

Fall 2021

# Combat Edge



## LEARNING from GIANTS





# BACK to SCHOOL Be SAFE Be SMART

- Watch for school zones
- Put your phone away – don't get distracted
- Drop off and pick up in designated areas
- Carpool so there are less vehicles on the road
- Watch for children around parked cars
- Stop for buses loading or unloading students
- Watch for warning signs and signals



For more Back to School Safety Tips go to:  
<https://www.nhtsa.gov/back-school-safety>

U.S. Air Force graphic by Mary Jenkins

## Combat Edge

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Photo Credit: The article "As the Rotor Turns" (Summer 2021, p. 16) included two excellent photographs by TSgt Matthew Spinks. We apologize for not giving TSgt Spinks proper credit for his contribution to the magazine. *Editor*

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COVER PHOTO BY TSgt JOHN WINN

# ACCent



## Risk Management

The concept of Risk Management sounds daunting and possibly intimidating; however, we can simplify it as a process for measuring risk *versus* reward. We all have been practicing it for years, whether we are aware of it or not. Our professional and personal lives are filled with risks that we encounter daily. How effectively we manage risk can make the difference between mission success or mission failure, optimizing equipment performance or damaging equipment, and/or ending the workday without injuries or inducing an injury to ourselves or one of our teammates.

The purpose of **Deliberate** Risk Management is to assess a situation methodically, before exposure to hazards, in order to minimize risks and prevent accepting unnecessary risks. Deliberate implies there is time to plan and thoroughly assess the hazards. Conversely, in **Real Time** Risk Management, time is limited to develop a comprehensive plan, and immediate actions must be taken to address the hazards now.

If you have adequate time to perform a comprehensive analysis, **Deliberate** Risk Management is the preferred process. If time is short, you can perform an abbreviated analysis with **Real Time** Risk Management. Regardless of which method you utilize, you will be in a better risk management position than if you do nothing and simply hope for a favorable outcome.

**Deliberate** Risk Management includes 5 steps for assessing the level of risk for your specific process.

1. **Identify the Hazards** – Be aware of any real or potential condition that can cause mission degradation, injury, death, or damage to/loss of equipment or property.
2. **Assess the Hazards** – Determine how many times will we experience the hazard, and how severe the injury or damage will be.
3. **Develop Controls & Make Decision** – How to reduce/eliminate hazard? Assign more experienced personnel to the task? Delay work until day shift shows up? Wait until weather conditions improve? What if hazard cannot be reduced/eliminated? Who is the risk-acceptance authority? WG/CC, GP/CC, SQ/CC, SQ/DO. Key tenet: Only assume risk YOU are AUTHORIZED assume.
4. **Implement Controls** – Put in place the controls that will reduce/eliminate the hazard. It should identify who, what, when, where, and cost(s) associated with the control measure.
5. **Supervise and Evaluate** – Continue to monitor for changing conditions and adjust controls as required.

**Real Time** Risk Management is based on the 5-step model. For ease of memory, substitute the **ABCD** acronym: **A**ssess the situation, **B**alance controls, **C**ommunicate, **D**ecide & **D**ebrief the RM decision.

Practicing Risk Management is a way of life for us in ACC. In this edition of *The Combat Edge*, you will see Real Time Risk Management in action, with Airmen saving the mission and saving themselves/family members. Despite the best planning and preparation, hazards unexpectedly arrived, and may have been catastrophic for the Airmen, were it not for sound Risk Management. Learn from these Airmen, so you don't become a mishap statistic. ACC needs the entire team "all in" for this effort. We must continue to preserve our limited resources - people, equipment, and facilities - and effective Risk Management will help us reach that objective.

If you desire greater knowledge of Risk Management, see AFI90-802 and AFPAM90-803 – *Risk Management Guidelines and Tools*. Additionally, your Wing also has a designated Risk Management Instructor/Advisor who can walk you through how your Wing practices Risk Management. See your Wing Safety Team for details.



Col Anthony A. Kleiger  
Director of Safety



# LEARNING from GIANTS



The Koren Kolligian, Jr. Trophy

BY CAPT TAYLOR JANE BYE

**O**n April 7, 2020, the morning started out like any typical day. Moody Air Force Base had returned to modified operations after closing because of the pandemic, and pilots were getting their hands warmed back up for flying. I had flown A-10s for two and a half years, and three weeks was a long time to be out of the jet. I had planned to fly a familiar mission-set in order to get back up to speed for normal operations. My wingman and I stepped as Oakley 01 and 02, to fly a Basic Surface Attack sortie at Grand Bay Range, where we would drop practice bombs and shoot target-practice rounds of 30-mm ammunition.





We had progressed through the bombing range profile, and had switched to using our guns. On the final pass, I set myself up at 300 feet for a Two-Target-Strafe, in which I was to fire on two different targets, expending about 100 rounds of ammunition. On the first pull of this pass, the gun stopped firing. I heard a loud “pop,” and received a “GUN UNSAFE” caution light. After knocking off the profile, I requested my wingman to rejoin me in a chase position, in order to look over my aircraft to see if there was any damage. Being in a single-seat jet, I was able to see only a small portion of the aircraft. I had to trust my wingman to report accurate details of what he saw. He noted damage, with panels either hanging or missing from the jet beneath the gun. I ran checklists, and asked for assistance from the Supervisor of Flying, as well as from the Operations Supervisor.

The next step was to land the jet safely. I attempted to lower the landing gear, but did not receive confirmation that all three were down and locked. I asked my wingman for confirmation. What he reported was not something I thought I’d ever hear: My nose wheel was not down and locked, and showed no sign of coming down. I was unable to land safely. A million thoughts rushed through my mind, but I couldn’t dwell on any of them. I said a quick prayer, and immediately thought to myself that I didn’t know how, but this jet was going to get me back safely on the ground. Since fuel was not a factor at the time, I made the situation safer by ridding the jet of practice bombs. I continued going through checklists, and eventually decided the only safe landing configuration I could achieve was all-gear-up.

Just when I thought my problems were coming to an end, the unexpected happened

— again. The canopy departed the jet. Instantly, 300-mph wind rushed into the cockpit, causing sensory overload. It was time to get the jet on the ground. I climbed up, lowered the seat to reduce the wind blast, and turned up the radio volume in order to hear the numerous voices helping me along the way.

Of all the hundreds of landings I had done before, none were like this one. My normal visual cues were off. The sounds and smells were off. I was going to attempt to do something for which we do not train. At 100 feet from touching down, I knew I had only one shot at the landing, and the severity of the situation finally hit me. I lined the jet up on the runway centerline, chose the landing point, and slowly brought the throttles to idle. As I passed through the height at which the gear normally touched down, I anxiously waited for the jet to meet the ground. Sparks flew, as I skidded a few thousand feet down the runway and brought

the A-10 to a stop. Once out of the jet, I turned around to see the result of what just happened. I simply was in awe at the sight.

The event reminded me of the giants who had come before me, who had handled gun, gear, and other aircraft malfunctions, and who had shared their stories in order that other pilots could learn from them and sharpen their teeth. One of the lessons I learned was that there are times when a quick, gut reaction is necessary for safety; however, if you have the time, take the time. There is no need to rush during a bad situation, and thus make it worse. I was not going to fall out of the sky, and therefore I took the time to use the available resources to make informed decisions. One of those resources was calling a Conference Hotel — a conversation with the expert engineers on the A-10 systems — to advise me on the safest course of action.

Looking back on my actions, I would have used selective jettison to get the training ordnance off the jet, as opposed to dropping the ordnance in a conventional manner. This would have required only one pass in order to remove my remaining weapons, and would have allowed me to focus on landing sooner. At the end of the day, every emergency situation is unique, and all your experiences leading up to that moment influence how you handle the situation.

Telling my story has allowed me to reflect more deeply on what happened that day. One of the most important lessons I learned has to do with the capabilities of our bodies and minds. During the flight, my mind did not have time to deal with the “what ifs” while handling the malfunctions. My body switched into survival mode, taking one step at a time to ensure my own safety.

Afterward, I realized that, in order to operate a jet safely, I needed to know how this event

might affect me in the future. I reached out to others in the flying world who have handled significant events, and sought their advice on moving forward. I’m thankful I did. Reaching out gave me confidence to continue flying, and further develop my skills as a pilot. I have learned the value of assessing one’s physical, mental, and emotional state prior to every flight, knowing that anything could happen, just as it had to me.

I would not have been able to handle this situation without certain people who were there that day. I am very grateful to “Queen” Ingber, “Pinto” Kielen, and “Manbat” Rooks.” ATTACK! ✈️

(Editor’s note: As a result of her actions during the mishap, Capt Bye was named the winner of the Air Combat Command Airmanship Award for FY 2020. Her nomination then advanced to the Air Force level, where she won the USAF Koren Kolligian, Jr. Trophy for FY 2020.)





# WHAT WORKS

## in Weapons Safety?

BY MSGT FRANTAVIOUS DOOLEY

When it comes to weapons, nothing is more important than safety. When it comes to Weapons Safety, few locations can match Creech AFB, where there has not been a weapons mishap in over six years. In light of our success, one may ask: What works in weapons safety? What are the personnel at Creech AFB doing that continues to ensure a spotless safety record? It may come as a surprise even to many Creech AFB personnel, but *live* munitions are loaded onto aircraft when training our pilots to ensure our assets work as intended. This is good, in that it shows that our Creech family has trust in our abilities in the 2W AFSC. It also requires that people who work with munitions strive not to become complacent.



What Does Not Work?

Making sure that preventative measures are taken can help keep the workplace safe wherever munitions are stored or handled. On the other hand, complacency can lead to a false sense of security, or even a disregard for danger. Complacency was a factor in the recent explosives mishap that took place on 4 August 2020, in Beirut, Lebanon. On that day, 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate (AN) exploded, causing at least 204 deaths, 6,500 injuries, and \$15 billion in property damage. An estimated 300,000 people were left homeless. The compound had been stored unsafely in a warehouse for six years, in a densely-populated area of Beirut. The explosion was equivalent to about 1.1 kilotons of TNT, and the blast was felt in neighboring countries and parts of Europe. It was heard more than 150 miles away, and was detected by the U.S. Geological Survey as a seismic event of magnitude 3.3. The exact cause

of the mishap is still under investigation. The explosion damaged or injured everything within a radius of several miles. This is why we maintain areas for storing and loading live ordnance at great distances from inhabited buildings. The mishap in Beirut is similar to several others that have occurred over the last one hundred years, such as the Texas City Harbor accident that took place on 16 April 1947, at Galveston Bay, Texas. A fire started aboard a docked ship and detonated her cargo of about 2,300 tons of ammonium nitrate. This began a chain reaction of fires and explosions in other ships and nearby oil-storage facilities. At least 581 people were killed, including all but one member of the Texas City fire department. It was the deadliest industrial accident in United States history, and was caused in part because people underestimated the overall risk of an explosion. In order to avoid repeating mistakes, it

is essential that we study past events such as these. Only then can we increase our knowledge and prevent them from happening again.

So ... What Works?

When it comes to weapons safety, what works is obvious:

- **Training.** Proper training helps people do their jobs safely and more efficiently.
- **Communication.** Leaders, supervisors, and workers all need to communicate what they are doing, and reinforce the need to do it safely.
- **Adherence to established procedures.** The procedures for working with explosives are very strict in order to prevent a mishap, or to minimize injury or damage resulting from a mishap.
- **Awareness.** People who work with explosives must understand the importance of the three previous elements, and recognize that a failure in any one of them could cause a mishap.

The commitment to all four aspects by the weapons personnel at Creech AFB is a major reason for their excellent safety record.

How Leaders Impact Munitions Safety.

Weapons leaders influence the munitions community by how well they understand and disseminate safety information. Staying involved and maintaining good communication helps personnel implement the procedures required to handle munitions successfully and safely. Leaders also stress the importance of training. The use of Technical Orders becomes more effective with extensive training. If something out of the ordinary happens, training will provide the tools needed to recognize what is out of place. Here is what two of the top leaders in the Creech AFB weapons community have to say about what works to ensure weapons safety remains strong:

CMSgt Joseph Armijo, Wing Weapons Manager: “Strict adherence to loading checklists and technical orders is paramount to the continued success and safety in the weapons community. Warnings, Cautions, and Notes are written in blood, and need to be taken seriously by all who load and handle munitions on a daily basis.”

SMSgt Kevin Adorno, Weapons Standardization Superintendent: What have we done to ensure safety first? Honestly, nothing new! We follow explosive standards because we do not want a repeat of the explosive incident in Bien Hoa, Vietnam, in 1965. We practice loading every month, to ensure that muscle memory is intact, to quote a passage “Without standardization, processes which depend upon one another don’t take their cues from one another, resulting in additional work in process, unsynchronized operations, and still more instability.” Taking shortcuts is not within our norms.

We are better than that, especially since we deal with things that go “BOOM.” I’m proud of all the achievements the weapons personnel have attained, and I’m impressed by the professionalism of each of the loaders on this base.

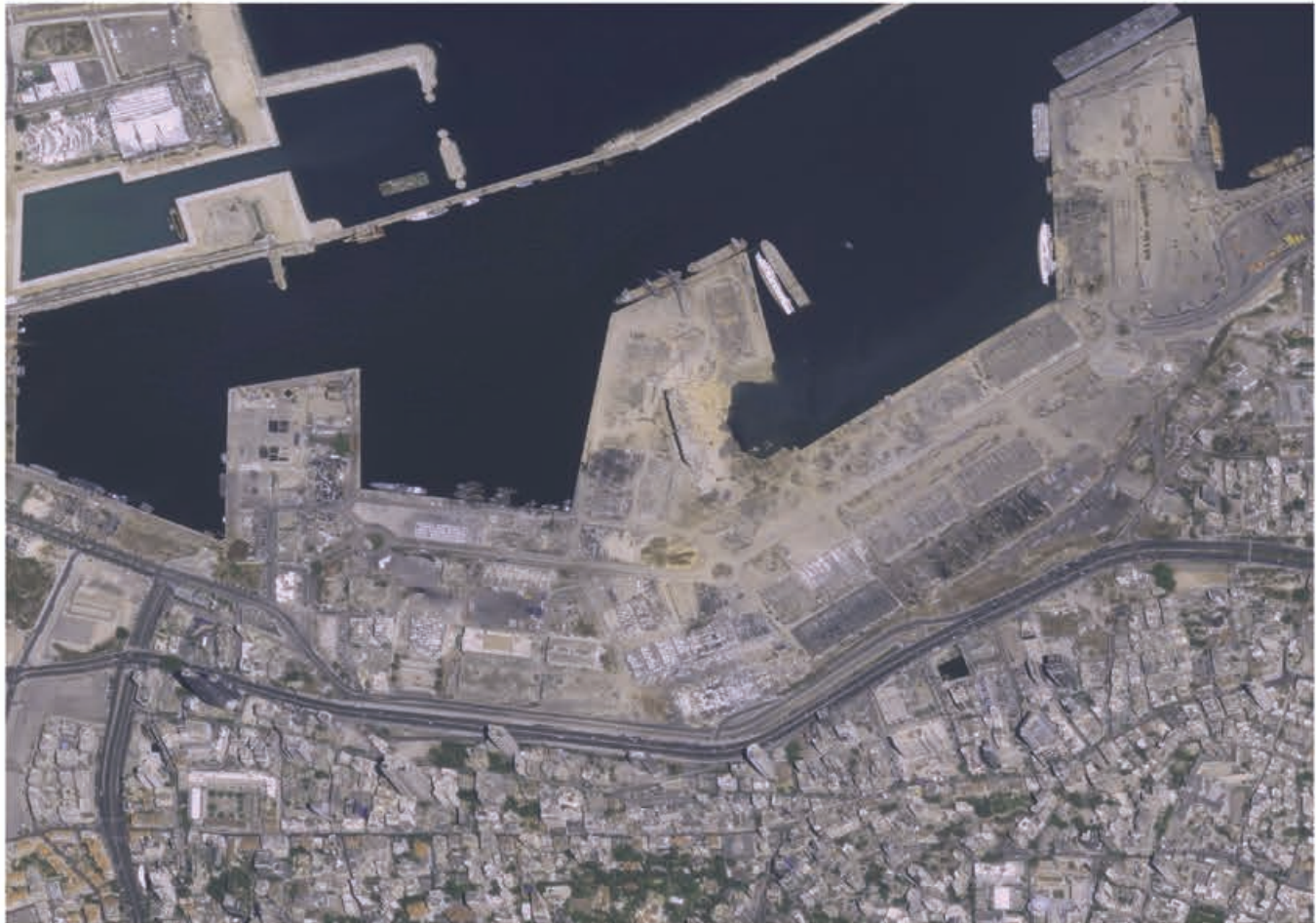
Awareness!

Awareness has to be key for everyone who handles munitions, including our base defenders. Bringing mishaps like Beirut to the attention of the people who handle munitions keeps it fresh in their minds, helping to prevent them from becoming susceptible to complacency. All our personnel need to stay alert and be prepared to act at a moment’s notice. This takes great awareness, and that is gained through members’ receiving the proper training.

BE SAFE and FLY SAFE!✈



Beirut before the mishap.



Beirut after the mishap.





# BASIC INSTINCT

BY MAJ DUSTIN WARNER

Pilots spend a great deal of time learning all about their aircraft, preparing themselves to be able to make the right decisions when it matters most. Not many professions devote so much time to training for something that happens so infrequently. Nevertheless, when something does go wrong, we're extremely grateful for the training we've received, the effort we've made, and the lessons we've learned from those who have gone before us.

On 20 January 2021, while acting as a T-38A Evaluator Pilot, I noted improper engine operating indications while selecting max afterburner during a training sortie. With a malfunctioning engine, I transitioned to an emergency pattern for a full-stop landing. The landing was uneventful; however,

upon landing, maintenance personnel noted a massive fuel leak from the entire bottom-aft section of the aircraft. No fuel-leak indications were yet present inside the aircraft, but, had I not noticed the subtle discrepancy in engine operation, the situation could have become much direr.

Another event took place on 5 February 2021. I was acting as an Instructor Pilot, in the rear cockpit of a T-38A, when we experienced a complex hydraulic and electrical-system malfunction. After executing a closed traffic pattern to inside downwind following a touch-and-go landing, I noted the simultaneous illumination of the Master Caution, Right Generator, and Flight Hydraulic lights. I determined the malfunction to be an Airframe-Mounted Gearbox failure. The driveshaft

powering the hydraulic pump and right generator had sheared, leading to the total loss of the right AC electrical system and flight hydraulic system.

With a severely-crippled aircraft, and limited time of controllability remaining, I was forced to execute numerous tasks simultaneously: I transitioned to an emergency landing pattern, primarily using one engine; relayed critical information and intentions to Air Traffic Control; coordinated for emergency ground services; ran in-flight emergency checklists; and began coordinating ejection considerations with the pilot-not-flying.

The big lessons learned from these two events have to do with the importance of the basics and preparation. As pilots, we perform many small checks throughout a flight. It's very easy to become

complacent when you've checked something a thousand times and never had an issue.

Nevertheless, as with the fuel leak, one of those checks can reveal an abnormal operation, and potentially can serve as the break in the chain, preventing a much more disastrous outcome.

Throughout our training, we evaluate, practice, and discuss different emergency scenarios. Taking the time to think through the intricacies of how to execute everything – pitch/power, boldface, communication, pros and cons, to different techniques, and second/third-order effects – allows us to make the quickest and best decision in the moment. You've already thought through the hard decisions, and that saves valuable time in the moment. ✈





# FLASHED BEFORE MY EYES

BY MSGT BRANDON TROLLMANN

**N**o matter where you are in the world, you need electrical power. Several years ago, I was the guy to bring it. Before becoming a Safety Professional, I spent the first ten years of my Air Force adventure as an Electrician in Civil Engineering. Yes, I kept the lights on from Cannon AFB to Baghdad, Iraq. No need to thank me; it was my pleasure; you're welcome. It goes without saying that working with electricity is inherently dangerous. The hazard is taken very seriously by all the professionals who deal with it.

The electricians with whom I've worked go to great lengths to avoid being shocked or electrocuted; however, focusing on a singular hazard potentially can blind a person to other, equally life-threatening hazards. Think about the last time you saw a crew working on power lines on base. There were multiple Airmen operating hydraulic-powered machinery, one guy working at heights, another cutting the road or sidewalk with a high-powered saw, and another climbing wooden utility poles. Every member of the crew was focused on the component they were repairing or installing. A very similar scenario played out the day I saw another Airman's life flash before my eyes.



One morning, the shop received notification of downed power lines. Two utility poles had been knocked down by a tractor trailer. We sprang into action, grabbing all our tools and equipment. Crews were given tasks to safe the site, prepare for repairs, and lock out the circuit. Then, we all were to come together to install new utility poles and lines. My crew went to the sub-station to confirm the high voltage line was de-energized. Once confirmed, we locked out the circuit breaker. We arrived at the work site to find the rest of the shop removing the broken utility poles. Some Airmen were using a vehicle-mounted winch to drag the poles, each weighing a few thousand pounds, into position to be picked up and loaded on a trailer by another crew.

The operator of the winch was at the rear of the vehicle, and his view was obstructed. He was depending on a spotter to provide directions on how to proceed. After the spotter connected the 3/4-inch braided steel cable from the winch to a utility pole, he backed away from the connection point and gave the command to pull. The cable was pulled tight, emitting a loud creak from the immense force of the hydraulic winch.

In an effort to get into a better position so as to communicate with the winch operator, the spotter moved toward the cable and stepped over it with one leg, straddling the cable. It was then that I had a "Final Destination" vision, one in which I actually saw the cable break free from the load and snap back from the extreme tension, cutting the young man in half. It was so real I could see the impact, hear the screams, and feel the anguish of losing a teammate.

This horrible dream ended as quickly as it began, and immediately I made my way to the Airman for a serious teachable moment. I began to brief him on the dangerous

situation he had created. His response floored me: He had been focused solely on electrical hazards, and assumed there was no danger because the power was not on.

This served as a wake-up call for me. We always emphasize the importance of safety when working with electricity, but sometimes we do not spot other, non-electrical hazards. Safety

in an industrial environment involves dealing with many working pieces and parts. While on the job, we cannot focus only on our individual tasks, because doing so causes us to become blind to everything else going on around us. I share this incident often while visiting work centers in order to help emphasize the importance of looking at all aspects of our day-to-day tasks. ✈



Photos by Airman Daniel Snider







Photo by Sgt. Connor Mendez

BY MSGT JEREMY CUNNINGHAM



**C**omplacency is a buzzword safety professionals often use. We all have heard someone say “That’s the way it’s always been done,” or have met individuals who are set in their ways, and refuse to consider new ideas or input. Considering the Air Force’s position favoring innovation, inflexibility can create stagnant or ineffective programs and policies. From a safety standpoint, this can increase the risks we face on a daily basis.

Recently, the Nevada Test and Training Range (NTTR) experienced a near-miss, having to do with personnel being present in an impact area where small-arms were being employed. We immediately ceased operations, and began a vigorous investigation to determine the root cause. In this case, all established programs, policies, and procedures had been followed, but the near-miss still occurred. The question arose: Why had a near-miss occurred? Why now? In this case, the mishap was caused by a series of events. Our programs were in need of refinement.

Upon review, the gaps in the program were apparent, especially when viewed through the lens of the near-miss. This was worrisome, because it showed that our success was not due to our policy. It was pure luck. Prior to this incident, we had assumed, since nothing had gone wrong, that our programs were effective. This was complacency at its finest.

In response, we revamped our policy for ground-based ranges, vetted the process through Wing leadership and its users, and tested the policy in table-top scenarios. We used this incident as the catalyst to incite change in other programs, as well. Our review demonstrated the need for better

control measures and communication standards. In other cases, it served to illustrate why a program was effective. In the end, one near-miss bolstered numerous safety programs and policies, resulting in tangible safety benefits for NTTR range users.

In your work centers, I challenge each of you to routinely evaluate your programs and policies. Your annual self-inspections are a great opportunity to accomplish this review. Don’t look at your programs only from a safety perspective, and don’t fear coming up with an idea that might fail. Look for ways to do things better, more efficiently, and more safely! 🍀



# ground EMERGENCY

BY TSGT CARLETON KENNEDY

**A**s a Weapons Flight-line Expediter, I work to ensure the safety of our Airmen. In theory, this may seem like an easy and straightforward responsibility; however, in practice, it rarely is. Prioritizing safety and tasks can be difficult, as the flight-line is continuously busy. Tasks become repetitive and monotonous, and it is easy to become complacent. Making safety a priority instead of a second thought is crucial to the lives of our Airmen.

The first time I called a ground emergency will be forever etched into my memory. On February 13, 2019, the 336th Aircraft Maintenance Unit (AMU), my squadron at the time, flew twelve F-15Es loaded with 72 BDU-33s on SUU-20s and 3K rounds of 20mm. This configuration was the first time in over three years that the 336 AMU at Seymour Johnson AFB flew this type of munition. This was due to an Air Force wide shortage of ADU-863 impulse cartridges.

During what should have been a routine sortie, an aircraft

attempted to release six BDU-33's. During the release, an unsafe malfunction occurred in which four of the munitions were retained, resulting in a "failure to release" situation. The pilot of the aircraft called an In-Flight Emergency and returned to base. Once the aircraft was on the ground, the End of Runway (EOR) crew was able to safe the munitions. The pilot was then able to return to chocks safely without any injury.

Later, during the munitions download, the load crew notified me that the impulse cartridge still had a significant amount of propellant remaining, even though it was clear that it had fired. Remembering the expeditor training I recently had completed, I recalled the instructor's warning of the dangers of slow-to-burn propellant. I quickly realized the propellant in the cartridge could reignite any second.

After Assessing the situation, I grabbed the radio and called the Maintenance Operations Center (MOC) to prompt a ground emergency. I had the crew slowly and carefully place the

cartridge in the cart can, and began evacuating anyone within 300 feet of the area. Once MOC declared the emergency in progress over the radio, the flight-line stopped moving. Aircraft that were taxiing in were commanded to stop, and fuel trucks had to leave the area. It seemed as though all eyes were on me.

All this took place in the span of about five minutes, but, to the one in charge of the emergency, it felt as though time stood still. The fire department and Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) crew arrived on the scene, removed the explosive, and production went back to normal – or so I thought.

After things died down, I received word from my EOR crew that all the remaining aircraft and bombs were safe. I recall thinking to myself, "What a relief that nothing went wrong with the rest of the jets." That relief was short lived, though, as I began to receive conflicting reports regarding munitions. Were they all expended, or not? Once the aircraft returned to chocks, my crews verified that these,

too, had propellant remaining in the impulse carts. This prompted yet another ground emergency, stopping everything once again.

During this situation, I leaned on my training and my instincts. My training enabled me to assess and resolve the situation accurately, while my instincts helped me move into action quickly in order to prevent people from being severely injured. The nerves I felt – the thought of calling it in and forcing the flight-line to stop, and having everybody's eyes on me – lasted only a millisecond before I sprang into action to ensure the safety of my people. The memory of letting fear or nerves take over would have haunted me for the rest of my life. Thanks to my training and instincts, I was able to overcome any hesitation and protect the lives of all others involved.

I have learned a great deal from being a weapons expeditor. I hope that sharing my stories and experiences will help others gain insight on how to keep their Airmen safe. I love my job, and am grateful for the opportunity to share. ✖



SJ

4

AF  
89



A large military helicopter, likely a CV-22 Osprey, is parked on a tarmac. In the foreground, a person in military uniform and a headset stands with their back to the camera, arms outstretched, acting as a marshal. The background shows a line of green trees under a clear sky.

# LEARNING the Hard Way

BY SSGT RYAN HENNESSY

As a 3-level, the basics are drilled into your head about Technical Orders (T.O.), Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and tool accountability. This is the easy stuff, but often it is overlooked by eager young crew chiefs who want to dive into being aircraft mechanics. For me, using a T.O. is an easy decision (as it should be for every Airman) because it's like an insurance policy. As long as you follow it, no matter what happens, you're covered. More importantly, by following it, you are certifying that the job has been done correctly, and the pilots will be able to fly the aircraft safely.

Tool accountability also is an easy concept to prioritize, because you can't work without it. Without tool accountability, a crew chief is open to the scariest situation in which they could find themselves - a tool left on an aircraft that has just taken off. Without using a T.O. and tool accountability, the worst possible outcome is someone else's dying because of your negligence.

On the other hand, PPE usage affects ourselves, not others. It is easier to rationalize not needing

to wear your own gloves or safety glasses than it is to convince yourself you don't need to check your box right before you marshal out your aircraft. It shouldn't be this way, though, because human beings are naturally selfish, and should want to protect themselves first, right?

Wrong. As a young and eager crew chief, you want to impress your expeditor or 5-level, and show that you excel at your job by working harder than any other brand-new Airman. How do you do that? You get your tasks done quickly, which sometimes leads airmen to cut corners with PPE usage.

As a new crew chief on my first TDY, I was eager to put my skills to the test. On the first day, we launched five or six aircraft for night missions, and they came back around 0100. Waiting for what felt like an eternity, we finally heard the low rumblings of the rotors, and ran outside to catch the birds. Being TDY, we were parked in an odd spot on the flight line, and needed four different marshals to get the aircraft into their spots. I was positioned as one of the last marshals, one who would turn the aircraft into its spot and stop it on its block.

As I was throwing on my headset and turning on my wands, I was focused on the other marshals, and didn't realize that I had forgotten my goggles back at the tent. If you didn't know, the CV-22 is really good at kicking up lots of dust and dirt. As I was standing in my spot, I could sense that something was off. Things didn't feel right, but, with the aircraft approaching, I got into position to start marshaling. As the aircraft got closer, I could feel the wind in my eyes, and small grains of sand start to hit my eyelids.

What an odd sensation, I thought, as I started to guide the aircraft into its spot. As soon as it turned to face me, I realized my horrible mistake, as my eyes immediately were pelted with dirt and

sand. At this point, I should have halted the aircraft and had someone else marshal them in the rest of the way. Instead, I donned the trusty safety squints, literally just squinting really hard. Obviously, this can lead to much bigger problems. Safety squints not only don't stop all debris from hitting your eyes, but they also limit your vision because your eyes are barely open.

I managed to stop the aircraft on its block, and I felt relieved when I heard the rotors start to slow. I was very fortunate not to have seriously injured my eyes. At the end of the TDY, the lesson that stood out to me the most was this: Always double-check that you have all required PPE. Never attempt a task without it. It's not worth the risk. ✖



# 2nd Quarter FY21 Awards



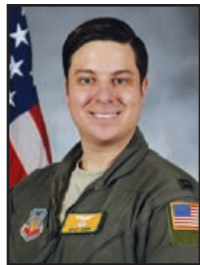
**Aircrew Safety**  
Crew of ZAPER23  
41 ECS  
Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ



**Crew Chief Safety**  
A1C Sovann C. Din  
57 AMXS  
Nellis AFB, NV



**Explosives Safety**  
Stockpile Management  
20 EMS  
Shaw AFB, SC



**Flight Safety**  
Capt Geoffrey M. Simkin  
55 WG  
Offutt AFB, NV



**Flight Line Safety**  
SSgt Austin S. Cowan  
24 FS  
NAS JRB, TX



**Pilot Safety**  
Maj Dustin C. (WALDO) Warner  
99 RS  
Beale AFB, CA



**Safety Career Professional**  
SSgt Zachary J. Rathbun  
99 ABW  
Nellis AFB, NV



**Unit Safety Representative**  
MSgt Jeremy Cunningham  
NTTR  
Nellis AFB, NV



**Unit Safety**  
Lightning Aircraft Maintenance Unit  
57 AMXS  
Nellis AFB, NV



**Weapons Safety**  
MSgt Joshua Humphreys  
757 AMXS  
Nellis AFB, NV





# HALLOWEEN SAFETY

## By the Numbers

4,500

estimated Halloween-related injuries from October through November 2018.

44%

of the injuries were related to pumpkin carving activities.

25%

were due to falls while putting up or taking down decorations, tripping on costumes, or walking while trick-or-treating.

27%

of the injuries included lacerations, ingestions, and costume, pumpkin or decoration-related injuries.

4%

were due to allergic reactions or rashes.

www.CPSC.gov

## Mishap Statistics Scoreboard

### FY21 Flight

Thru 30 June 2021

	Fatal	Aircraft Destroyed	Class A Aircraft Damage
15 AF			
16 AF			
USAFWC			
ANG (ACC-gained)			
AFRC (ACC-gained)			
AFCENT (ACC-gained)			

### FY21 Occupational

Thru 30 June 2021

	Class A Fatal	Class A Non-Fatal	Class B
AFCENT		0	0
USAFWC		0	0
12 AF		0	0
15 AF		0	0
16 AF		0	0

### FY21 Weapons

Thru 30 June 2021

	Class A	Class B
ACC	0	0

#### Legend

Class A - Fatality; permanent total disability; property damage \$2.5 million or more  
 Class B - Permanent partial disability; property damage between \$600,000 and \$2.5 million  
 Class C - Lost workday; property damage between \$60,000 and \$600,000  
 (Class description effective Oct. 1, 2019)

= On-duty

= Off-duty

#### Symbols for Mishap Aircraft



### Flight Notes

Air Combat Command had three Class-A flight mishaps for the 3d Quarter of Fiscal Year 2021, bringing our MAJCOM's yearly total to eight. While difficult to pin an all-inclusive trend to this quarter, I'd suggest "be ready for the unexpected" might be our greatest lesson learned. Our aircraft are not getting any younger—which is obvious—but equally obvious is the aviation requirement to think ahead, anticipate challenges in each stage, and ask ourselves "if something happened now, what would I do?" Fixing, flying, maintaining, and supporting our nation's aerial assets will continue to need critical thinking, mindful, what-if-now contemplation, and watchful eyes on aging materials. Let's continue the trend of no fatalities, and strive for a continued, safe summer. Fly safe and check six.

### Occupational Notes

Air Combat Command sustained three fatal mishaps during the third quarter of Fiscal Year 2021, two involved motorcycles and one involved a member that was working out at the base gym. The first motorcycle mishap involved the operator traveling at a high rate of speed and losing control of the bike, however the second motorcycle mishap involved a bike stopped at a red light and was struck from behind by another vehicle. The third mishap involved a member who collapsed while working out at the base gym. This mishap is still under investigation.

### Weapons Notes

During the third quarter ACC experienced two Class C, one Class D, and five Class E mishaps. Of the eight, six were caused by complacency and lack of situational awareness resulting in damaged munitions. The remaining mishaps involved inadvertent discharge of a firearm. One of which resulted in a member shooting themselves in the leg. These types of mishaps may seem small in nature, but in the grand scheme of things could have resulted in fatal outcomes. Let's continue to work hard on preventive measures to avoid potentially traumatic mishaps. Please take your time and do it right the first time.





The Face of  
**RESILIENCY**



## DoD Safe Helpline: How it Works

All Safe Helpline services are: anonymous, confidential, 24/7, and tailored to support members of the DoD community and their loved ones affected by sexual assault.

### CALL



877-995-5247

### CHAT



Online.SafeHelpline.org

### DISCUSS



SafeHelpRoom.org

You always will be connected to a live, specially-trained professional.

“One of the most profound gifts we can give survivors who come to Safe Helpline is simply listening to them. No one should have to go through healing from a sexual assault alone.”

—Samir, Safe Helpline staff member for over three years

“Compassion and support are at the heart of DoD Safe Helpline staff. It is what they provide to each visitor, and why we enjoy being a part of Safe Helpline.”

—Sydney, Safe Helpline staff member for over ten years

“When a survivor is connected with one of our staffers, they should know that this is a safe place, free from judgment or shame. We can help survivors find the support they need and deserve.”

—Jason, Safe Helpline staff member for over three years

## FOOD POISONING: PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY

Anybody can get food poisoning (also called foodborne illness).

But the following groups are more likely to get sick and to have a more serious illness:



Adults aged 65 and older



Children younger than age 5



People who have health problems or take medicines that lower the body's ability to fight germs and sickness



Pregnant women

### Take Steps to Prevent Food Poisoning



1 Wash hands, utensils, and kitchen surfaces often when you cook.



2 Keep fresh produce separate from raw meat, chicken, turkey, seafood, and eggs. Use separate cutting boards and plates.



3 Cook food to the right internal temperature to kill germs. Use a food thermometer to check.



4 Refrigerate perishable food and leftovers within 2 hours (within 1 hour if it's hotter than 90°F outside).

You should not eat these foods if you are more likely to get food poisoning:

- Undercooked or raw animal products, such as meat, chicken, turkey, eggs, and seafood
- Raw or lightly cooked sprouts
- Unpasteurized (raw) milk and juices
- Soft cheese, such as queso fresco, unless it is made with pasteurized milk

Cook to the right temperature:

145°F	Steaks, roasts, chops of beef, pork, lamb, veal (then let rest 3 minutes before serving)
145°F	Fish with fins
145°F	Fresh ham (raw)
160°F	Ground meats like beef and pork
160°F	Egg dishes like frittata and quiche
165°F	All poultry, including ground chicken and turkey
165°F	Leftovers and casseroles



See a doctor if you have these symptoms. They could be signs of serious food poisoning.

- High fever (over 102°F)
- Diarrhea for more than three days
- Dehydration (dry mouth and throat, feeling dizzy when you stand up)
- Bloody diarrhea
- Frequent vomiting



3 **FOOD POISONING**  
PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY  
by U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services

4 **KITCHEN SAFETY DURING THE HOLIDAYS**  
by Dr. Richard E. Cook  
ACC/SEM, JB Langley-Eustis, VA

8 **RIDING WITH THE GKMMC**  
by TSgt Tylor Evans  
89 ATKS, Ellsworth AFB, SD

10 **TSUNAMI TRAGEDY**  
by SSgt Princess D. Atualevao  
355 WG, Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ

12 **THE FACE OF RESILIENCY**  
by SSgt Jao'Torey Johnson  
380 AEW/PA, Al Dhafra AB, UAE

Cover photo by SSgt Jao'Torey Johnson



U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention

Learn more at [www.cdc.gov/foodsafety](https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety)

Accessible version: <https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/food-poisoning.html>

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## KITCHEN SAFETY

# During the Holidays

BY DR. RICHARD E. COOK

Cooking has been an important part of my life for as long as I can remember.

Few things make me happier than working with food. I worked in professional kitchens to support my family when I was younger. I learned a great deal from the chefs, not only about cooking techniques, but also about safety in the kitchen. There's more to it than simply preventing food poisoning. Kitchens are serious places, filled with murderous tools and intimidating equipment. The folk who work there take safety very seriously.

The danger increases during the holidays, when we spend a great deal more time than usual preparing food for dinners, parties, and snacking. September is National Food Safety Education Month, sponsored by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation. Labor Day Weekend may signal the end of summer, but it also looks toward the start of the holiday season, and that certainly means more cooking and baking. Safety always should be a priority when one is cooking, and it is especially important during the hectic days at the end of the year.

Safe cooking means good cooking. The following is a list of ways to stay safe while working in your own kitchen this holiday season. By cultivating good safety habits, you'll be able to focus on perfecting Great-great Grandmother's gingerbread recipe. *Buon appetito!*



1

**1. Learn to use knives.**

Invest in a set of high-quality knives, and keep them sharp. A dull knife is much more dangerous than a sharp one. Treat knives with respect. Choose the right knife for the job (Don't use a paring knife to chop a cabbage.). Always point knives away from yourself and others. Learn how to chop and slice as chefs do, holding the food with your non-dominant hand, fingers curled, side of the blade touching you. Take your time.

2

**2. Wear safe clothing.**

No matter how good it looks on you, do not wear loose, flowing clothing in the kitchen. Full sleeves and blousy tops can fall into pots and bowls, or catch fire over a burner. Baggy trousers can catch on drawer handles or corners and cause you to fall, or to drop a pot of scalding water or pan of hot grease. Long hair should be pulled back into a ponytail, kept safely behind you.

3

**3. Wear shoes.**

Yes, I know you're at home, but you still have to wear shoes. I once dropped a chef's knife, and it stood straight up, stuck in a bone in my foot. Not only will shoes protect you from falling (sharp) objects, but they also will protect you from other kitchen mishaps involving such things as broken glass and hot spills.

4

**4. Keep kids and pets out.**

Simply put, children and pets do not belong in the kitchen. Kids and pets not only are a distraction, but they also can hurt themselves by getting into raw food or pulling down hot pots. They also can distract or trip you while you're using a knife or carrying something heavy. Don't hold a baby while cooking. When you decide to teach your children how to cook, start with something simple that doesn't require cutting or high heat. Teach children to respect the kitchen. It's not a playground, and nothing in it is a toy.

5

**5. Don't rush me.**

The TV shows featuring aspiring chefs running around in a panic are entertaining, but they're not real, and their behavior isn't safe. Professional cooks respect the kitchen the same way electricians respect electricity. Never get overly excited in the kitchen: The food won't cook any faster, and you'll only be much more likely to injure yourself. Learn three very important French words: *mise en place* ("setting up"). Don't wait till you need an ingredient to try and find it. Get everything ready in advance, and cooking will be easier, more efficient, and more rewarding.

6

**6. Remember the 100-degree rule<sup>1</sup>.**

Cold food should be kept at 40° F or lower, and hot food should be kept at 140° F or higher. The 100-degree gap between those temperatures is favorable for the growth of bacteria such as *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Salmonella Enteritidis*, *Escherichia coli* O157:H7, *Campylobacter*, and other organisms that wish to do you harm. Keep an instant-read thermometer handy, and get in the habit of using it. Check your refrigerator, and keep it set at 40° F or below.

7

**7. Beware of steam.**

Lifting the lid for a whiff can leave you with a burned face. Water boils at 212° F, but steam can be much hotter. Lift the cover on the opposite side of the pot, away from you. Use one hand to waft aromas toward you. Also, be careful when opening microwaved foods or items that have been cooked in packets. Open the packages away from your face, and remember to use hot pads.

8

**8. Don't use the same cutting board for raw meat, fruits, and vegetables.**

Commercial kitchens usually have color-coded cutting boards for everything. While avoiding washing extra dishes might seem frugal, avoiding cross-contamination is more important. Using the same cutting board for meats, fruits, and vegetables puts your family at risk for food poisoning. The FDA advises using at least two separate cutting boards: one for raw meat, poultry, and seafood, and another for fresh fruits and vegetables. Cutting boards are inexpensive. Every kitchen should have several, in different sizes.

9

**9. Be careful with burners.**

Keep pot handles turned away from the front of the stove, and avoid bumping against them and spilling hot food on yourself. Avoid reaching over hot burners to get to another pan.

10

**10. Don't leave food unattended.**

I had a friend who left a duck breast in a steamer while he ran a couple of errands. The disaster remediation team must have joked about him for weeks. Never leave the house when food is cooking or baking. Food can go quickly from browning to bursting into flame. If there are children or pets in your household, make sure an adult is in the kitchen at all times while food is cooking. Accidents can happen in a matter of seconds.

11

**11. Learn how to put out a fire.**

There are roughly 172,900 residential cooking fires in the United States each year, making cooking the leading cause of fires and injuries that occur in the home.<sup>2</sup> Always keep a fire extinguisher in the kitchen, and know how to use it. Learn about different types of fires, including grease and electrical fires. Never put kitchen fires out with water. Instead, smother them with baking soda or a pan cover, or use a dry chemical extinguisher.

12

**12. Use hot pads.**

Remember: the kitchen is a serious place, filled with things that can hurt you. You may forget that the pan you're about to grab just came from the oven. Hot pots and pans should be treated with cautious respect. Keep hot pads or mitts handy at all times.

13

**13. Keep it clean.**

Imagine slipping and falling with a razor-sharp knife in your hand. A clean kitchen is a safer kitchen. Be especially quick to clean up spills on the floor. Keep counter tops clean to help prevent the spreading of bacteria. The pros say "Clean as you go." Allow yourself plenty of uncluttered room in which to work. Wash your hands frequently.

14

**14. Store leftovers properly.**

The primary cause of food poisoning is the improper handling of cooked foods, not raw. Bacteria can be reintroduced to food after it has been cooked. Put leftovers into shallow containers for quick cooling, and refrigerate them at 40° F or below within 2 hours.

These suggestions all have one thing in common, a phrase we hear often in the military: *situational awareness*. When in the kitchen, remember where you are. Be mindful of everything around you. Keep your kitchen neat and organized, and respect the tools you use. Love your food, and treat it well. By developing safe habits in the kitchen, you can enjoy creating your favorite dishes, from hamburgers to *haute cuisine*.

1. U.S. Department of Agriculture  
2. National Fire Prevention Association



# Riding with the GKMMC



BY TSGT TYLOR EVANS

Throwing a leg over any amount of horsepower is a thrill that more and more members of the armed forces have in common. Whatever our respective brands of machine, we all crave the same blacktop, whether winding, open, or backroad. It gives a feeling of freedom, but it comes with its own, unique challenges; however, we as riders can mitigate some of the risks. Others can

be handled through Risk Management. Wearing proper PPE, running a T-CLOCKS inspection on your motorcycle, checking the weather, and checking the route – as a young rider, these were not things that I considered. Another factor I didn't think would be a significant player was my own mental and physical fitness to ride. In the early 2000s, in the beautiful area of Barcis Lake, north of Aviano, Italy, these factors came into play.

One of my first rides with the Green Knights Military Motorcycle Club (GKMMC) was cut short when I ran my Kawasaki street bike into the side of a mountain. As "tail gunner" for the group, I entered a small S-turn at 25 MPH. Worried about the rock-face to my right, I looked to see how close I was to it. As you may have guessed, target fixation closed the gap between the wall and me. I was jolted down a granite ditch-line by a series of

hits that began with the handlebars, then helmet, shoulder, and left leg. The bike started to drop, and I had to kick off the rock face to avoid being caught under the bike and dragged along the rocky surface.

Surfing my bike to a stop, I quickly assessed my status and that of my machine. Thankfully, several things had saved me from a worse fate; proper PPE and the training from the mentors in the GKMMC that I had had. While I didn't give it much thought at the moment, it was those individuals in my riding chapter who got me back in the seat and continuing to pursue my passion all these years later. 2020 is in the taillight, and 2021 is starting to warm up for all of us not enjoying sunshine all year round (I'm envious, that's all). We have all seen an incident, involving either a civilian or service member, that can remind us that we need to focus on riding safely and getting home in the same condition as when we left.

We've all noticed the rise in motorcycle-related deaths over the past few years, and the numbers keep climbing. How do we combat this loss and prevent it in the future? One way we can do this is with sound risk management. Ask yourself, "Does this action benefit outweigh the risk?" Often, the answer probably is "No," regarding most motorized activities. Does your training and experience match how you ride? Are you adjusting your riding style to environmental factors like traffic, road conditions, weather, and rural versus urban terrain? Are you constantly changing this risk management as the ride progresses, continually scanning for hazards that may become a factor? Are you able to identify anything that is dumb, dangerous, or different? These are good questions when analyzing risk management.

Another way to mitigate some of these issues, is mentorship. While many may be "lone wolf" riders who do not wish to be a part of a club or group, mentorship is always something that we, as military riders, should promote. Many groups or clubs are offered to our riders, but few are dedicated to the safety and mentorship of active-duty riders, like the Green Knights Military Motorcycle Club. Since 1999, the GKMMC has been a DOD-recognized mentorship program aimed to bring new and experienced riders together under the specific thing we share: service and motorcycles.

We have over 140 chapters worldwide in 10 countries representing all military branches. Anyone interested in locating a local chapter may send an email request to [greenknightsmmc@hotmail.com](mailto:greenknightsmmc@hotmail.com). Our members range from DOD, active duty, Reserve, Guard, retired, and their families. As Green Knights, we all are military members from all different walks of life, brought together by a love of riding. We pass on to others what we learn, just as we do in the service. Those who have retired rediscover the camaraderie they had when they wore the uniform.

Building from the support of this family, you develop your skills as a rider and leader, and project those into your local community! Many Knights will tell you, "I joined to ride with others with whom I had something in common." Then they realize they got that ... and much more! 🍀





# Tsunami Tragedy



Photos by TSgt Cohen A. Young

BY SSGT PRINCESS D. ATUALEVAO

Imagine looking on as your hometown is washed away by a tsunami, and seeing how quickly life can be taken by Mother Nature. Then, it hits you: gratitude, which quickly rushes over you as you realize you were solely responsible for ensuring the safety of your family. In 2009, my family and I had flown back home to Amaua, our village in American Samoa, for a much-needed vacation. A time that was supposed to be filled with memories and laughter quickly turned into tragedy.

I never will forget when it happened. On September 29, 2009, at approximately 0645, our island was hit by a submarine earthquake with a magnitude of 8.0. As quickly as it came, it was

gone. Life in our village continued on, with no one knowing that the worst was yet to come. My cousin and I were seated on the front steps of our church, looking out over the ocean about 30 feet in front of us. I jokingly said the rippling waves made for a great day for swimming. We agreed that we would, until I noticed that the waves had begun to rise to a frightening height, heading towards us rapidly. It was in that moment that I realized that I had to warn the others. I quickly grabbed my cousin, who was frozen with fear, and ran back towards my grandmother's house, located right behind the church.

We were screaming at the tops of our lungs, "RUN TO THE MOUNTAINS! RUN TO THE MOUNTAINS

NOW!" My family caught a glimpse of the monster headed our way and yelled to the other villagers to follow. There were no sirens, no form of notification to warn others of the tsunami other than our voices yelling for them to head to higher ground. On top of the mountain, we witnessed the ocean unforgivingly swallow our small village whole.

The Los Angeles Times, quoting a source at the National Park of American Samoa, reported that "four tsunami waves, 15 to 20 feet high, reaching up to a mile inland," had hit American Samoa shortly after the earthquake. It was not until after the tsunami that we received word that it had taken the lives of 32 people, injured more than a hundred, and destroyed about 200 homes.

Tsunamis are among Earth's most infrequent and unpredictable disasters, posing a serious threat to coastal communities. Reflecting on the tragic incident, I realize three things that possibly saved not only my life but also the lives of others. The first was utilizing real-time risk assessment. Instead of sticking around to confirm that it really was a tsunami, both my cousin and I had run to warn the others. Second, we had mapped out the fastest and safest route up the mountain. Lastly, we had used our surrounding natural resources to keep everyone alive until it was safe to return home. I don't know where I would be today, had I stayed a second longer in front of an oncoming tsunami. ✖



# The Face of RESILIENCY

BY SSGT JAO'TOREY JOHNSON

She hadn't slept so soundly in a while; unfortunately, it was the one night she wished she hadn't. It was one instance of Murphy's Law in a long streak that unfolded in Janelle's life. One incident after another. It was enough to yank the cheer right out of the average person, but not her. U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Janelle Vicente was a seasoned veteran when it came to mental resiliency.

Vicente's string of unfortunate events initially stemmed from the COVID-19 pandemic, as so many others faced struggles surrounding that same cause. She was slated for a permanent change of station from Misawa Air Base, Japan to Travis Air Force Base, CA, but with the world still adapting to COVID mitigation, her departure was pushed back to a near critical point. "It was looking really shaky for a while, and I ended up leaving in the last week that was allowable due to how far along I was in my pregnancy," said Vicente.

When Vicente finally made it to Travis, she was nearing the end of her pregnancy in the midst of a global pandemic, and she was forced to evacuate her new local area due to the California wildfires that ravaged over 4.3 million acres. Vicente gave birth to her son immediately after returning to her local area while still in the transitioning process with no home to bring him back to after leaving the hospital.

For months, Vicente and her husband raised their baby in precautionary isolation, not interacting much with others because of COVID. Sleepless night after sleepless night, it was mostly just the three of them. Then, the day before her birthday, the misfortune continued as she awoke to find her car had been stolen. "It was the first night the baby had fully slept through, so we were excited," Vicente said. "It was also the one night we wish we would have had that cause to have been awake."

The challenges didn't end with a stolen vehicle. Soon after returning to work from maternity leave, Vicente found out she had been tasked with a deployment. "I left right when he started crawling," she said, "so I know I'll be missing a lot, but I try to maintain a strong presence back home with scheduled phone calls and video chats to keep his

recognition of me and my voice for when I return."

Now at Al Dhafra Air Base, Vicente works in the 380th Expeditionary Medical Group as a mental health technician. With so much to break one's spirit, it's amazing that Vicente is still standing tall with a smile on her face. She credits the nature of her job for her resiliency and ability to put the toughest of situations into perspective.

Vicente said about her string of unfortunate events, "Wild things seem to happen to me, but having the right mindset, thinking positively, and seeing the good in situations keeps me optimistic. Being pessimistic or thinking negatively doesn't help improve the situation, so there's no point in letting my mind go there," she continued.

Vicente admitted to being anxious about reuniting with her baby at the end of her deployment and not being remembered, but she plans to use this time away to focus on the things she can control right now, like making small recordings of herself for her son to watch and preparing for her first fitness test after pregnancy.

Now at the halfway point in her tour, Vicente said, "deployments can be tough on you, both physically and mentally, so I keep a support system here, have regular schedules for talks with my family, and have small goals locally to focus on. You have to prioritize self-care, and remember there's always someone you can talk to if things start getting rough."

Further proof of her resilient attitude can be found by examining the Common Access Card she carries. Even in one of the most trying moments, when Vicente's dream car was stolen with all of her things inside, she walked into the military personnel section the same day, and snapped a photo for her replacement CAC with an ear-to-ear smile.

Vicente's supervisor, U.S. Air Force Maj. Timothy Ralston, the 380th EMDG mental health provider, said, "Sgt. Vicente's calm and steady demeanor has been invaluable on this deployment. Her positive attitude and humor have helped me through the tougher times, and have allowed us to be a successful team." Ralston also provided some mid-tour mental health tips for others who may be feeling the wear and tear of deployment:

- **Reassess goals.** Reaching the halfway point of deployment is a great time to evaluate progress toward goals and set a plan for the remaining time.
- **Try something new.** Routine is great, but mixing in some new experiences can keep things interesting.
- **Set boundaries with work.** This is more challenging on deployment, but try not to bring work home, and set limits with extra time spent at work.
- **Keep your focus on the short-term.** Looking too far into the future toward a departure date makes time seem to slow down.
- **Find ways to be active.** More down-time means more time to think, which can lead to additional stress. Try to fill the time with meaningful activities.
- **Maintain perspective.** Deployment is temporary and won't last forever. Try to accept the situation and make the best of it.
- **You're not in this alone.** Others are away from home just like you, and are in need of support, so don't hesitate to seek out opportunities to socialize.



Photo by SSgt Jao'Torey Johnson