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I was appointed to the Academy after graduating from high school in Edina, Minnesota. My first two years were in CS-07, and as we were the first class to change squadrons halfway, I spent the last two years in CS-06. I majored in Astro and although I didn't get into the Purdue co-op program, I was selected for a small group that got to set up our own co-op program at North Carolina State. I got a Masters in Aero and Mechanical Engineering in seven months, so I guess all the extra effort was worth it.

I then attended pilot training at Webb AFB in Big Spring, TX. I wanted a fighter, but at that point in the war, there were no fighter assignments available. I opted to take a C-7A Caribou on the theory that I'd get another new assignment after returning from Vietnam. I'm not endorsing war, but that was the most fun flying I ever had. Every day two Lts got a mission frag and jumped in a Bou and flew everywhere in South Vietnam carrying everything from water buffaloes to Army paymasters. Completely on our own to get everything done. Incredibly rewarding and great experience.

Coming home, the Air Force was swamped with young pilots returning from the war, so I ended up flying two engine C-131 transports for two years, when I was involuntarily assigned to Virginia Tech Univ. as an AFROTC instructor. You should have heard me scream when they took my study young pilot self and dragged me to a non-flying AFROTC job. Again, it turned out to be a great assignment, and was probably responsible for a lot of my career successes.

I then moved to the C-130 aircraft where I spent most of my flying career, with assignments to Dyess AFB, TX, and Little Rock AFB, AR, where I spent most of my time as a flight instructor, and completed my time as a squadron commander. I loved flying the C-130; lots of hands-on flying and different missions almost every day.

I did two tours at Maxwell AFB for ACSC and AWC, and also served at HQ Military Airlift Command for three years, ending as the project officer for the new C-17 aircraft. I count that as another success. After AWC I was assigned to the Basic Military Training School at Lackland AFB, TX, first as vice then Commander. That was probably the most rewarding assignment of my career, working with the elite Military Training Instructors and all of the new airmen entering the Air Force. Their energy and enthusiasm made every day a success.

If there's any lesson from my Air Force career, it's that you don't always get to choose what or where you're going to work, but if you make the best of what you get, the experiences can be superbly rewarding and enjoyable. I wish you the very best in your Air Force career, and in whatever follows. Enjoy it however and wherever it comes.