



Christopher J Hope



2018 FAA Flight Instructor of the Year
Central Region

To the cadet who is receiving this saber, my wish for you is that you take what you have received these past four years and make it all part of your life. I hope that you can see yourself as a career officer and Air Force pilot, but if life takes you in a different direction, your skills and your moral compass can guide you, whatever your life becomes. I threw my hat in the air in Falcon Stadium 50 years ago, secure in my knowledge that I would complete pilot training and spend the next 20 – 30 years flying Air Force aircraft. It was not too be. I did complete pilot training, and I flew C-141s during the waning years of the Viet Nam war. I still look back in amazement that this country turned a multi-million-dollar aircraft over to me and let me fly it all over the world, but the Air Force had the confidence in me, and in my instructors. After a tour in the C-141, I returned, kicking and screaming, back to the Academy with orders to teach first-class cadets how to fly. This turned out to be the best job I ever held. Although my salaried job over the next twenty-five years was in the field of construction management, I have, this year, completed my 50th accident-free year of flying, and I have been blessed to teach flying for over 45 of them. Most of my students have flown for their own pleasure only, but I have one married set Air Force officers on my list (he is an A-10 pilot who wears my AF wings), I have a couple of airline pilots on my list, and I have several young people who are part of our Long Blue Line.

This country has blessed me with an education, both academically and morally, and through my volunteer flying I have been able to give hundreds of hours back. And I thank the Academy for that part of my moral make-up as well.

Soar high, and I hope that this Flying Fickle Finger of Fate will make you realize that there are people in this world that you do not know who have your back, who are nudging you to be all that you can.