



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC 20330

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Leaders,

Throughout my career, I've witnessed the friction between bold leadership, in the spirit of mission command, and the guidance our Air Force has outlined in our instructions and regulations. I believe and have often said, "there is a fine line between leaning forward and falling over." That is the challenge we face as Airmen...executing mission command and complying with all forms of guidance. At its core, mission command—and our success in future crisis or conflict—is grounded in clear communication of intent, shared understanding, trust, and empowerment.

In your role, both you and those you are privileged to lead are guided, governed, and sometimes constrained by prescriptive processes and requirements laid out in Air Force instructions and guidance. Air Force leaders own the responsibility to balance written guidance against judgment and experience. When faced with a mission accomplishment versus compliance conundrum, I expect leaders to use professional judgment, assess risk, and bias action over stagnation. You have been trained in a specialty, honed your tradecraft in exercises, and proven your expertise during deployments. When facing a situation where rapidly-evolving variables are not aligned with Air Force regulations, or guidance doesn't exist, all Airmen need to conduct risk assessments, determine modes of risk mitigation, communicate the risk up and down the chain of command, work to update and align guidance with the operational environment, and accomplish their mission.

We are in the early stages of executing the Air Force Future Operating Concept; providing commander's intent and executing under mission orders will be imperative to accomplishing our mission in an agile environment. Mission command takes practice, intentional development, and empowering Airmen at all levels to lead, assess and communicate risk, and execute effectively. Leaders must create opportunities for our Airmen to develop the skills required for mission command; Agile Combat Employment training is one example. To operationalize mission command, every significant event needs to be planned, briefed, executed, and debriefed.

The new Air Force Doctrine Publication 1-1, *Mission Command*, released on 15 August 2023, is located in the [USAF Doctrine Library](#). The inclusion of AFDP 1-1 in Air Force doctrine is intended to provide a foundational framework to educate all Airmen on how to approach a mission command philosophy. While this publication will help build a common understanding of mission command across the force, the culture of mission command doesn't happen just because it is written in our doctrine. There is opportunity to unleash the potential of mission command when we trust our Airmen, capitalize on their talent, and seize the initiative while balancing and communicating risk related to the actions being taken. I believe building confidence in mission command, for both leaders and Airmen, requires daily execution in simple scenarios ahead of a complex challenge in conflict.

I trust your judgment as Airmen and leaders to execute our mission...*Fly, Fight, and Win...Airpower anytime, anywhere*. Thanks for your leadership.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles Q. Brown, Jr.", is positioned above the typed name.

CHARLES Q. BROWN, JR.
General, USAF
Chief of Staff