



New one-star joins two-star brother

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LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va. (AFPN) -- As Maj. Gen. Stanley Gorenc watched his younger brother, Brig. Gen. Frank Gorenc, pin on his first star, they became two of 271 general officers in the active-duty Air Force out of its more than 350,000 Airmen

The younger brother was promoted during a frocking ceremony June 15 as he relinquished command of the 1st Fighter Wing here. He is headed to Balad Air Base, Iraq, to command the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing.

The two-star brother, director of operational capabilities requirements in Washington, said the occasion was "inspiring."

While they do not know for sure whether they are the first set of brothers to serve as generals at the same time, they do believe they are the first Slovenian-born brothers to serve together as generals in the U. S. Air Force.

The brothers immigrated with their parents to the United States from the former Yugoslavia in 1962 when they were 8 and 4.

After arriving in America, their father worked as a tailor, and their mother served as a factory machine operator.

General Gorenc said that he and his older brother were required to go to summer school each year simply because the opportunity for education existed and was available.

"We didn't know the language," the two-star said. "We didn't know the culture, and we came to learn (that) the United States is truly a land of opportunity."

Frank went to visit his older brother, then a freshman cadet, during Parents' Weekend at the U.S. Air Force Academy, and there he developed his first interest in the Air Force.

"As a freshman in high school walking on the academy campus, you couldn't help but be inspired," the younger brother said.

Coming from a lower middle-class background, the opportunities seemed boundless.

During the frocking ceremony, the new general said he sees the Air Force as his calling, and has been "living the dream" for 26 years.

"I've been chasing (my brother) through the ranks since he graduated from the academy," he said. "He sets the bar pretty high."

Having lost their father and mother, the two brothers remain especially close. They said they often discuss Air Force issues with each other and share advice.

Although each has had unique assignments throughout his career, the two command pilots agree on the importance of accomplishing the mission and taking care of the people.

The new general said he and his brother “understand the value of the Airman to making the mission happen. We believe in empowerment, in letting people do their jobs and letting them grow. Sometimes people make mistakes, but you help them learn and then move forward.”

The elder brother said their parents’ advice was simple, with the guiding principle of, “Do your best.”

“It’s a good philosophy, no matter what role or job you have if you in fact do your best,” he said. “If you do the best you can in the United States, you will in fact be successful.

“We are the classic example of America being the land of opportunity,” he said. “We are just glad to do the job, and we’re honored to serve our country.”

“If Mom and Dad were here today, they’d be proud of both of us,” the new general said. (Maj. Patricia Traynor contributed to this report.)

