

Address by the Chief of Air Force Air Marshal Leo Davies, AO, CSC

Officers' Training School Graduation, Sale 29 July 2016

Commanding Officer, Officers' Train School, Wing Commander Davin Augustine and the 54 graduates of No 2 of 2016 Initial Officer Course, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Today's parade and graduation is really about three groups of people and I wish to extend a special welcome to you all.

First, the families and friends of today's proud graduates; I know some of you have made a considerable effort to not only be here today but to support your graduate throughout his or her journey. As a father of two, I can appreciate how tough that can be, so it is with empathy that I pass on to you my sincerest thanks, and congratulations. Service life provides real opportunities for members and their families; however, it also places considerable demands upon them: time away from friends and loved ones, long working hours, and the inevitable upheaval on postings. While these factors can be quite daunting, it is the understanding and support Air Force members receive from their family and friends that assists in maintaining their enthusiasm and dedication.

Second, to the instructors, facilitators and OTS [Officers' Training School] executives who have taken years of good ideas, proven techniques and surprise outcomes to formulate not only a curriculum, but an atmosphere of education, development and support (albeit at times tough support); you have again been most successful.

Finally, to you the members of the Royal Australian Air Force on parade – the graduates of IOC [Initial Officers' Course] 2 of 2016 – the newest officers in the RAAF. I congratulate you on your drive and motivation, on being smart enough and brave enough to commission as a Direct Entry Officer as I did, or to make the transition from NCO [non-commissioned officer] to Junior Officer. I commend you for having the skill and courage to complete the first step. And make no mistake: this is only the first step in your officer careers.

Some of you have already given years of loyal service to the Air Force, while some have come direct to our service with special interests, skills and experience. I note that there is a pretty broad range in ages here today – our youngest is 20, while our most 'mature' graduate is 42. Well done, Polly.

Most importantly, today, all of you are becoming commissioned officers, with the rights and special responsibilities that go with being a leader. Each of you has made a commitment to serve your country, and I ask that you do that with pride. 'Accept responsibility' should be your motto. Lead by example to all who serve with you. As an officer, you are required to develop, attain, and maintain the very highest standards of integrity, professional achievement and personal conduct. You must continue to uphold the standards of a proud service whose traditions were forged in the defence of Australia and maintained by many who preceded you.

During the past weeks, your instructors have demonstrated to you the importance of the Air Force values of Respect, Excellence, Agility, Dedication, Integrity and Teamwork. They will

have also helped you develop essential military attitudes, and improved your motivation, self-confidence, initiative, assertiveness, and esprit de corps. Exercises such as “IROQUOIS” and “CARIBOU”, have stretched you and tested your ability to assess a situation, and adapt and lead your team to achieve the task. This has helped you develop a greater awareness of your ability to extend your limits, break through mental barriers, and interact as team members.

Your ability to give and take orders, and to plan and execute tasks, will help ensure that you will play your part as our Air Force continues to provide first-rate air power in operations ranging from warfighting to humanitarian support and we have been involved in both in recent years; right now we have aircraft over Iraq.

You are beginning your careers at an extraordinary and significant time in Air Force history as we are midway through replacing nearly all of our existing aircraft. This transition brings great challenges but with it comes great opportunities. Having these aircraft and supporting systems is one thing. However, the Air Force still requires professional, intelligent, motivated, and operationally focused officers to ensure these platforms are effective. It is the unique mix of personnel and machine that will enable our Air Force to deliver air power, in all its forms, and to continue to show why our Air Force is held in such high regard.

Finally, I ask you to look upon your time here as the stepping stone in a fulfilling career. Today, you will leave this parade ground one step closer to your goal; the goal of serving your country as Air Combat Officers, Armoury Officers, Dental Officers, Electronic Engineering Officers, Joint Battlefield Airspace Controllers, Legal Officers, Medical Officers, Nursing Officers and Pilots. That list, ladies and gentlemen, represents a very broad spread of capability for our Air Force with every specialisation required to support each other.

Enjoy this moment; take the time to reflect; and keep your families involved. Remain vigilant to the challenges that lie ahead. Continue to work hard, contribute to Air Force capability, lead others, and make a difference. And remember the friendships you’ve made here, because these friendships will help you build support networks that will carry you successfully through your career and your life.

I congratulate you upon graduating from this challenging course at Officers’ Training School and I wish you all the best in your commissioned careers.

Thank you.