

Behind the Cyberspace Veil

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The Hidden
Evolution of the
Air Force
Officer Corps

Brian J. Collins



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Toward the end of World War II, the commander of the Air Corps, General Henry "Hap" Arnold, remarked: "Someday...the man holding my job will meet here with a staff of scientists, and they will wear no pilot's wings on their chests." That day may be near. Here, the author reveals the emerging challenges posed by cyberspace to the traditional culture of the Air Force. The U.S. Air Force added cyberspace to its war-fighting mission in December 2005 and the 8th Air Force was assigned operational responsibility for cyberspace in November 2006. These events clearly indicate that the nexus of activities collectively known as command, control, communications, computer systems, and intelligence, which are the nervous system of the military, had achieved critical mass. Such activities are no longer merely important to airpower, but form the basis for independent operations in cyberspace. Although the technological implications of this shift in Air Force missions is apparent, the ultimate impact on the officer corps is not. While fighter pilots have traditionally represented the image of the Air Force, today more and more officers work at remote consoles operating unmanned aerial vehicles that deliver precision-guided munitions.

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