



Photo courtesy U.S. Air Force

JAY HUBBARD MANAGES AIR FORCE'S NEW HIGH-TECH MISSION GLOBAL HAWK PILOT BY DAY, MBA STUDENT AT NIGHT

When Jay Hubbard was six growing up in Georgia, he saw an ad in the back of *Boys' Life* magazine and sent away for the detailed blueprints to make a working jet engine.

"I was convinced I could build it and for three years I tried to get my father to stop by the machine shop to buy the pieces," he recalls. "But Dad didn't want me having a jet engine around."

Hubbard's fascination with flight never waned. He went on to graduate from the Air Force Academy in 1999, and today he is a decorated Air Force captain and pilot who has flown missions in combat zones where there is no margin for error.

He's also a first-year student in the Sacramento Working Professional MBA Program, an

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opportunity he says he jumped at when he transferred from Offutt Air Force in Nebraska to Beale Air Force Base, just north of Sacramento. He said he was fortunate to find a world-class MBA program with a convenient schedule where he could hone his leadership and business skills.

"The Air Force is being asked to make aggressive changes to how we manage our people and resources," Hubbard explains. "The UC Davis MBA program is helping to prepare me to contribute and play an active role in determining how to implement those changes. My supervisors have been very supportive to give me the time to go to class."

Hubbard says his wife, Kim, a nurse in the pain management clinic at UC Davis Medical Center in Sacramento, has been a pillar of strength and keeps him focused on his studies. They also have their hands full as new parents to their five-month-old girl, Autumn Skye—a fitting name for an Air Force pilot's daughter.

As the chief of training for the 12th Reconnaissance Squadron at Beale, Hubbard flies via remote control the Air Force's newest and most sophisticated unmanned surveillance aircraft, the RQ-4 Global Hawk. The high-altitude, long-range drone has soared over Afghanistan and Iraq for years, spotting enemy encampments, protecting military bases and providing commanders with real-time intelligence.

Hubbard says the Global Hawk's high-tech complexity requires a dedicated team with specialized skills to keep it aloft. "The private sector has given us a product that works very well," he says. "The challenge is making it work within the Air Force's framework. This is new for the Air Force and for aviation as a whole. Breaking the old paradigms of manned aviation and building new ones will require a cooperative effort from both the military and civilian sides."

He says one of key benefits of the Working Professional MBA Program is collaborating with the area's best and brightest managers outside the military and learning from their daily experiences.

"My colleagues in the classroom have been awesome," he says. "They've given me a much wider perspective and a powerful set of tools that I can take into any situation."

Hubbard's commitment to the Air Force ends next year, but he hasn't filed his flight plan for the future yet as he considers advancing his military career or venturing into the business world. "I wanted to be prepared for that decision," he says. "A UC Davis MBA will make me more competitive no matter which path I choose." ■