

CHRIS: Thanks for joining us. Really looking forward to this discussion with Lieutenant General Chance Saltzman, [who] goes by Salty. Salty is a friend of Stan and mine. I've known him for many years. He's really an accomplished leader in the Air Force, and now the Space Force. He was commissioned in 1991, went straight into the Air Force, and he did the majority of his career there - rising to the rank of a Three-Star General. With the recent creation of the US Space Force, Salty was selected to shift from his role as an officer in the Air Force over into the Space Force.

Many of the folks coming into Space Force are coming directly out of the Air Force to get the new force started – and Salty's a senior example of that. In the Space Force, he is, for lack of a better term, sort of the Chief Operating Officer. He reports directly to General Raymond who oversees the Space Force – as the Four-Star General on the Joint Staff.

Salty's job is... [in] a corporate space, everything that a COO does, sort of the day-to-day everything-under-the-sun sort of role, which is exceptionally challenging in any large military organization. But imagine that now, as - on the front end, you have to stand up this entirely new force and those decisions involve everything from, you know, what's our uniform look like, what are our regulations, where's our headquarters going to be, up into the very strategic level. How are we going to dominate space, guarantee that we're mission-ready in the whole spectrum of what we're being tasked to do, is our initial tasking right, do we need to expand our thinking, et cetera. So interestingly, and you'll hear this in the discussion, despite what could easily be an overwhelming amount of tasks to keep track of, Salty is true to his character.

He's just a calm, thoughtful leader, who is looking at all these challenges through a lens of humility, intellectual curiosity, all of the traits that we know are the foundations of really great leadership. So, we're grateful to him and his team for making this possible. And I think you'll really enjoy listening to the insights from a very accomplished leader who's doing great things for our nation.

So now over to General Saltzman.

STAN: Well Chance, thanks for being on today. It's a real honor. We've been excited for this because we don't know very much about space or the Space Force, but I probably know more than you think. I do know the history of the Force. It goes back to 1865. When a gentleman known as Impey Barbicane, who was the president of the Baltimore Gun Club, created a giant cannon and he shot that cannon from “Tampa Town” in the United States to the moon.

And three people went in the projectile. It landed there. We're not quite sure what happened to him after that, but as Jules Verne captured it in his book *From the Earth to the Moon*, they conquered space. So now more than a hundred years later, you guys are sort of slow catching up, but we've created an entirely new Space Force.

So obviously, Chance, I'm pulling your leg, but what is the Space Force? Why space?

LT GEN SALTZMAN: That is the essential question. And I appreciate you asking that. I will not be able to speak with the eloquence of Jules Verne, I promise. But I'll do my best to at least cover the basics. You know, technically, [Space Force is] the fifth armed service in the Department of Defense - as simple as that. And there's a couple of nuances that I think are worth talking about. And one is that the US Space Force is a part of the department of the Air Force. And so, in the same model that the Marines use in the Navy - where the United States Navy and the Marine Corps both worked for the Department of Navy - it's the same thing for both the Space Force and the Air Force working under the Secretary of the Air Force.

But the essential question is: is why do we need one? What's changed or what's different? And, and I think that's probably more interesting to the listeners.

STAN: Well, wait a minute, Chris and I always asked why we needed an Air Force.

LT GEN SALTZMAN: You know, what's good for the goose is good for the gander. Now the Air Force doesn't have to answer as many of those questions anymore. They just point to the Space Force and be like, "Hey, deal with those guys." I got to be the junior service twice.

I answered the question about why Space Force, and quite frankly, it might apply to the Air Force too, in three parts. The first part is when you recognize how critically dependent we are on space capabilities. I mean that from a military standpoint, certainly, and I know that both of you are intimately familiar with GPS and military satellite communications, with the missile warning capabilities that are provided, the intelligence surveillance and surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities. It allows us access to somewhat denied areas of the planet, because you have that literally universal access from space and that persistence.

I always like to point out – I always do my “mom test.” Does my mom understand this? And one of the things I found out that she didn't understand is GPS is important from its navigational and position data, but it's quite more important for its timing signal. The timing signal, the very precise timing signal that is supplied to the earth from those satellites, completely enables cellular telephone technology, every financial transaction globally. Your ATM will not work if it's not receiving that GPS timing signal... The networks that power our power grid require exquisite synchronicity that is provided by that GPS signal.

It's invisible to the vast majority of citizens. As it should be. The bottom line is that we literally have become dependent on space capabilities from a military standpoint, but also in the civil sector and in commercial enterprise. We are dependent on those capabilities. It's created such a strategic advantage for us that our global competitors ([I'll] just refer to them as that) have recognized that and are investing heavily in capabilities to deny us those strategic advantages. It's not going to be a surprise if I talk about Russia or China on that list - they are our strategic competitors and have invested heavily in denying us our space capabilities. And so, if you couple a critical dependency against a vulnerability and a competitor that's trying to deny you that strategic advantage, it comes as no shock (especially to this group) that the Department of Defense is going to be concerned about that. Members of Congress are going to be concerned about that.

And the Department of Defense... very generally speaking, likes to organize its services around warfighting domains. We have the Army that focuses on land dominance. We have the Marines and the Navy focused on maritime control, likewise with the Air Force. And so, it only makes sense that as space goes from what was previously kind of a benign environment, to now being a warfighting contested domain, I think there was a certain level of comfort with seeing, okay, now we have a service who's wakes up every day, thinking about how we defend those capabilities, how we protect our critical vulnerabilities, and how we assure that in all spectrum of conflict that will have those capabilities and be able to rely on them. And that's what the United States Space Force brings to that challenge.

STAN: Yeah, I think that's really well said because not just someone who knows they're responsible, but an organization whose culture is wrapped up in an understanding of it. Like they used to say the “sea is in the blood of Mariners” and whatnot.

A short story on GPS: when I was major in 3rd Ranger Battalion, we were using some of the first GPS and they sent a little team out to bring the magic box with us. And we were operating in the deserts of Egypt at the time with the Egyptian commandos. But because of the limited coverage of the satellites, we only got signal for a very brief period of [the] day. So, for a brief window of the day, we knew where we were - the rest of the time we were completely lost. And so, the fact that we take [GPS] for granted now it's just something that someone of my age understands.

LT GEN SALTZMAN: When I get to the Pentagon every morning at 7:30, there's this brief moment where I know exactly what I'm doing – and the rest of the day I have no idea what's going to happen.

CHRIS: You need a personal GPS. I know our listeners are going to be super interested in what's going on just inside of DOD with the establishment of this force, but there's also an equally interesting question which is around the creation of something new. That happens in the government, it happens in industry at this scale, it's quite unique.

So, I'd love you to just offer your thoughts on how you're going about you - and the other leaders there inside the Space force - you're creating something new. But for those that aren't aware on the civilian side, you're not just plucking people and putting in the uniform, right? You're pulling together folks from other services, and a host of other organizations that are contributing to this all coming with their sort of tribal norms, their perspectives, et cetera. How are you approaching, creating a new unified thing with this convergence of all these different backgrounds?

LT GEN SALTZMAN: Great question. You know, and maybe a different way to say it is with the merger of all of the various cultures, how do you carve out the new culture, which is the Space Force? And is that a deliberate process, is it an indirect process? This is a worrisome thought for me, quite frankly, because I know that, you know, as we talked about earlier, we're making a lot of decisions now that will come and go, you know, budget decisions, even policy decisions, what uniform we're going to wear. These things have a way of kind of evening out over time. But culture. Boy, that's one of those things that starts to grab hold and you can't shake

it one way or another sometimes. And so I think the first thing I would tell everyone is we're being very deliberate and we are recognizing that no matter what actions we take, it will develop a culture. So, since that's true, boy, let's get it right.

And let's make sure we're rewarding the kinds of behavior that we want and ... discarding the things that we don't want to happen in our force. The vast majority of the initial cadre came from the Air Force. And that won't shock you at all. If you didn't see, my executive officer's an Army officer. In fact, a good portion of my staff comes from the Navy, the Marines, and the Army, because we just don't have the mass right out of the gate to continue to do the operations that are required in the field and stand up a headquarters staff.

And so, we literally are pulling officers and enlisted personnel from all the services to help stand this up. Here's what basically I keep asking myself is, am I tied to the old way of thinking? What are the assumptions I'm making because of the service I came from? And is it still a valid assumption or are there other ways to do it?

So, what I'll tell you is I spend a lot of my time listening and, you know, it sounds like such an easy thing to say, but I know you guys have been in these situations. A lot of times there's a leader. People are looking at you not to listen, but to say something. They're looking for guidance and direction.

And when you're standing up something new, there's a lot of guidance and direction that has to get out. And so, I really have to be very conscious and deliberate in how I go about thinking, "Hold on, now it's time to listen", you know, and ask people directly for their input. I'm always surprised I feel like a captain, but I'm a three-star - and they don't always want to offer their opinions to the three-star right out of the gate.

And so, you have to ask, "Hey, what do you think about this? Do you have a different input? What's your background related to this topic?" And keep teasing this out of them so that we don't get caught in these old assumptions, old paradigms. I spent 28 years in the Air Force - you know, old dog, new tricks to some degree. And I want to be very conscious that I'm not locked into those assumptions.

CHRIS: Just a comment on one of the things you said and then I'll turn it over to Stan for a follow-up question - but it's something that I certainly haven't given enough thought over the years, although I should have, because you know, Stan and I [are] now we're 10 years into standing up a consulting firm from two people at his kitchen table. It's the things that you do out of the gates that turn into culture - and some of those are blind spots, probably, you know, not realizing any from how you dress, how you speak, all of these things that eventually become the seeds of culture that five years, ten years down the road may have been unintentional. It's a really interesting challenge, especially in your seat, I can imagine - to try to weave through that and navigate that effectively. Which of these are near-term decisions ... are going to be 20-year culture decisions that we don't recognize right now? Just an observation, but Stan, over to you.

STAN: In 1947, the last time we did this, the Air Force was created from the Army Air Corps. And so, I'd be interested in what thoughts you've got on the innovations that that unlocked, what lessons were learned, any problems, where did they get that wrong? Where did they get it right? That sort of thing.

LT GEN SALTZMAN: I've been given that a lot of thought as well. Clearly 1947 was a watershed event for the Department of Defense, the Department of War, Department of Navy. And I keep saying how much of those lessons can we adopt and learn? It occurs to me, and I offer that this honestly, for comment, because I'm not sure I've got it right either. But to some degree, I feel like we might be closer to 1919 air power than 1947 air power.

And here's why I would say that. In 1919, there was still a large group of people that were not talking about air as a contested domain, as a separate domain of warfare. [It] was certainly useful. Certainly, we started applying surveillance and reconnaissance techniques, some limited bombing, but we're talking about dropping grenades out of biplanes really, so, you know, not a tremendous battlefield effect.

And so, I think that interwar period, there was a lot of debate about how do you contest the air? What's the right way to use the technology in support of this effort or as an independent arm? And I won't go through the whole history lesson, but it was a resource-constrained environment in those interwar periods. And so, there's a lot about space being a benign domain, and now it's becoming a contested domain and I see some likeness there. We're in a very resource-constrained environment, and I see some, you know, having to make hard priority decisions that they probably had to make in the interwar period.

It's a tiny organization. And, and I mean that there's power in being tiny. And I know I'm preaching the choir on that, but there's a lot of power in being a small organization. We are a very small organization - like I can imagine the Air Corps coming out of World War I was. And so, I really think back to some of the lessons they were learning - more so than the huge, massive demobilization that was occurring after World War II. The Army Air service, the Army Air Forces had over 2 million airmen, and it was drawing down as it was creating and a new service. The budgets were coming down, but they were still massive in terms of expenditures.

I think we have proven beyond the shadow of a doubt that air was a contested domain and that, you know, that there was an independent effort. And I mean, you don't have to look past Hiroshima, Nagasaki, or, you know... the Battle of Britain - it was clear that air power and contesting the domain and then exploiting your power had value.

We're still maturing our thoughts in terms of tactics and doctrine associated with space. And so I know that was a long preamble, but I think ... about where we are in the history of the domain is an important aspect of this. And so, the basic lessons that we're taking are: what did they focus on when they were small and resource-constrained? What were they thinking about? And it was training, tactics, and technology development. And to some degree, that's kind of the basics that we're going after. What's the equipment that we need to do the job that we've been given, and then what are the tactics in the training we need to give our operators so that they'll be able to

effectively perform the missions that we're going for? And so, I think there was some innovation in that, in the interwar period. And so, we're trying to be innovative and creative as we come out from under the Air Force and think about space as a contested domain in that regard.

CHRIS: General Saltzman - as you talk about those windows of change, going back into the early 20th century and air power, et cetera, many of our listeners will know at a very deep level, what that type of ... innovation did to modern warfare as we know it. Stan and I just had a conversation a few days ago in the *No Turning Back* series with senior executives inside of IDEO, a design thinking firm that's been around for many years in Silicon Valley and expanded out from there. Just brilliant, different types of thinkers who think about end state and then sort of reverse engineer to how they get to that future. But we had an interesting discussion that I'd be curious how you see this change in defense, right?

Because one of the points that we got into with this team was separating between improvements on the existing approach - which can seem innovative if they're moving faster, et cetera. We've done this debate all the time in special operations. Where is their real innovation? Well look how we're operating our target. Well, it's still 20 operators getting out of the back of helicopters. They're just really good at it. And they could do a much faster with greater precision. Now, when that operator can talk in real time on two different comms channels, one of which can go all the way back to DC if needed. That's, I would argue, a massive step in innovation. Is what you're overseeing a big but linear improvement? Or is it a true step function in innovation?

LT GEN SALTZMAN: I think, you know, as all great complex questions are, it's a very nuanced answer. And so, it's a little bit of both, right? I think what I heard you say is the good is the enemy of the great sometimes. And continuous improvement can be disguised as innovation.

And I wholly agree with that by the way. Sometimes good is good enough, and there's a time to move out and [say] this is the best plan that we've got right now. Let's execute. And I would say there are certainly areas of standing up the Space Force where we've adopted that principle. "Hey, this is good enough for now. Let's keep going."

But, we ask ourselves routinely, "Well, hold on." If we're a little more deliberate, if we ask a little bit more here, can we leapfrog to the next best capability, a revolutionary step, rather than an evolutionary step? Here's my concern and some of the challenges that we're dealing with is balancing going fast, get it done, versus get it right.

And so how fast do you want to move and how fast do you need to build institutional inertia? How fast do you need to start training your own people? I was trained by Air Command and Staff College, Air War College, and I emphasizing the "Air" Command **and** Staff college, the "Air" War College.

How fast do I need a Space Command and Staff college? How fast do I need a Space War College where I'm building and developing my own leaders around my domain of warfighting? Well, we need that. There's no question we're going to have that. Do I need it today or do I want to wait until I have a kind of a revolutionary leap forward? And what is it I want to train them

on? What's the doctrine look like? How are we different? And we've got a lot of questions to answer before I sit somebody down for a year and start explaining to them you know how the Space Force works.

And so, I think that's the struggle: is trying to be as deliberate as we can about which things fall into the bin of "Let's get this done and move out," versus, "Hey, we really need to get this right - so we need to slow down." And that's been the struggle and we get some right and we get some wrong, but that's been the real struggle in my mind. And so, you know, all I can offer is we also ask a lot of different perspectives on this. Like, what do you think is most important? You know, if you were starting a new service, what would be the first three things that you thought about?

We asked those questions a lot and sometimes we get answers that reflect our thinking, and sometimes we get, you know, stuff that's off the charts and we haven't thought about it and that's helpful. So, it's that balance between the bureaucracy, General McChrystal, you know, you've been here as the DJS.

If you don't start something you're never going to get finished. And so, there's almost like, "Hey, we have to get some of this going," because this is a two, three-year process. If we wait until we have the perfect plan and the perfect idea, and we'll never get this through the system. And so, there was a little bit of that balance.

CHRIS: Uh, for those listening DJS is Director of the Joint Staff, which is essentially the, the COO of the Pentagon, for lack of a better way to describe it.

Pulling on that thread though a little bit: at that level, clearly technology is part of that solution, right? And so, you have the opportunity, sort of the blank canvas, to pull in best practices, which seems like it's a priority for Space Force from the corporate space as well.

How are you managing that? Because those two things tend to... there's two big institutions, DOD versus profit-driven corporate space, [which] move at different paces. How are you pulling in the best that that private sector has to offer?

LT GEN SALTZMAN: I think it starts with opening the line of communication. I was brought up as a young officer, as an operator primarily where I didn't engage with industry at all.

You know, it wasn't until like my third tour in the Pentagon where somebody said, "Hey, I need you to talk to this contractor and see what they're working on." I had no idea. Now I know that there's acquisition folks and contracting officers that do that more routinely. But from an operator standpoint, there was no engagement. General Raymond, as our Chief of Space Operations [as] a senior officer, has said he wants to flip that dynamic on its head. This is real important to him. He's asked me personally to engage with not just the big industries that you would expect or the big companies, but small companies - and ask them [and] tell them what our problems are. Tell them what the operational environment looks like. Don't tell them what your requirements are - because you don't know, right?

Let them come back to you with, “Hey, I’ve got an idea. Have you ever thought about this?” If they understand what problems we’re trying to solve - he’s convinced, and I’m becoming convinced - that the best ideas, especially from a technology standpoint, will come from industry. And so it’s only incumbent upon us to get them in the right arena. Tell them, “this is one of the struggles I’m facing. Is there anything you can do to help?” And once they started to, “Hey, that looks like, that [solution] might answer the question.” Now I turn them to our requirements guys, and to our acquisition folks, so that they know that we think this could solve an operational problem.

But it’s the outreach. I’m sending colonels out - it’s not just me, I’m sending colonels and they’re sending lieutenant colonels out, and we’re trying to make sure it all the right levels we’re engaging to pull good ideas forward. That’s our initial effort to try to make this a more robust... tighten up the connective tissue between the service and industry that can help us do it.

STAN: Some people ask me to compare something like a new service with a corporation. And there’s an idea that the service has a tremendous amount of autonomy, doesn’t have any shareholders, doesn’t have a board of directors per se. And I quickly tell them you’ve got Congress, you’ve got civilian leadership, you’ve got a million people who have an opinion or you know, some kind of pull over what you do - and yet there’s this tension as you described so well: you need leaders who can go out and feel empowered enough to make appropriate decisions. There are certain strategic decisions that you should measure five times before you cut, there’s some others where you ought to make them and make them pretty quickly at that lieutenant colonel or colonel level.

How do you develop, select and develop, the leaders who are going to go out and do that for the new team?

LT GEN SALTZMAN: Boy, what a great question. You know, and I feel like one of the places where I add value is in finding that talent that’s out there. Keeping your eye open and, you know, I always think about Marshall’s List of, of key officers that he kept, you know, because you never know when things are getting bad and you’re going to need to go down that list and pull some people out.

And I won’t tell you there’s a list in my drawer that looks like that. But you know, I think we all kind of keep this mental.... you might’ve had a mental list of a guy named Fussell when you were out there at one point, you know, so I think that’s important. What is it that you’re looking for? You know, somebody that can ask that hard question that can hear a very complex situation and find the one question that really zeroes in on, “Hey, that is the key issue. That is the question we ought to be answering.” Well, what a gem, when you find somebody like that and now grab them and nurture them and mentor them and put them in the right challenging jobs, so they stay interested in the profession. I think that’s one of the key responsibilities of leaders.

Then the second thing is don’t micromanage them, you know, let them make some mistakes, let them learn that that’s going to be far more interesting to them. They’re going to get better, faster under those conditions. They’re going to stay engaged. They’re going to feel a sense of ownership

when it's their projects, you know, sink or swim, they own it, and they're responsible for the results. And so, finding the talent and then nurturing it by giving them the responsibility and giving them and delegating and then those authorities. That's just, I think the, one of the most important things we do as senior leaders.

CHRIS: General Saltzman, my kids are 10 and 12. My daughter's 12, my son's 10. My daughter wants to go to the Naval Academy, although she watched Top Gun over the holidays and now wants to be a fighter pilot. My son wants to be a professional baseball player or a Navy SEAL. I don't know how that's gonna happen – he's gotta choose one certain point. I wanted to be in the Green Berets after watching John Wayne as a kid, Through whether it's movies or the positioning of a force in how it presents itself in recruiting campaigns, et cetera, there's this whole future legacy that to be on your mind. I don't know when you start that conversation. How and when do you start messaging down into the next generation, so that my 12-year-old daughter also sees Space Force as a viable option?

LT GEN SALTZMAN: Great question. I think you start immediately, because these are the things we're planting seeds that we're not going to harvest for years. And so if you don't start now, you'll never get to the harvest. But at the same time, do we clearly know exactly what we want? You know, and do it in not to sell out too far one way or the other?

I'll give you an example. It's a debate that me and my peers have all the time. We're in such a technical business. Space Force arguably is one of the most technical services that we have. So, there's this idea that, "Hey, when we go to our colleges, when we go to ROTC or go to the Academy, we really want those STEM graduates: science, technology, engineering, math," that, those engineering, those technical skills, that's what we value. And I don't disagree with that. I think there's definitely a place for that.

And I've been in lots of rooms where I don't completely understand what's going on, and I'm thankful to have the tech experts that are there. But I wonder if STEM educational background represents the composite list of skills that leaders need to lead large organizations, communication skills, writing skills, you know, clarity of thought, multiple perspectives from outside a particular problem. There's a lot to be said for a liberal arts degree in terms of providing those different kinds of perspectives and those critical thinking skills. And so, I don't want to throw the baby out with the bath water, you know, is what I say.

So, when somebody says, what should I do to prepare for the Space Force? Study hard, study hard. I mean, follow your passion, but read on a wide variety of topics, debate with your friends, everything from politics to, you know, what's the right way to defend our cyber infrastructure. I'm good with all of that. And I think we need all of that. So, I guess my point is: I think it's going to take a balanced group of people moving through our Space Force to make it effective. And so, whether it's a technical background, whether it's, you know, focused on leadership and management and strategic thinking, all of those skills are necessary. And so, I'm cautious about throwing all my eggs in one basket, so to speak, when it comes to how somebody should prepare or how we should reach out and engage.

And so, the last point on your question really is how do we engage them to get the right kinds of people? I'm looking for leaders. If they come with a technical background, it's a bonus. Especially in the Officer Corps, I think I'm looking for high initiative people. People that are self-starters that don't require somebody telling them every single step along the way.

We're far too lean for that. And so those are the kinds of values I think we're starting to see from the Space Force that we're looking for in our sessions, arena in how we're recruiting. A high initiative, some technical skills, but leadership skills as well.

CHRIS: Yeah. I'm just reminded, I had an uncle that was in the SEALs teams as well, back in the Vietnam years. I keep this picture of him with his deployment gear rolled out for his first deployment over to Vietnam. It was a poncho, an M16, an unarmored set of H-Gear and a rucksack. And that was it. That's where they got to the SEALs teams, special operations at their finest in that era.

And now, you know, everyone gets their own like train size Conex box with all the gear that goes into it. Right. And that's in relatively speaking short order to 30 plus years, and now there's this evolutionary leap. So, it's just fascinating to look at what you're doing and what will that look like, 30 years from now, 50 years from now, which will be very quickly. And I applaud you for being in a position to set the foundation right now with what's going to build on top of it in the generations ahead. Stan, over you.

STAN: I'm going to finish by thanking you, but I'm also going to put one last question. And in this case, I'm really asking you to talk to fellow senior leaders. I know you graduated in 1991 and you didn't come out as Lieutenant General Saltzman. You came out as Lieutenant Saltzman. And, and I know that when I was a senior officer inside, I may have looked on the outside, like General McChrystal, on the inside I was Lieutenant McChrystal, trying to remember that that's not the way other people saw me.

So, what I want to do is ask you about that peculiar sort of unexpected role of being senior. When you walk in the room, the situation changes. When you talk to somebody, they tell their spouse about it that night. How do you think about that? How do you process it?

LT GEN SALTZMAN: Well, you know, it's the humbling part of the job. I'm truly humbled and honored to get where I am. And if you don't remind yourself of that every day, you know, I remember hearing somebody talk about, and I can say to myself is you meet so many people all the time. But you have to remember, this might be the only time they're going to meet a three-star. And so, you have to keep remind yourself that every event, every speech has to be special because of maybe the one time that you get to talk to somebody young that's inspired. You know, and I think that's what keeps us humble is making sure that we keep recognizing that ... I haven't earned this position. I've been given this position because they expect something out of me and now I need to return that favor on the Force. And so that's a big part of this, I think is making sure you stay humble and realizing that you've got more to give back than than really you have to give forward to it.

But, you know, this is an incredibly humbling opportunity to be all of a sudden in charge of making operational decisions for a brand new service. And I have reflected many times on what would Lieutenant Saltzman think about this kind of decision and man, it, nothing breaks your heart worse when you go Jesus, he would have hated that, he would have hated that decision.

But you know, I think it's critical that we keep asking those questions, recognize that we're out of touch, recognize that we're not 21, 22, 23, recognize that we're probably not going to be able to think like that anymore. And so therefore we have to actually ask the question and listen to what the 23-year-old says.

I think we get into trouble when we say, "Hey, I was in your shoes. I know exactly what it's like to be a Lieutenant. And let me tell you what I think you should be doing." Boy, I think that's going to put us on a path, you know, where we don't completely get it. Right. And so I, you know, I think it's just important to realize I have a role to play and it's not as a Lieutenant [or] Captain anymore.

And so I'll play my role. And, but I'm going to listen to what the lieutenants and captains and tech sergeants and sergeants have to offer because I'm not in their shoes and they are dealing with different problems. I didn't have to deal with social media. I know you didn't, sir, at least early in your career. These are problems that they face that we don't - and we just need to listen. And make sure that we have a good round and set of perspectives. We make very important decisions, and sometimes that's easier said than done, but we just got to keep reminding ourselves.

STAN: Well, when we hear your talk, I can't tell you how grateful we are for what you do, how thankful we are that you and your comrades are doing this job, because how important it is.

I mean, it's not important in wartime. It's important every minute of every day, and it's going to be very important if we end up in war's wealth. So, let me thank you for taking the time with us today, sharing your wisdom and all you do.

LT GEN SALTZMAN: Well, sir, it's been my honor. Like I said, I know the lineup of people that you have on this show and I'm not worthy. You know, when I see Kasparov and Brian Kilmeade and those sorts, I don't have that level of capabilities. I'm a guy doing a job. I think it's an important job. And so, I asked for a lot of help from around me to get that job done and having an opportunity to talk to, to people like yourselves, it really helps me build my perspective as well. So, thank you for doing this. Thanks for continuing to have the leadership discussions out there, because we all benefit by the discussion.

CHRIS: Thank you so much, General Saltzman. Thanks for taking the time and thanks to your team for helping us line it up.

CHRIS: Just a great discussion with Lieutenant General Saltzman - he goes by Salty. You know, what jumped out at me immediately was, I mean, obviously yourself and I growing up in the military, you know, there are leaders like that. But I can imagine some of our listeners hearing

such a down to earth person. And you're like, "Wow, this could be a person in my firm, anywhere, the way it doesn't come across as you know, General Pat." And there's a real humility there that I think is more common in senior leaders in the military than people understand that have never served there.

But [I'm] just curious [about] your reflections on the attitude and sort of approach that he's bringing into such an overwhelming job, if you really step back and consider it.

STAN: Well, it's hard to imagine the position he's in. He graduated from Boston College in 1991, right after the first Gulf War and the big success there. America's a hyper power and he's a second Lieutenant working in Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles. So, he's learning process.

28 years later, he's creating an entire military service. No second lieutenant can comprehend the complexity of that or the importance of something that big - it's gotta be a bit frightening. And of course, suddenly you are dealing with politicians, you're dealing with contractors, you're dealing with an entire spectrum of challenges in a new domain that, that most of us aren't psychologically prepared for. And the fact that he comes at it with no arrogance, that I'm the guy put in charge of, you know, the great thing and Salty comes to it with a real respect for the challenge ahead and how important it is.

CHRIS: Yeah, I do. I didn't want to put them on the spot and dive into it, but I would have no question that he was selected because of that personality trait for this role. Another area that jumped out at me was the discussion around establishing, you know, because you imagine you're in his position, you're doing a thousand things every day to just get this thing up and running and one in 20 of those is unintentionally creating the cultural foundations of what the Force is going to be. He clearly is thinking about that. You know, who are we, how do we merge these different cultures, et cetera. But it's really interesting, I think for leaders anywhere to consider, there are deliberate efforts to talk about who you are, your culture, your values, et cetera. And then there are those unintentional ones, especially when you're creating something new that from day one, when you walk through the door, you are creating what will be this longer-term culture.

I can't personally, I can't think of times, I can't pinpoint times where I did that in the SEAL teams. It was such an established culture. I think I added where I knew it, the important cultural cornerstones of the organization. But I'd be curious from your perspective, having so many years in, in the Ranger Regiment or different parts of the service, if you saw actions in one tour, eventually create down the road, a cultural norm at a bigger scale, that might've surprised you.

STAN: Well first, a little background for people. The modern-day Rangers were created in 1973, when the Army was coming out of Vietnam as a damaged entity, there were problems with morale. There were problems with readiness. There were problems with integrity. And so, the decision was made to form these two Ranger battalions, and the lore is that they created them for this special [operations] force, but that wasn't it at all.

They actually were trying to create two battalions that had the highest standards possible. They would be a crucible that would help lead this damage to Army into the future. And so many

things were hyperbolic. And what I mean is the Rangers discipline was exaggerated. Military neatness was exaggerated, your attention to detail.

When you got there, you were told how to sew little reflective tape on your hat on your equipment. It had to be exactly the same way. And they were making a point. They were essentially putting ruts in the road so that the people who followed after them, the wagons would go in the right direction. And it was very thoughtful.

It was painful in the moment. I was a company commander first and I fell into those ruts and I was actually thankful later that I had, and then as a battalion commander in the Regiment, I was able to prioritize. We'd started to receive a tremendous number of other missions and requirements, and I dumbed it down, so it felt comfortable to me. I said there are only four things you've got to be good at: marksmanship, physical training, medical training - the ability to take care of your buddies, and small unit drills. All the other things are nice to do: don't touch any of them unless you've mastered "the big four" as we called it.

And it was interesting because I pushed it in the battalion and we lived it. And then about a year later, I was brought back at the next level. I commanded the entire Regiment and it had started to be locked in. It started become the culture. Young Rangers described to me, sir, this is what we do. Many of them not having any idea that I was involved in it at all.

And so, the ability to set the direction for an organization and help shape that culture can be really rewarding. But it's also a little frightening if you haven't thought it through and that's why leaders have to be so intentional about it.

CHRIS: Yeah. That's a great anecdote. I think leaders as they get more senior, the organization gets more complex. It's so easy to forget that regardless of industry, "Hey, at the end of the day, our product needs to work. At the end of the day, we need to service our clients well," or in that example, we need to be good at these four things. Otherwise, everything else doesn't matter. I think you shared with me an anecdote one time of a peer of yours that had run through the essential task list that a unit had to be good at and had said, had gone to his boss, said this is literally mathematically impossible. Did you share that view?

STAN: The Army had a manual that said all the required training you had to do for a year. And a guy had gone through and done the math on all the hours of training required, and it was more hours there were than there were in the year. Which meant that by definition, the Army was disobeying its own regulation and every leader by choosing what they trained on was disobeying things that they theoretically had been told to do.

CHRIS: Yeah. And I mean, it sounds, 101-ish, but it's so true. When you look at great companies, great military units, great sports teams, they don't mess up the blocking and tackling. They do the little thing right every single time. And the question is, are you keeping everyone focused on the little things? And I think Salty is a great example of that.

You could easily get overwhelmed with: I don't have time to think about the basics because there's too much important stuff to do. And he's clearly keeping that front sight. One last point that I'd love to tease out because I thought for those that are listeners that were never in the service, the Air Force and now the Space Force, they are tech dependent and enabled parts of the military. Every service is [dependent] now, but Space Force to a whole different level, even as he opened his discussion around the criticality of what the Space Force mission is to our regular sort of day to day lives all the way down to ATM service.

It would be tempting to think if I'm General Saltzman, I have to be the tech expert on all this stuff, because otherwise it'll get out of control. And he was really pivoting and say, "No, my job is to lead the experts, and let them do what they're great at." Again, that sounds obvious when you say it, but I've always thought that more technical it gets the more personal courage a leader has to have to step back and say, "I trust the experts on the ground."

I mean, you oversaw the counterterrorism units that when they went through a massive tech advance. Did you wrestle with that at all?

STAN: Well, I did. And when I first met you, that's exactly what I saw. I went out to see a SEAL leader, leading SEALs in combat in Western Iraq. And what you see is the force operating with equipment I'd never touched. I didn't understand technically how to work it, but I also had not used it tactically. And yet I watched you in your SEALs, so I guess what it asks you is you've got this group of problem solvers that work for you. And they looked a little like *Terry and the Pirates* with beards and strategy uniforms - and you got to admit that. But they grabbed that technology. How did you think about regulating, controlling or directing that?

CHRIS: Yeah. I mean, that was, I guess there's always versions of this happening in the military or any complex space regardless of industry. But, for me that would have been 2000s and, you know, that was the first real match duration of the SEALs team since Vietnam.

We went through this significant evolution. What I had learned about being a junior mid-tier leader in the SEALs teams in the first eight, 10 years of my career was really irrelevant. I mean, it was small unit tactics. You gotta be in charge of your plume. Here's how to do a mission briefing, et cetera.

And all of that stuff was just now happening at the ground level. So, you had to fight to redesign how you thought about stuff up and into the strategy of the organization, one, like listening to your general officers, et cetera, understanding what they were thinking about the fight and then connecting across to your peers that were on the battlefield. And the technology allowed us to allow us to connect in real-time sharing information insights with Rangers, with other specialized units that were at my level at the operations level. And then in a similar fashion, sort of releasing the reigns and saying, I just know that team right there is going to figure out how to use technology better.

And I don't have time to get mired in it. If I'm doing that, I'm probably not doing my job because I know they're not sitting here doing what I'm supposed to be doing, et cetera. And so, there is, I

think, every leader has to constantly step back and use to put it really, really well in those cases, you know? Do what only you can do. Right? And so, it's tempting to always lead down to where you used to be comfortable. And it's challenging to force yourself to try to figure out at every level. What are the things that only I can and should be doing right now? Technology is really one of the key drivers to say, where do you put those cut lines and what you should be focusing on? Doing it at Saltzman scale is a whole different question. I applaud them for it.

Great, great discussion, really thoughtful and just the right leader to be in there right now.

STAN: We should have been back a couple of years from now because this is going to be a fascinating journey, forming the new force.

CHRIS: No, you're right. And I just hope they have some, you know, fantastic futuristic uniforms when he comes back.

STAN: Perfect. All right. Great.

CHRIS: Thanks.

STAN: Thanks Chris.