

From the Superintendent



Lt. Gen. **Mike Gould**, '76

Hello graduates!

As this edition of *Checkpoints* hits the newsstands, another class will have passed into the Long Blue Line, and I am happy to report that all is well at your USAFA. The Robin Olds (USMA '43) Class of 2011 wrapped up four strong years at USAFA with a great graduation week and ceremony. We are all proud of this group of lieutenants, and I assure you that we have succeeded in our mission of creating a new crop of leaders of character for the Air Force and America. You can expect great things from this bunch.

The class of 2011 is entering the Air Force well prepared and well equipped for the challenges of the future—and as you all know, they will enter an Air Force that is vastly different than the one you and I faced following our own graduations. These young men and women will meet challenges that are entirely new to a fighting force. With that in mind, I want to take a moment and talk to you about a major change

in DoD policy and how we are preparing at USAFA.

On December 22, 2010, President Obama signed into law legislation that provided for the repeal of Section 654 of Title 10 of the United States Code, a section commonly known as “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” Once the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff all certify to Congress that the services have completed mandated training and that our policies and regulations are consistent with standards of military readiness, the actual repeal will occur 60 days later. USAFA is currently following all official DoD guidance to train USAFA cadets and permanent party on post-repeal policy. Here’s our bottom line: USAFA is dedicated to executing this historical change with a focus on mutual respect and dignity.

This message of respect should not sound new to you; in fact, the official Air Force training program identifies four key words/concepts to guide us



through the smooth implementation of repeal—the same concepts that should guide us all through any and all interpersonal relationships: leadership, professionalism, discipline and respect. I'm optimistic about our ability to implement the repeal of DADT. These are exactly the same qualities we strive to instill in all cadets, and as long as we keep respect at the forefront, we will succeed.

USAFAs has proven its ability to implement major change in the past. Of the 926 graduates who threw their hats into the air with me and my classmates on June 2, 1976, none were women. Yet, 24 days later, 157 women entered the Air Force Academy for the first time. Integration did not happen overnight, but four years later, 97 of those young women graduated with the Class of 1980. Now, as we did then, we will follow the law and embrace the opportunity to allow a group of men and women to serve their country openly. Once the repeal is enacted, just as back in

1980, integration will require cadets, faculty and staff to move forward with acceptance and inclusion as our guides.

This policy change is in no way a small one—and we are well aware that significant change demands strong leadership. As we launch the Class of 2011 into the officer corps and prepare for the arrival of the Class of 2015, I'm confident we'll embrace change and posture for success. I encourage open dialogue and frank discourse among all USAFA personnel and among the graduate community. The more we talk and think about how to handle situations that are bound to arise, the easier it will be to implement this new policy.

We need all grads to stay engaged, stay tuned and stay plugged into your local chapter associates. Keep your feedback flowing back through the AOG and help make USAFA even better than it is today! Thanks for your service and professionalism! ✓