

[Sent to Jeff Hackett (and shared with other classmates), USAFA Class of 1975, as head of the Class's 50-year Reunion in November, 2025.]

“Greetings Jeff, my old roomie. I remember with horror those doolie days when you and I and Duchnowski were stuffed into a “dorm” room meant for one. Survival of the fittest, and now here we are. Thanks for everything you’re doing for the reunion.

Speaking of which...I’ve been thinking about the temper of our coming event. We know that reunions are meant to bring our particular band of brothers back together for reacquaintance and reminiscence. I look forward to that. A secondary purpose is to learn about the evolution of our institution - what has changed and what remains the same. After all, it is the unique context and milieu of the Academy itself that bonds us in the first place. Given all the gift and donation solicitations we are peppered with, the Academy’s leadership needs to provide us with their vision and direction for the future if they expect our continued support.

I expect to hear a great deal about that direction as part of our reunion agenda. Demonstrating my firm grasp of the obvious, much has changed recently with regard to the Academy and the Air Force in general. The swear words “diversity,” “equity,” and “inclusion” have been purged from the curriculum and from normal discourse. I wonder what [Lt Gen Silveria](#) thinks about that. I recently wrote a defense of the US military’s ethos against “baby killer” detractors, citing as an example my ethical leadership coursework and teachings at the War Colleges and, in particular, the profound emphasis on professionalism, ethics, morality, philosophy, and yes, DEI principles, that existed heretofore as an essential component of the curriculum at the US Air Force Academy. I’m wondering now if I need to retract my defense...

I see too that the Academy wants to [eliminate some 105 civilian PhD professors](#) from its faculty in favor of less academically qualified military officers, suggesting this is a money issue. Color me skeptical. More likely, this excuse looks like top cover for the current Administration’s anti “woke” agenda. We might remember that a hallmark of the Soviet system was to purge free-thinking, dangerous civilian academics from the regime’s educational institutions and replace them with politburo loyalists. You know - get rid of the intellectuals. I’m

guessing that the Supt has no intentions of joining Harvard and many other renowned US universities in the nascent “[academic mutual defense compact](#)” as they fight to retain their academic freedom despite their Big Brother thoughtcrimes.

Beyond that, as part of this expulsion effort, the current Superintendent worries about retaining the Academy’s [accreditation status](#). WTF?! How has our alma mater gone from one of our nation’s most prestigious universities to a program that needs to concern itself with accreditation? Perhaps it has something to do with [eliminating the word “educate”](#) from the Academy’s mission statement?

I want to hear more about all this at our reunion.

Perhaps related to the roiling of the civilian faculty, I expect to hear a lot about the need for the Academy to reinstall a “warrior” mentality into its graduates. What exactly is a “warrior mentality?” Less than half of the class of 2025 will be given rated assignments. The larger portion will fill critical support fields. I’m anxious to hear how a “warrior” mentality will serve the majority of Academy graduates who will likely never once be armed during their Air Force career.

Moreover, in today’s Air Force, even the contributions and legacies of true “warriors” are circumspect. Apparently, gender and race play essential roles in how we define our “warriors.” Take for instance combat fighter pilot, fighter squadron commander, and Thunderbird pilot Colonel Nicole Malachowski (USAFA Class of 1996) whose name was removed from select military websites at DoD direction. [Look her up](#). Apparently, not enough correct body parts to be considered a true warrior. Or the ill-fated effort to [remove the Tuskegee Airmen](#) from Air Force teachings. For some in the current Administration, looks like skin color also factors into our “warrior” heritage.

I’m wondering if the women and people of color in the Class of 2025 have any trepidation about their upcoming Air Force careers. I doubt that they signed up for this four years ago. Probably just the opposite - they saw the Academy and the Air Force as promising avenues of merit-based opportunity and advancement, uncompromised by gender and race considerations. Probably figured they were

joining an institution that reflected the promises and principles of the nation they intended to serve.

I have great faith that our school shaped the Class of 2025 into the kinds of officers we recognize and will be proud of. I am less sanguine about the whiplash facing 2026 through 2028. And I am wondering if any high school senior who is not a white, Christian(?), man is thinking twice about applying to USAFA or any other military academy.

Jeff, our alma mater is at a crossroads. In between some adult beverages and all the smoking and joking, I'm hoping these topics will be addressed by the Academy's leadership at our reunion.

Stay the course roomie."

Kevin Donovan
'75, Best Alive