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In 1966, the Air Force launched a search for “ the best qualified and most impressive individual” in the service to fill a new position, that of Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force.

It said that candidates had to have at least 22 years of active-duty service and two years as a chief master sergeant. Each had to have “ the highest standards of integrity and performance. ” Noting that the year 1967 marked the Air Force’s 20th anniversary as a separate service, Chief Airey said the changes and progress facilitated by the enlisted force were hallmarks of those two decades. He also said continued progress was assured because: “ It is pride and dedication that keep enlisted men at their posts, not the lure of an easy life and a secure future.

For the dedicated airman, it is not only money or the job to be done. It is the desire to serve our country that motivates today’s Air Force. ” At the ceremony, McConnell told him, “ OK, you’ve got the job. Run with it. You know being Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force is 90 percent common sense and 10 percent knowledge.

You have to try to get along with the Air Staff. There are people who will make a patsy out of you, both officer and enlisted. Others will try to use you. Many will have axes to grind.

” His work with a team of Air Force specialists helped to produce the Weighted Airman Promotion System, which he said is his most important contribution as CMSAF. According to Airey, “ The end result was a promotion system which today is still in effect and is by far the fairest, best, most equitable enlisted promotion system of any of the armed forces. Airey at times came in contact with Capitol Hill, mostly regarding constituent complaints. Rep. Wright Patman (D-Tex. ), the chairman of the House Banking Committee, once asked him to come along on a tour of US military bases in Europe. Patman had received reports that servicemen there were paying usurious rates for loans, and he had sought out Airey upon learning that he had experience working with credit unions. The trip resulted in the establishment of credit unions at US bases in Europe.

Air Force Enlisted Heritage Research Institue-Air University The Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force (CMSAF) position was created to add prestige to the noncommissioned officer corps. As the position title indicates, there can be only one CMSAF at one time. The CMSAF acts as a personal advisor to the Air Force Chief of Staff and Secretary of the Air Force on matters concerning the welfare, effective use, and progress of the enlisted force.