

FIRST CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT OF THE SPACE FORCE ROGER A. TOWBERMAN

Roger Towberman became the first Chief Master Sergeant of the Space Force on April 3rd, 2020. As the first person to enlist in the new service and “Employee #2” (as dubbed by then Secretary of the Air Force Barbara Barrett), he spent close to the next four years providing direction and guidance for the first new military service in more than 70 years.

Known as a passionate champion of an enlisted force he called the greatest military advantage in history; he represented their interests and the United States Space Force to the American public, the President of the United States, Congress, and the Department of Defense. He was the personal advisor to the first two Chiefs of Space Operations and two Secretaries of the Air Force on all issues regarding the welfare, readiness, morale, proper utilization, resilience, and development of the Space Force.



Before he enlisted in the Space Force, Chief Towberman was an Air Force Airman for over three decades. His 19 deployments as an intelligence analyst, cryptologic linguist, and aviator included Operations Joint Forge, Allied Force, Northern Watch, Southern Watch, Iraqi Freedom, Enduring Freedom, and Unified Protector and he logged more than 3500 combat flying hours. As a Chief, he served on the command team for every level of Air Force command and an Assistant Secretary of the Air Force. Long before the stand up of the Space Force, he was on the team which stood up 25th Air Force and became its first Command Chief in 2014. Five years later, he was again asked to stand up a new organization, United States Space Command; becoming its first Command Senior Enlisted Leader in August 2019.

An internet publication once claimed Chief Towberman had an “allergy to nonsense” and his dynamic speaking ability and down-to-earth leadership style made him one of the most popular military leaders of his generation. It was his experience, knowledge, and insight, however, which most influenced the early and immediate successes of the Space Force. His background in human performance, development, and resilience along with his insights on culture, change, and organizational design were inextricably linked to everything that was Space Force in its first four years.

Generations of Guardians will remember him not for simply being the first Chief Master Sergeant of the Space Force, but for the difference he made in the world and the lives he changed along the way.