying to take that pivot , you know um from a from a student context or you know an airman who uh you know is looking at attending P . M . E . In the future . You know um you know what is the mindset that they need now to come to P . M . E . And um to get after these kinds of changes ? So I'm gonna steal part of your example . That's a great example about one of the things that I would say that they need to take into their mindset is in this conflict . There has been that I know of open everything open source , right is seven Russian generals have died . seven . And the reason that those generals have died is due to sniper fire and um due to happen to be too close to the front lines . And the reason they had to be so close to the front lines is because they don't have an enlisted corps that they can trust to take their commander's intent to take their orders and carry it down to the to the front levels . And and conversely they don't have a force that they can trust to carry the right um what is the mission ? What's the enemy ? What's the train , the time that you know the collateral damage ? They don't have the an an enlisted force that can assess the those are the intent and so um what I would say as they're preparing to uh enter into P . M . E . Is the mindset that that they need to have is that it's not a box to check , it's not a hoop to go through to get to another stripe . These are immersive experiences that that are required in order for them to be shaped into the force that we need . Um No one comes into the Air Force is the chief master sergeant or a four star general and what that tells me is . So even as a chief I I still get development but what that tells me is if I don't come in as a chief and I don't come in as a four star general then there's a there is a Litany of developmental opportunities that I need to shape me into the leader that I can become and this is one of them . And so the mindset that they should take coming in is to absorb as much as they possibly can . It's 25 days of concentrated experience every day . Every our is poured over . There is um you know chiefs being 1% of the four sounds like a really small number until as my boss is fond of saying until every one of them has an opinion about what should be going into E . P . M . E . And so we're very intentional about the things that we let into those 25 days and in the ways that we we get after training our airmen . And so some of the things that we have looked that from a curriculum stand finding the curriculum is we want to start with the objectives we want them to we want our curriculum to start based around what our Air Force needs . And so we talked about those two things um teaching uh

collaborative practices , teamwork and teaching how to execute mission command or commander's intent um Autonomously . And and the way that we leverage that is through the use of the army leadership . Um And sees there's 24 foundational competencies . Every lesson that we that we teach is vetted against those foundational competencies . And then there's a third marker that we use and that's the C . J . C . S . I . As the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff the CIA back um produced a document the enlisted force for tomorrow's wars um and their p . And the outcomes that are expected . And so we measure every lesson plan everything that we teach against those documents to make sure that hey this isn't just Chief lackey and Colonel Babcock's good idea Ferry that's coming along . We want to make sure that everything is aligned with what the strategic air Force and the D . O . D . Wants similar to how we expect our airmen to operate at the tactical level when they're out in an ace environment and and they're alone and unafraid . Um They should say what am I doing that matches with what I know the Air Force isn't meant to be what my naps intend to be the wing , the group , the squadron and my commander's intent . So that's the way that we're getting after that . Some of the things that you'll hear um these airmen , N . C . O . S and senior as well here that it's coming out of P . M . E . Are some of the soft skills and that's not because we're de emphasizing that uh you know , my background as a first sergeant tells me that soft skills are invaluable in today's Air Force . But I can't I can't inculcate that into your persona in 25 days In 25 days . I can't make you an emotionally intelligent person . I cannot make you focused on those elements of diversity inclusion that are foundational to being an airman . But what I can do is give you tools , what I can do is give you the joint planning process . I can give you the military decision making process , critical thinking analysis . I can give you those tools to take back to your work soon . And so those things that we've that we've started to remove from P . M . E . As we start to move forward . Um where do they go if they're still important , where do they go ? Because not everything can go into PM into this very constrained box as much as I would like every airman to be a coach . Every Airman to you know to to have coaching certification . Every airman to be an I . S . S . A certified fitness instructor . Every airman is we love all those things but we don't have the bandwidth for them . So as we look to how do we push these things out that are still very very important ? Where do we where do we box those ? And so are forced development team has been putting together curated content , all the content that we've pulled out , we're curating it And it's gonna be pushed out through the 88 s . Um into the wings uh in packaged format so that they can pick and choose amongst those wings and those airmen and be taught at the very base level um at squadrons um through you know sergeants time through the first sergeant , through whoever and its its curriculum that has already been vetted through us and there's lessons plans attached . And so um your ad hoc like professional development that becomes sergeant , whoever's you know , passion project of choice . Hey I want to teach you guys on this . Well now you have stuff that's been curated by an Air Force entity that's been vetted , it's been um and and then pushed out so that so that can be used so we're not gonna lose that and along those lines . Um jake us um is being redesigned right now at half the job qualification standard for Airmen Leaving Airman leadership school into your squadron . And so what we believe is that the airmen that are leaving Airman Leadership school were not the vetting authority that they should be supervisors . What we can say is we have trained them on these tasks . We give them these tools and then when they get back to their squadron , their squadron commander , their supervisor can all say , all right , let's do a check on

learning . How do you do see one , do one teach one ? How do you do these baseline supervisory tasks and then sign them off in the J . Q . S . So it's part of their their competency for order . And so that piece of becoming a supervisor that cultural piece gets embedded in the squadron . No , I was just curious like so , you know , we're talking about and I love the fact that you're trying to create this content that you know can be moved because you're right , we don't have you know enough time for everything and you know , uh everything is still important but you got to utilize other avenues . So like wearing your teeth hat or your first sergeant's hat or or just being sergeant sergeant . So and so with four airmen , you know using that sergeant time to to say , hey guys we're gonna talk about some of these soft skills that are important to your development . But I'm curious , you know , we're talking about a . L . S . But is a lot of these changes cascading up to how you're gonna work in C . O . A . And senior N . C . O . A . I maybe I'm jumping ahead here but but you know I'm sure anyone listening is probably going okay we're talking about A . L . S . But you know are we also talking about you know how we're doing N . C . O . Training and senior N . C . O . Training . So I appreciate that . Yes and yes . Um and so the idea is that we're trying to take those cultural elements from each of the levels and push them into an area where the culture exists . Because we've all experienced um going to P . M . E . And then returning the station and someone says that's what you learn in P . M . E . That's cute . That's not how we do it in the real air force . And so we need to get to where the real air force is . The air force that we want and a way to get there is to push those cultural content into the hands of the people who are going to have to teach . It will also have to be responsible for it . Right ? And so we never wanna we never want to take away um At Comic Con right ? If if you're being taught a thing , if you're being um made responsible for a thing then you should have ownership of that thing . And so culturally emotional intelligence , those things . If your supervisor is gonna be the one that has to look you in the eye and say hey this is the culture we're going for . Then then we're gonna give them the tools to teach your culture and so a different elements to as a really great question . We start to ask the question when should these experiences occur , especially as we start to hit this slowdown of promotions , um is it gonna be ranked based ? Is it going to be position based ? Is it gonna be as a flight chief ? This is when you go , is it gonna be um as a squadron senior listed leader ? This is when you go and we're starting to look at those things in those elements . I will tell you the early um the early decision that we've done is that we have started to slow down over the last 3 to 4 months and continuing on , we have slowed down the production rates of of L . S . N . C O . A . Senior N C A . And C L . A . And the reason for it is um we started to find that staff sergeants with a line to tech sergeant , we're going to see academy . That's kind of my my my case point . And so that told us that we had way too much capacity in the system and that we are just doing production for production . We're not trying to take opportunity for that text select . But what we need to do is make sure that the content that's at N C O . A . Is specifically geared for those Master sergeants and Master Sergeant select , so that we're not watering down content . And so we're also making sure that they're getting targeted opportunities . And so while we may change the construct of who goes win , we'll still be very , very targeted . So our production requirement , what we call P . R . D . Slow down for each of those . And so if , if across the force and I've got a couple of notes , hey , hey , you know , chief , we noticed that uh , you know , not no more master sergeants are going to senior N . C . O . A . Or no more text . Let's are going to N . C . O . A .

And whatnot . Why are we doing that ? Is it a resource problem ? No , it's not a resource problem , it's , it's a selectivity problem . We want to make sure that those people that are supposed to be going get it when they should get it in their careers , especially when there's potentially longer periods between their career . Um , when they can go . Some of the things that we're considering too is uh there's a lot of argument for , hey , there's differences between officer P . M . E . And enlisted PM me and those are two different products . Those are , you know , there's different functions for officers that enlisted , but there's a lot of places where we work very , very closely and and the idea is if we fight together , we should be able to train together in some ways . And so we're looking for what are good touch points between O . P . M . E . And E P M . E . So that um when a commander selects their senior listed leader or their chief , the first time that they've trained with an enlisted person who worked alongside the list . The person isn't that moment in command where everybody's like at a middle school dance is very awkward Frankenstein . And so we want to prepare those command teams and it's part of that . That first objective that we talked about is is building teams . And so how do we build teams across the Air Force and across command teams is very important to how we approach enlisted PM in one of those things that we've done at the senior levels . Um we work very closely with the leadership development um course that's done through the Ikar Center Andtraditionally um it was called the commander's course over the last six months to a year . Um We embedded one of our chiefs from the Chief Leadership Academy as an Ellen . Oh , like you know , between commands like Transcom will have an L . N . O . At the U . S . Africom . And um so we took , we took a chief and put them over , there is an L . N . O to say , hey , here's some equities that we see from the enlisted PMP side and now we have a fully integrated course where senior N . C . O . S . And commanders go to a professional development course together at the leadership development course and learn what it means to be a squadron leadership team alongside each other . Then we're looking for more of those touch points between O and E P . M . One of the other things that we're looking at that is done in the officer side is we're considering in soliciting um selectivity . What does it mean that all enlisted personnel go through every enlisted P . M . E . Um Not every officer goes through a csd and not every officer goes through their work college or S . D . E . I . D . And so as we're looking at the design of P . M . E . E . P . M . E . And seeing how do we make this , not competitive internally , but competition focused towards our external adversaries while building teams and while building collaborative practices and building autonomous airmen , what does that design look like ? Is there some selectivity to it , does it depend on your career pathway , does it depend on what your career trajectory is ? And so some of those elements that we've taken , they don't necessarily fall into p . M . E per se . Some of them fall into experiences and certifications and licenses that a member can gain as they go throughout their career . Um for example , there's a there's a Digital Badging um uh initiative that's happening under the Community College of the Air Force . They , they fall under the barn center , so CCF , most people know them as , hey , that's the guys that , you know , after so many years that , you know , I I do 18 classes and they award me um an associates degree in my field of expertise ? That is , that's one of the things that they do . Another thing that they do is they execute , which is the credentialing and online licensure , but they also execute , they're the , they're the badging digital badging hub for the Air Force as well . And so what they're doing over there is , is taking those non P . M . E . And non degree licenses and certification and finding a way to aggregate them in a system of

records so that the Air Force when they reach down and then you can say , hey , you know , I know Chief lackey is a medic by trade and he's got some short time and he's got some some uh command chief time and here's his degrees that's on his surf and , and but I also know that uh you know , he's , he's lean six sigma black belt and he's got absolute 21 green belt and we need one of those guys of Ramstein . And when I build a slate , I want to be able to help Ramstein choose from people who have the experiences in digital badging that , that they need . And so it helped the down select across the forest . So that's one of the other opportunities that we're looking at is um as we slow promotions as we as we start to look at what experiences and exposures mean to an airman and how do we develop an airman that can fight um well and and be able to critically think through what commander's intent is and to be able to build cross functional teams to be able to help out in areas that aren't their expertise and to bring their expertise in the areas that that they don't typically do . What do those experience and exposures mean in terms of policy and and being able to be mobile throughout the air force well and it definitely , you know , everything ties right back to , you know , um action order Airmen and developing the airmen we need in line with General Brown's accelerate change or lose strategic priorities and and General Robinson and and our priority of advancing force development here in a T C . It sounds like you guys have a lot going on . So uh last question before we wrap it up , what is maybe the timeline look for really implementation across , you know , the ep meal landscape for for all these changes ? Because I mean obviously you guys got a probably like everybody else is small staff but a lot . So what does this look like ? Yeah , you're not wrong . So what this looks like is some of this is starting to roll out time now . Um the curated content we've started to push out to the what formerly was called Core Assistance advisors . Now the mm development advisors , we start to push that out to them . Um and so that will become available really in a robust way over the next 30 to 60 days . Um Senior N . C . O . Academy next starts on one october one of the things that I didn't talk about um And I'd like to touch on with Senior N . C . O . Academy is we have hyper focused on building teams . Um And so as we went into design for that curriculum and worked with their leadership team . One of the things that came out is that Um as we're building teams and we're teaching over 25 calendar day or 25 days of instruction about hey team team team learn to build a team and then the culminating event is single achievement and and and and an award that's given out . And so we took a very critical look at how to how to reinforce that . And so some of the traditional awards at only the senior and ceo academy level none of the below levels at only the Senior N . C . Academy level removed one of those . Um Was unfortunately the john Lovato award and we spoke to his son because he's a he's a fantastic advocate for our enlisted force and our heritage and he does an amazing job of teaching uh you know as a as a guest speaker at a lot of the L . S . Is an N . C . O . S . We wanted him to understand that this in no way is um Speaks to his father's legacy . He's an absolute hero actually reinforces uh lovato's selfless teamwork right when he saw that that canister in spooky 41 And and jumped on top of it and put himself at risk for his team . That's the kind of action that we're trying to reinforce his say put the team before yourself . And so that rules out on one October and so starting that that iteration you'll see competition focused . Um Airmen being developed at senior N . C . O . A . And there won't be that the culminating award will be the team Etchberger award . Um The DGS um there'll be 11 per flight and it will be based on their ability to build teams . Um N . C . O . Academy we're going through that one the next 66 months or so . You should start to

see stuff roll out from then . Um And then the O . P . M . E . P . M . E . Touch points will be by the end of the year will have a real good conflict about that . And so um slowly moving forward over the next 6 to 9 months and uh airman should start to see this start to roll out their way awesome . Well good stuff chief . We appreciate your time today . I mean we gotta wrap it up because you've got a lot of work to do . So we can't we can't just talk all day . You've got to actually get some work done . I appreciate it . Thanks for your time . Tons of changes coming to enlisted p . M . E . Developing the airmen we need for 2037 has already begun . And a big thank you to Chief lackey from the barn center for spending time with us today . As a reminder , you can follow air education and training , Command and Lieutenant General Robinson via social media . A e T C is on facebook , twitter and instagram . You can find Lieutenant General Robinson on twitter at e T C underscore commander as well as on facebook at a T C command team for 24 7 news and notes . You can find us as well on the web at www dot a e t c dot af dot mil . Thanks for checking out the podcast as we dive into the world of recruiting , training and education for our entire e t . C public affairs team . I'm dan Hawkins . So long we'll talk to you next time on the Air Force starts here .