

Combat Edge

Fall 2025

Air Combat Command's Safety Magazine



DRAG & GRIND

pg 6



Aviation Safety Action Program



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(i.e., AMC or AETC Form 97) ...
File a HATR ...
Report a birdstrike ...
Or submit an identity-protected ASAP



Report it on

SAFEREP

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www.safety.af.mil/home/saferep



Combat Edge

- 4 | TAKE ACTION OR DIE**
by TSgt Derek R. Redfield
7 BW/SEW, Dyess AFB, TX
- 6 | DRAG & GRIND**
by SSgt Matthew C. Duke
388 MUNS, Hill AFB, UT
- 10 | ADAPT TO DISASTER**
by Mr. Daniel J. Kopcik
55 LRS, Offutt AFB, NE
- 14 | THE UNEXPECTED DRILL**
by SSgt Jesus M. Pinon, Jr.
55 FGS, Shaw AFB, SC

- 16 | LEADERSHIP: THE CORNERSTONE OF A POSITIVE SAFETY CULTURE**
by Mr. Tristan J. Streetman
99 ABW/SE, Nellis AFB, NV
- 19 | STATS**
- 20 | SAFETY SHORTS: A HANDFUL OF TROUBLE**
by TSgt James J. Lane
93 AGOW/SE, Moody AFB, GA
- 21 | SAFETY SHORTS: BEHIND THE LINES**
by SSgt Jesus M. Pinon, Jr.
55 FGS, Shaw AFB, SC
- 22 | 2ND QUARTER AWARDS**

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COVER GRAPHIC COMPOSITED USING PHOTOS BY
SSGT ZACHARY RUFUS AND A1C ABIGAIL DUELL

ACCent



I recently spent time reviewing our extensive archive of The Combat Edge and TAC Attack magazines. I encourage you to take a look for yourself, as the collection provides a unique view of Air Force life as far back as 1961. Despite everything that has changed since then, one thing stood out, bringing the phrase “the more things change, the more they stay the same” to mind.

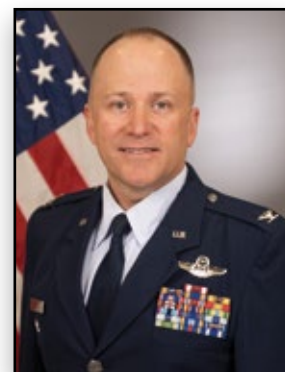
The common theme I found spread throughout was people, and their importance to absolutely everything the USAF accomplishes. Despite that understanding across the decades, people also continue to be a root cause to a significant number of our mishaps, both on- and off-duty.

Last fall, CSAF initiated the Integrating Risk and Readiness Campaign with a kick-off event emphasizing the concepts of operational discipline and risk management. The “Stand-up Day” was intended to reinforce the need for operational discipline as a baseline for making risk-informed decisions, both of which are critical to preserving our resources and saving lives. This fall, the campaign continues with a focus on policy, practice, tools, and training.

The desired end state for the Integrating Risk and Readiness Campaign is the achievement of a fully integrated risk management culture across the force. The result will enhance operational effectiveness, preserve resources, and protect personnel from unnecessary risks. Additionally, risk management is a valuable framework that can be used across all aspects of one’s life to find success in whatever your own mission is.

After you put down this magazine and continue on with your day, I encourage you to think about yourself and the people around you. Is there a risk management culture in place that enables you to succeed and prepares you to execute your mission? Personnel all across Air Combat Command are working hard to make that happen. If you aren’t seeing it for yourself, then please talk with your local safety office, supervisor, or commander, and never hesitate to report a hazard in person or via SAFEREP.

Life is full of risk, but there are ways to manage or mitigate those risks and still accomplish the mission, personally and professionally. Each and every Airmen contributes to our nation’s key competitive advantage—our people. Get ready, stay ready, and make smart choices!



Col Jesse Doyle
Director of Safety

Take Action or Die

By TSgt Derek R. Redfield

Bagram Airfield Afghanistan can be a make-or-break area in which to work. Between the normal grind and the adversaries outside the wire, it can be a challenging environment for anyone. As a young Senior Airman in 2011, this was my second tour to the mountainous region in which the United States had been operating for around a decade. Deploying out of Seymour Johnson AFB, constant deployments and temporary duty locations for training were to be expected. Although I had only

three years under my belt, I had seen quite a bit of action.

One evening during second shift, just before the sun was setting, two F-15Es were in the approach pattern to land. Everything seemed normal. The aircraft were returning with their payloads still attached, as they had not expended all their configuration of bombs and missiles. The first F-15E landed uneventfully with a full payload and returned to the parking location.

The crew chief was marshalling the aircraft into its designated spot when the right main landing gear caught fire. The pilot had

received no indication of hot brakes, and the brakes did not appear to be glowing. The hydraulic lines were leaking fluid, and the flames engulfed a 500-pound GBU-38 bomb attached to the wing. The B-Man, whose job it was to chock and safe the jet, just stood there, his hands gripping the fire extinguisher, completely stunned by what he was seeing. The crew chief went into fight mode, and pushed the B-Man aside, taking over and quickly extinguishing the flames.



I was sitting across the parking ramp in the Expeditor truck while the expeditor was tracking time. The expeditor handed me the radio to make the call in to Maintenance Operation Center to notify Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) and the Fire Department. Sitting in the truck, relaying information while watching an aircraft catch fire was a very surreal experience. Luckily, the expeditor driving the truck moved it back against the revetment in order to protect us in case the bomb exploded. It takes only a few minutes for a GBU-38 engulfed in flames to detonate. The result would have been catastrophic.

Once the fire was out, we followed ground emergency procedures, beginning with ordering the pilot and all non-essential personnel to evacuate the area. EOD was called and, after the waiting period was over, rendered the bomb safe to remove from the aircraft. It was transported to the munition storage area for disassembly and inspection. It was my crew's job to download the bomb and put it on a trailer. EOD informed

A shipment of GBU-38 smart bombs assembled by the 455th Maintenance Squadron, sit on a trailer ready to be delivered to aircraft at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan
Photos by Capt Raymond Geoffroy



us the bomb had expanded to the point of breaking the metal banding around it, and it was only a matter of seconds before the bomb could have detonated. The damage could be seen, as the bomb had expanded beyond the banding strap before the strap failed.

Seconds count in an emergency, and the crew chief responsible for extinguishing the flames saved not only multiple lives but also over fifty million dollars' worth of assets. On

the other hand, the damage to the aircraft's right main landing gear—as well as the bomb—could have been better mitigated, had the B-Man not failed to act. Nevertheless, correct calls were made, such as extinguishing the flames, removing individuals and vehicles from the area, and taking note of how long the ground emergency lasted.

This mishap was a stark reminder that our getting stuck in a groove can leave us unprepared for something out of the ordinary. It is important to stay alert and not fall victim to routine. Keep your head up and stay vigilant out there. ✈️

“Seconds count in an emergency . . .”



A U.S. Air Force F-15E Strike Eagle from the 335th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron taxis at Bagram Airfield on Sept. 30, 2011.
Photo by TSgt Matt Hecht



By SSgt Matthew C. Duke

DRAG & GRIND

The year 2019 brought me the first deployment of my career. I had been in the Air Force for only a couple of years, yet I considered myself to be a careful Airman when working with explosives. This deployment would break my winning streak and provide me with a large teaching moment that included important lessons I use to this day.

Southwest Asia, late 2019: I was supporting F-35 and F-15 aircraft at the time. In addition to working as a line driver, I was a technician in conventional maintenance. As such, I assembled

and maintained non-nuclear munitions and delivered them for upload. Among the munitions with which I worked was the 25 mm cannon ammunition for the F-35, which had its own loading equipment similar to a Universal Ammunition Loading System for 20 mm, also known as the bulkloader. It's worth mentioning this piece of equipment and its additional components are constructed mostly of aluminum and plastic. The major components I dealt with included a part known as the chute, used for the uploading and downloading of rounds into and out of the aircraft or bulkloader. I worked



57th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron Bolt Aircraft Maintenance Unit weapons loaders attach an ammo belt (chute) to an F-35 Lightning II at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada. Photo by A1C Andrew D. Sarver



Load crew members with the 60th Aircraft Maintenance Unit carry an ammo belt (chute) in preparation for loading 25 mm ammunition into several F-35A Lightning IIs at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, Apr. 29, 2024. The F-35A Lightning II can store up to 181 rounds of 25 mm ammunition. Photo by A1C Abigail Duell

with this piece of equipment so often that the job became mundane, which certainly was not a good habit to create.

Days passed, each filled with making several deliveries and replenishing using the bulkloader. The process became routine; however, one night I was reminded why it's critical to pay close attention to all aspects of an operation. That night, two other Airmen and I were bringing a bulkloader back to the Munitions Storage Area (MSA) with its chute attached. Standard procedure at the time called for a cover to be in place over both the bulkloader and chute when in tow, but some in-theatre complications resulted in this process being

amended to leave the covers off. I was tasked with training these Airmen on the bulkloader system, including inspection prior to towing. It's easy to miss checking whether the interface of that pesky chute is fully locked in, an inspection point that came back to get me only half an hour later.

The drive back was uneventful, aside from the usual banter and talk of favorite sports teams. After making it out of the flightline area, we were on the home stretch for what was about to become a not-so-routine trip. We got to the MSA and proceed through the bumpy Entry Control Point (ECP). The sun was going down, with darkness following quickly. The roads in the MSA were what you'd



Small Photo captions

(Top) 57th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron Bolt Aircraft Maintenance Unit weapons loaders, attach an ammo belt (chute) to a crate of 25mm rounds, at Nellis AFB, Nevada. Photo by A1C Andrew D. Sarver

(Bottom) Maintainers in the 4th Aircraft Maintenance Unit, position an ammo cart to begin load of 25mm target rounds in an F-35A Lightning II at Hill AFB, Utah. Photo by Todd Cromar



expect of a mildly-developed location: dirt with gravel over the top.

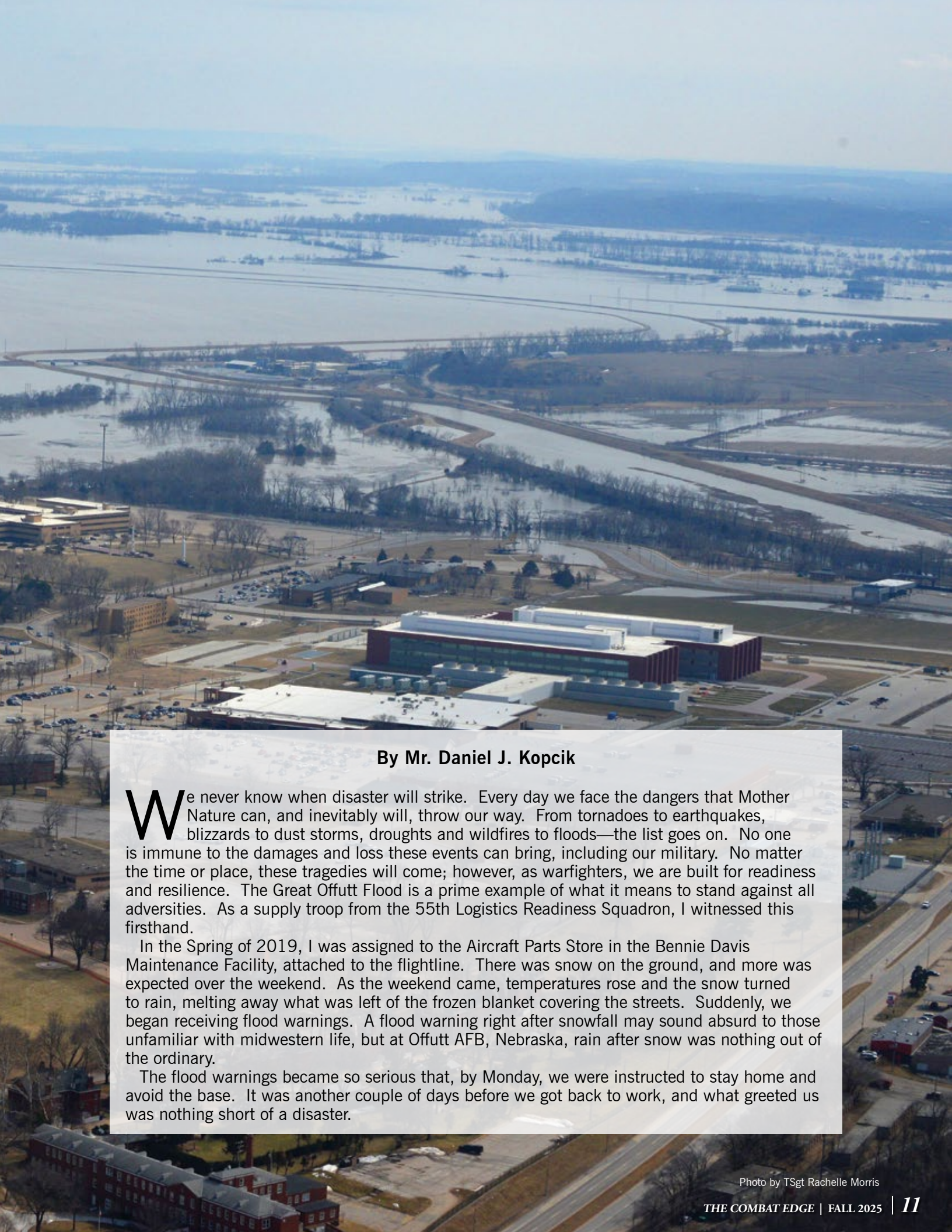
Driving through to our destination, we didn't notice anything out of the ordinary at first. The next moment, we saw half of our shop running toward our truck, yelling "Stop!" As it turned out, the chute's security wasn't verified. Coming through the bumpy ECP, the chute had been knocked loose, and had been dragged almost a mile and a half down the gravel road. To say the chute was roughed up was an understatement. It looked as though it had been put through a gauntlet of angle grinders.

The night grew long, as we worked to resolve and process the damage, and that was when I was

reminded of a critical safety topic: complacency. While fortunately no personnel were injured, a mission-critical piece of equipment was damaged beyond repair. Had the inspection been completed properly, the chute would have lived to load another day. Even now, I remember that experience as a "scared straight" reminder of the importance of thorough care and attention in the performance of explosive operations. ✈️

Adapt to Disaster





By Mr. Daniel J. Kopcik

We never know when disaster will strike. Every day we face the dangers that Mother Nature can, and inevitably will, throw our way. From tornadoes to earthquakes, blizzards to dust storms, droughts and wildfires to floods—the list goes on. No one is immune to the damages and loss these events can bring, including our military. No matter the time or place, these tragedies will come; however, as warfighters, we are built for readiness and resilience. The Great Offutt Flood is a prime example of what it means to stand against all adversities. As a supply troop from the 55th Logistics Readiness Squadron, I witnessed this firsthand.

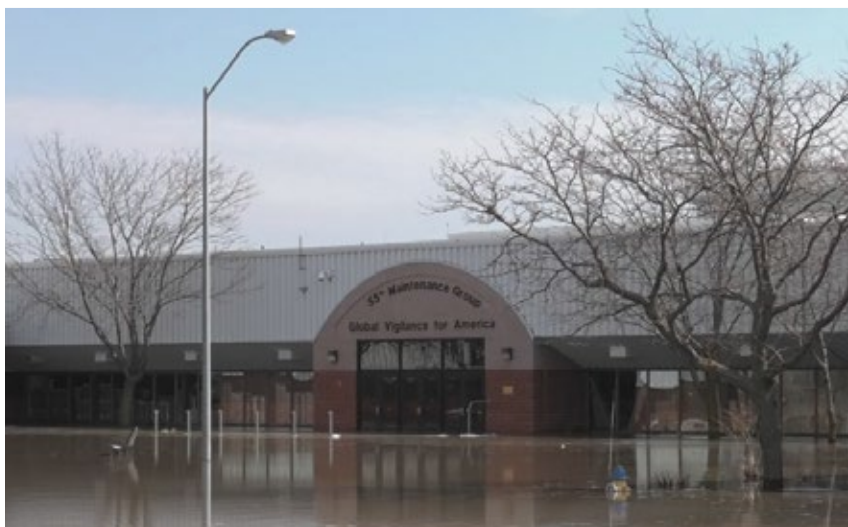
In the Spring of 2019, I was assigned to the Aircraft Parts Store in the Bennie Davis Maintenance Facility, attached to the flightline. There was snow on the ground, and more was expected over the weekend. As the weekend came, temperatures rose and the snow turned to rain, melting away what was left of the frozen blanket covering the streets. Suddenly, we began receiving flood warnings. A flood warning right after snowfall may sound absurd to those unfamiliar with midwestern life, but at Offutt AFB, Nebraska, rain after snow was nothing out of the ordinary.

The flood warnings became so serious that, by Monday, we were instructed to stay home and avoid the base. It was another couple of days before we got back to work, and what greeted us was nothing short of a disaster.

Photo by TSgt Rachelle Morris



Before and after NASA Earth Observatory images by Joshua Stevens, using Landsat data from the U.S. Geological Survey



Floodwaters breach Bennie L. Davis Maintenance Facility, Offutt AFB. Photo is a screen capture from video by Mr. Kevin Schwandt

The flightline was a lake. Several facilities belonging to the 55th Security Forces, the 97th Intelligence Squadron, and the 595th Maintenance hangar were mostly or fully submerged. Videos of wing leadership using boats to reach these places made their way through social media. This level of flooding was unheard of in Nebraska history.

The flooding at Bennie Davis was the best-case scenario, with water only four feet deep. Once the water was pumped out and we were permitted to enter, we found our warehouse in complete disarray. Every asset under the water line was destroyed, and our computer equipment was rendered useless; however, that didn't stop us, as we arranged for an alternate location on higher ground across the base where we could move our operations.

As we began moving our inventory, a few sharp-eyed Airmen noticed the shelving was so degraded from the pressures of the flood waters that the units had begun to shift. Before loading another truck



with parts, we paused to access the hazard of the shelving. Concerned that it all could give way, we gathered ratchet straps and forklifts from our warehouse on the hill. We secured the shelves by strapping them to each other and stabilizing them with the forklifts.

Despite our efforts, one of the units gave way. It happened just after we cleared one area. We heard a cracking noise, and cordoned off the area just in time to watch it come down. This likely would have been the fate of all the shelves if no one had noticed their condition. The area was dark, and all we had were head lamps. If it hadn't been for the Airmen bringing the matter to our attention, who knows how

An aerial view of Offutt Air Force Base and the surrounding areas affected by flood waters on March 16, 2019. An increase in water levels of surrounding rivers and waterways caused by record-setting snowfall over the winter in addition to a large drop in air pressure resulted in widespread flooding across the state of Nebraska. Photo by TSgt Rachelle Morris



many assets—or lives—could have been in critical danger—or lost.

Within a couple of weeks, we had a new warehouse up and running, without slowing down any missions. We accepted the loss of what we could not salvage and made do with what we had left. Our success was due largely to our Airmen and the situational awareness they possessed in the midst of a disaster that no one could have anticipated.

This is what we train to do—not necessarily to prepare for disasters, but rather to adapt to whatever comes our way, to keep in mind what we need from each other and what is expected of us in



TSgt Tyler Powers, 55th Logistics Readiness Squadron NCO-in-charge of special depot support, and Daniel Kopcik, 55th LRS supply technician, move a box for palletizing as part of an air cargo shipment at the Bennie Davis facility. Photo by Daniel Martinez

the face of adversity. These are jobs we cannot do on our own. It's up to us and our fellow Airmen to keep each other safe. This makes us stronger and improves our readiness.✈

The Unexpected Drill

By SSgt Jesus M. Pinon, Jr.

On an otherwise ordinary night at Al-Asad Airbase, the air was thick with anticipation as the teams awaited the return of night sorties from their missions. It was standard procedure: Once the aircraft touched down, the ammo and weapons teams would spring into action, re-fragging the planes with practiced efficiency. Ammo personnel, trailer in tow, provided the gunners with the necessary 105 mm and 30 mm shells, while the weapons team tallied the rounds spent in the night's endeavor.

As ordinary as it seemed, this night was destined to stand apart. In an unprecedented request, the lead gunner sought assistance from both teams to procure a Griffin missile (AGM-176) for an in-flight re-frag simulation, a procedure never rehearsed at our home station nor executed in the field. With the ammo trailer positioned beside the aircraft, the weapons team chief asked about retrieving the

Griffin from the munitions storage area. The ammo crew chief, seeing no problem, casually approved. The three weapons personnel then embarked on the unusual mission: driving to the bomb dump, securing the missile, and returning with it to the waiting aircraft.

Upon arrival back at the aircraft, the team faced unexpected resistance when presenting the Griffin to the lead gunner. "I can't accept it like this," he declared, leaving the crew bewildered. "How come? This is how we load it," the team chief contested. The lead gunner insisted the missile be encased in its designated casket for acceptance—a bit of protocol the team had overlooked. Confused but compliant, the team returned the Griffin to its proper casing and delivered it again, meeting the lead gunner's standards.

The incident didn't end there. The lead gunner, sensing the gravity of the team's oversight, reported the mishap to the commander, who was far from pleased. A critical regulation had been breached: No munition, especially not a live AGM-176, a 1.1 class asset with all its safing mechanisms engaged, should ever be transported casually in a government-owned vehicle, and certainly not resting on the laps of Airmen. This incident could have been prevented with a modicum of patience. While the lead gunner's request for the AGM-176 missile for training purposes was valid, no immediate urgency necessitated its expedited handling. Even if the need had been urgent, it was incumbent upon the ammo crew to communicate effectively, and to advise the lead gunner of the need for patience and adherence to protocol. Given that there was a singular, prescribed method for transporting the



AGM-176 encased in transport and storage container (casket)
Photo by TSgt Joshua Rogers



AGM-176 encased in transport and storage container (casket)
Photo by TSgt Joshua Rogers

munition, the deviation by the weapons crew was unnecessary and avoidable.

The events that unfolded that night at Al Assad Airbase serve as a teaching moment, and emphasize the importance of discipline, protocol, and communication within the military framework. They remind us of the responsibilities shouldered by military personnel while performing duties that seem routine. Even the smallest oversight or error in judgment can result in serious consequences.

The situation also underscores the importance of unwavering adherence to established procedures and regulations. It shines a spotlight on the necessity for vigilance, continuous training, and comprehensive education to ensure the safety and well-being of those who serve. Such efforts are vital in maintaining the integrity of military missions and protecting the lives of service members. This story reinforces the importance of strict compliance with military protocols, and highlights the need for careful planning, patience, and respect for the chain of command. ✖

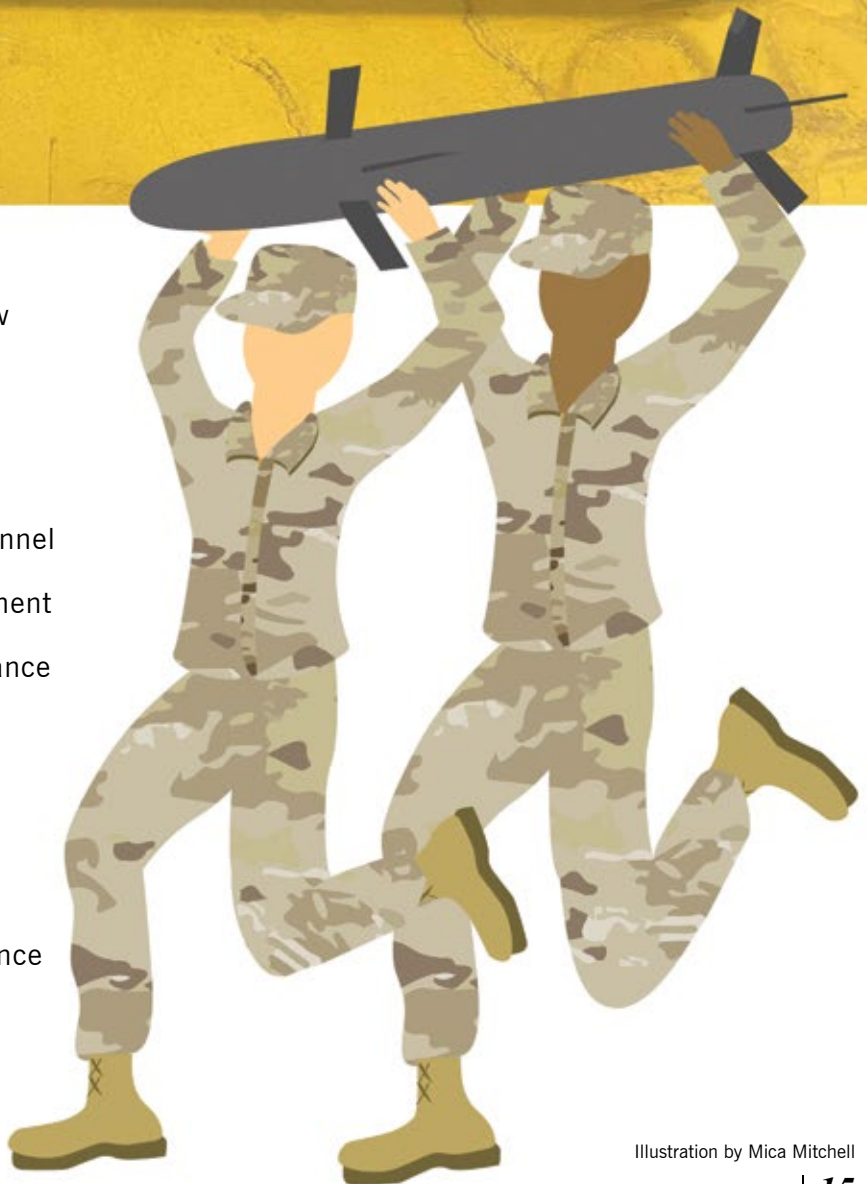


Illustration by Mica Mitchell

Leadership: The Cornerstone of a Positive Safety Culture

By Mr. Tristan J. Streetman

In today's world, organizations must balance productivity, efficiency, and employee well-being. One of the most effective ways to achieve this is through strong leadership that fosters a positive safety culture. When leadership prioritizes safety, it not only reduces workplace accidents, but also boosts morale, reduces absenteeism, and enhances overall organizational effectiveness.

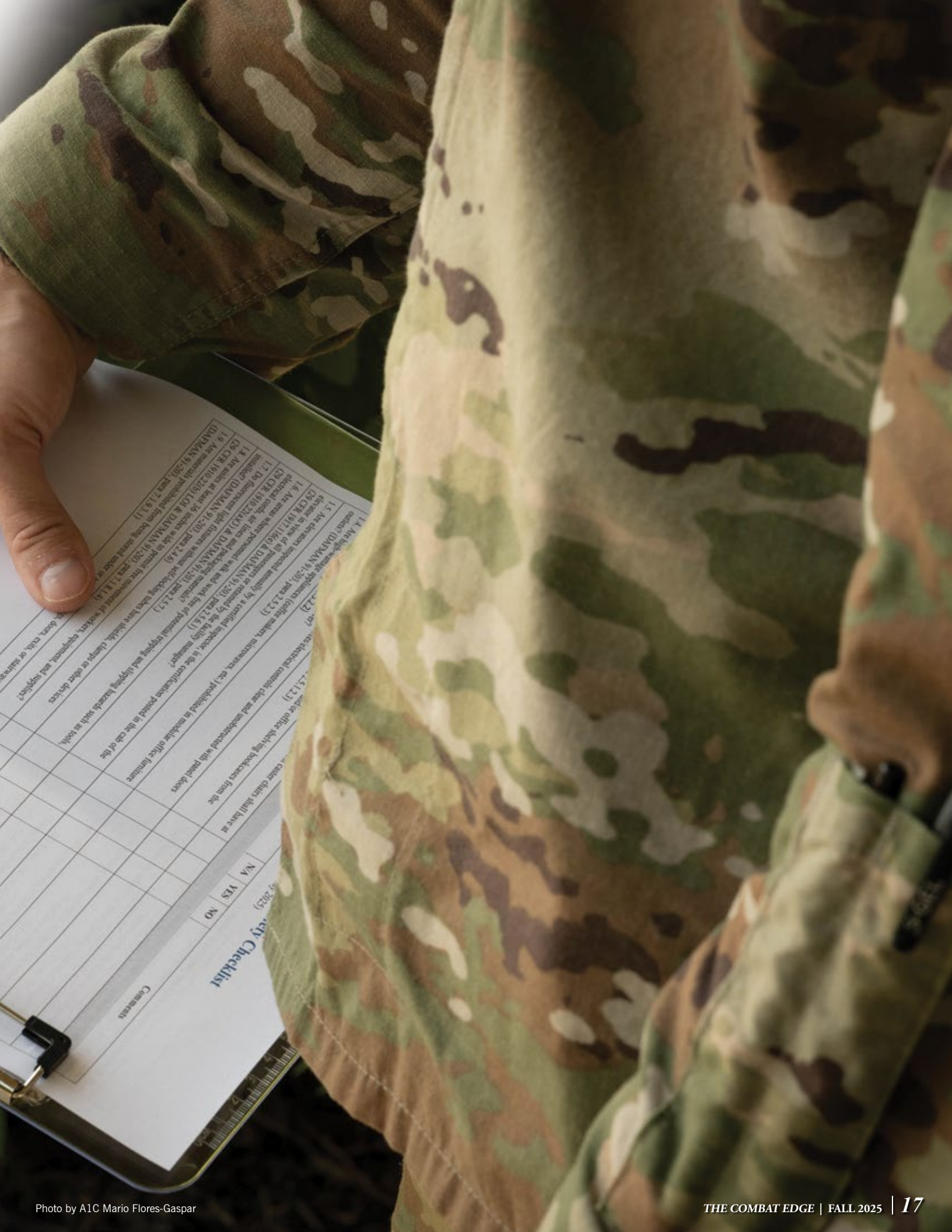
The Role of Leadership in Safety Culture

Leadership sets the tone for workplace safety. A positive safety culture is not just about rules and regulations; it's about mindset and behavior. Leaders who actively promote safety demonstrate its importance through their actions, words, and policies. When safety is ingrained in the company's values and practices, Airmen are more likely to take it seriously. A strong safety culture starts with visible commitment from leadership. Airmen look to their leaders for guidance, and when they see commanders and supervisors prioritizing safety, they are more inclined to do the same. Whether it's conducting regular safety training, engaging in open discussions about hazards, or recognizing Airmen for safe behavior, leaders play a crucial role in embedding safety into the organization's DNA.

The Ripple Effect: Happy, Healthy, and Engaged Airmen

When Airmen feel safe at work, their job satisfaction and engagement increase. A workplace that prioritizes safety ensures that Airmen not only are physically protected, but also are mentally and emotionally supported. This reduces stress, improves morale, and leads to higher productivity. Airmen who feel valued and cared for are more likely to be engaged in their work and committed to the success of the organization.

Furthermore, reducing workplace injuries leads to fewer absences. When Airmen are injured or become unwell due to workplace hazards, it disrupts operations, increases inefficiencies, and burdens other team members. A strong safety culture minimizes these disruptions, allowing for smoother workflow, better collaboration, and improved efficiency.



	NA	YES	NO
1.4. Are high-voltage equipment (office routers, microwave, etc.) prohibited in mobile office furniture?			
1.5. Are electrical control clear and unobstructed with panel doors?			
1.6. Are office chairs shall have at least 16 inches wide to permit free movement of workers, equipment, and supplies?			
1.7. Do fluorescent light fixtures and packaging materials?			
1.8. Are stairs at least 36 inches wide to permit free movement of workers, equipment, and supplies?			
1.9. Are materials provided from being stored under or in?			

Safety Checklist

Comments

Safety as an Organizational Advantage

An organization that emphasizes safety gains a competitive edge. Units that invest in safety culture see a lower rate of absenteeism, reduced legal liabilities, and higher operational efficiency. A proactive approach to safety prevents accidents and enhances an organization's reputation. Sister units and mission partners prefer to do business with companies that prioritize the well-being of their workforce, as they view them as responsible and trustworthy.

Moreover, regulatory compliance is a critical factor. Organizations with strong safety leadership avoid penalties and legal issues, enjoying smooth operations without the setbacks of violations or lawsuits. Investing in safety is not just about meeting legal requirements—it's about creating a sustainable, thriving organization.

Leading by Example

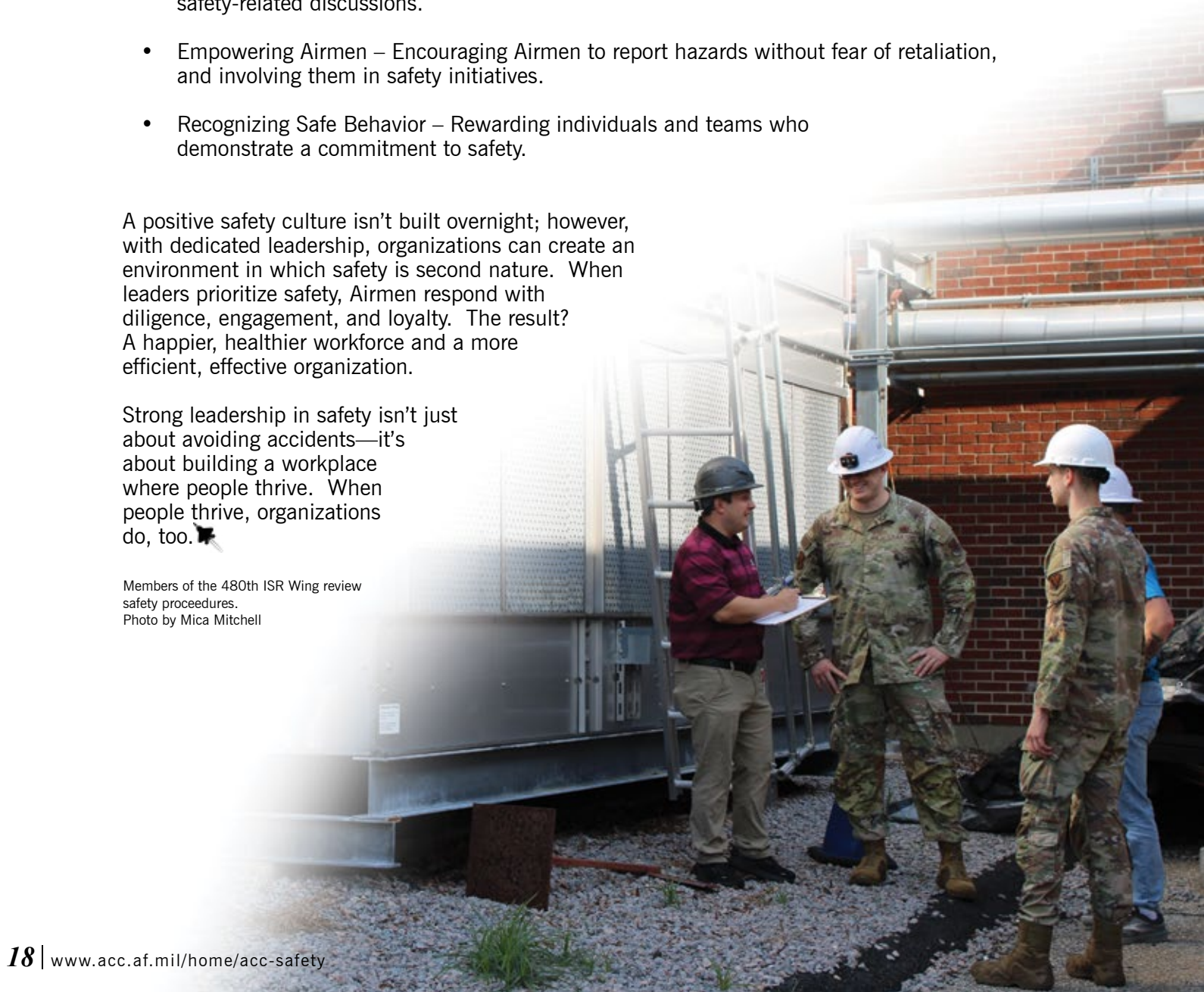
To build a strong safety culture, leaders must lead by example. This means:

- Consistent Communication – Regularly discussing safety policies, best practices, and potential hazards with Airmen.
- Active Participation – Attending safety meetings, walking the shop floor, and being present in safety-related discussions.
- Empowering Airmen – Encouraging Airmen to report hazards without fear of retaliation, and involving them in safety initiatives.
- Recognizing Safe Behavior – Rewarding individuals and teams who demonstrate a commitment to safety.

A positive safety culture isn't built overnight; however, with dedicated leadership, organizations can create an environment in which safety is second nature. When leaders prioritize safety, Airmen respond with diligence, engagement, and loyalty. The result? A happier, healthier workforce and a more efficient, effective organization.



Strong leadership in safety isn't just about avoiding accidents—it's about building a workplace where people thrive. When people thrive, organizations do, too. ✨

Members of the 480th ISR Wing review safety procedures.
Photo by Mica Mitchell



FY25 Flight

Thru 30 Jun 2025

	Fatal	Aircraft Destroyed	Class A Aircraft Damage
15 AF	0		
16 AF	0	0	0
USAFWC	0	0	0
ANG	0	0	0
AFRC	0	0	0
CONTRACT	0	0	0
COCOM	0	0	0

FY25 Occupational

Thru 30 Jun 2025

	Class A Fatal	Class A Non-Fatal	Class B
AFCENT	1	0	0
USAFWC	0	0	0
12 AF	0	0	0
15 AF	2	0	1,1
16 AF	0	0	0

FY25 Weapons

Thru 30 Jun 2025

	Class A	Class B	Class C	Class D	Class E
ACC	0	0	2	0	7

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)

(RED) = On-duty

(BLACK) = Off-duty

Symbols for Mishap Aircraft



Flight Notes

ACC experienced no Class A flight-related mishaps in third quarter FY25. ACC Flight Safety continues to support flying wings via the continual emphasis of integrating proactive risk management to strengthen flight operations readiness.

Occupational Notes

During the third quarter of FY25, ACC sustained two Class A Fatal mishaps and one Class B mishap. The two Class A mishaps involved a 2-wheel PMV and a Sports & Recreation incident (Swimming), both fatal. The Class B mishap involved a member who had his finger caught under a guard on a shear machine, the tip of which was later amputated. This is a significant reduction compared to the previous FY, when we sustained nine Class A and two Class B mishaps. As we move forward into the final three months of FY25 we need to stay focused on what we are doing and what is going on around us. Continue to look for the hazards around you and then take action to reduce the risk of those hazards. Remember nobody should care more about your safety than you – STAY SAFE!

Weapons Notes

During the third quarter of FY25, six weapons mishaps occurred: one Class C and five Class E mishaps. The Class C mishap involved six inert GBU-38s that fell off a forklift when the tie-down strap broke and the driver stopped because the load wasn't secured. The Class E mishaps were all different: Materials Handling Equipment (MHE) was struck, MHE struck something, a bomb was dropped, a missile umbilical was damaged during download, and missile damage was discovered during ops check. The Class C was an expensive lesson in practicing emergency procedures, but all were preventable. Until next time, take your time and take care.

A Handful of Trouble

By TSgt James J. Lane

The maintenance task was routine for the two-person team: greasing aircraft landing gear, something they had done countless times. Both technicians diligently donned their required PPE—gloves, goggles, and face shields. Little did they know, but this seemingly ordinary day was about to take a painful turn.

As they worked, the high-pressure grease gun sputtered, indicating an air pocket in the reservoir. This was common, and usually was remedied by squeezing the trigger until the trapped air escaped and grease flowed freely.

One technician was a little impatient, and placed his gloved hand in front of the gun's nozzle to feel for escaping air. At that moment, the built-up pressure was released, expelling a concentrated stream of grease through his glove and directly into the palm of his hand. Not just onto, but into.

The sting of impact confirmed the seriousness of the situation. His supervisor sent him to get medical attention. The wound

was cleaned and bandaged, and he was advised to take the rest of the day off. Since the incident occurred on a Friday, he would have the weekend to recover.

Sunday morning brought a rude awakening. His hand was swollen and throbbing. He made another trip to the hospital. The diagnosis was alarming: The force of the accidental injection had pushed grease deep into his hand, creating a number of internal pockets of lubricant. Immediate surgery was required, involving fully opening his hand in order to flush out the grease and sterilize the area.

The incident serves as a reminder of the importance of reporting all workplace injuries, no matter how insignificant they may appear. The consequences of delaying

medical attention can be severe, turning a minor injury into a life-altering event.

This story also highlights the hidden dangers of complacency. Even routine tasks can harbor unexpected risks, and it's crucial to remain vigilant and always prioritize safety protocols. A moment of impatience or a seemingly harmless shortcut can have lasting consequences. Remember: When it comes to safety, there's no room for shortcuts or second guesses. ✈️



A1C Brock Thompson, 911th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chief, applies lubricant to the landing gear of a C-17 Globemaster III. Photo by Joshua J. Seybert



Behind the Lines

By SSgt Jesus M. Pinon, Jr.

Dawn was breaking as my team and I made our way to the AC-130W, tasked with preparing the aircraft for its nocturnal mission. Our assignment was to equip the plane with four GBU-39 Small Diameter Bombs (SDBs). Per standard procedure, the ordnance team delivered the live munitions for loading. We installed the bombs and proceeded with our duties, unaware of the looming crisis.

The mission concluded uneventfully...as far as we knew. Shortly afterward, though, our Chief convened us for a briefing during which we learned how our day really turned out. We learned that one of the SDBs we loaded had deviated from its intended path by a significant distance of five miles, triggering an immediate investigation. A pall of silence fell over the gathering, the gravity of the situation weighing heavily on us as we contemplated the consequences of our actions.

As an Airman First Class and the No. 3 person, I was responsible for verifying the serviceability of the munitions upon delivery. Questions and concerns flooded my mind. Had I overlooked a critical detail? Could this have been a result of my action or inaction? These and other questions clouded my thoughts.

The Chief emphasized the seriousness of the incident,

particularly given the location of the combat zone. He pointed out what could have happened had the errant bomb impacted a civilian site such as a place of worship or a school. The possible outcome of such a scenario was sobering, and served as a reminder of our responsibilities when handling munitions.

The investigation revealed a critical oversight. The bomb was faulty because of an electrical issue. Protocol required the SDB be declared operable before being brought to the aircraft. As it happened, the ammo team didn't check the Common Ammunition System for serviceability until after the aircraft had taken off. By that time, of course, it was too late. We already had loaded it,

and the plane was on its mission.

This close call led to a significant procedural overhaul. A two-step verification process was instituted to ensure the serviceability of munitions even before they reach the bomb dump.

This story, more than merely a recounting of events, is a potent reminder of the profound responsibility resting on our shoulders. A single oversight can have far-reaching implications. The lesson we learned underscores the importance of vigilance, thoroughness, and continuous improvement in our procedures. It should remind us all that, in the pursuit of safety and success, complacency is our enemy, and diligence is our ally. ✈️

TSgt Lee Macedo, noncommissioned officer in charge of munitions and control for the 379th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron, inspects the electronic components inside a bomb rack unit loaded with four GBU-39 small diameter bombs at the munitions storage area on Al Udeid Air Base.
Photo by SSgt Jordan Martin



A guided bomb unit (GBU) 39 small diameter bomb hits a target during a Joint Terminal Attack Controller proficiency training at the Nevada Test and Training Range.
Photo by SrA Jose Miguel T. Tamondong

2nd Quarter FY25 Awards



Flight Line Safety

SSgt Anthony M. Allende
755 AMXS, 55 WG, 16 AF
Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ



Pilot Safety

Capt Katherine E. Reft
960 AACS, 552 ACW, 15 AF
Tinker AFB, OK



Unit Safety Representative

SSgt Nolan M. Berryhill
480 ISRW, 16 AF
JB Langley-Eustis, VA



Weapons Safety Professional

MSgt Edwin J. Martinez
57 WG/SEW, USAFWC
Nellis AFB, NV



Safety Career Professional

TSgt Brandon J. Labak
99 ABW/SEG, USAFWC
Nellis AFB, NV



Aviation Maintenance Safety

SSgt Keenan M. Ruh
552 AMXS, 552 ACW, 15 AF
Tinker AFB, OK



Aircrew Safety Award

Crew of Ghost 01
41 RQS, 23 WG, 15 AF
Moody AFB, GA



Unit Safety

Weapons Standardization Section
57 MXG, 57 WG, USAFCW
Nellis AFB, NV

Congratulations



SEPTEMBER IS
NATIONAL
SUICIDE
AWARENESS MONTH



Harnessing the Power
of Social Connection:
A Revolutionary New Approach
to Suicide Prevention

PAGE 10

If you or someone you know are struggling
CALL, TEXT, CHAT THE 988 LIFELINE
You are not alone



Back to School Safety

Be on the lookout for school zone signals and **ALWAYS** obey the speed limits

When entering a school zone, be sure to **SLOW** down and obey all traffic laws

ALWAYS stop for school buses loading or unloading children, all vehicles must stop if no physical divider is present

Watch out for school crossing guards and **OBEY** their signals

Be aware of and watch out for children near schools, bus stops, sidewalks, in the streets, in school parking lots, etc . . .

NEVER pass, change lanes or make U-turns while driving in a school zone

Background photo by LCpl. Scott Whiting

OVER the Edge MAGAZINE

4 | **KNOW YOUR LIMITS**
by TSgt Richard B. Warnos, Jr.
432 WG/SEG, Creech AFB, NV

7 | **HALLOWEEN SAFETY TIPS**

8 | **IS IT DONE YET?**

10 | **HARNESSING THE POWER OF
SOCIAL CONNECTION**

by Maj Kevin R. Feiszli
548 ISRG/SG, Beale AFB, CA

11 | **SAFE STORAGE**
Defense Suicide Prevention Office

12 | **PUSHING THROUGH FOR NO GAIN**
by SSgt Robert M. Peppers, Jr.
366 FW/SEO, Mountain Home AFB, ID

14 | **THE MAN WHO RAN THROUGH FIRE**
by SSgt Adam Van Lange
801 RHTS, Tyndall AFB, FL

16 | **HOME FIRE SAFETY PSA**

17 | **HOLIDAY DECORATING**



Hello AUTUMN

FALL SAFETY TIPS

As the air turns cooler and leaves drop from the trees, it's important to keep a few important fall safety tips in mind. With proper precautions and safety awareness, your family can enjoy that crisp, autumn weather while avoiding some of the dangers that come with the season.

Service Your HVAC

Before the cold weather sets in, be sure to call your heating and cooling company to service your HVAC. This helps to ensure your system runs all year long without breaking down, enabling reliant service and efficiency.

Use Fireplaces Safely

Keep fires in their proper place by using a fireplace screen to mitigate sparks from flying out of the fireplace. Never leave a burning fire unattended and make sure the fire is completely out before going to bed.

Use Caution with Space Heaters

A space heater can be an effective way to warm up a chilly room, but it's essential that you read the instructions on the unit before you use it. If your space heater requires venting, make sure it has been properly ventilated. Never use your stove or oven to heat your home; only use space heaters that are approve for this purpose. Always allow at least three feet of space around heaters.

Reconsider Leaf Burning

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, burning leaves produce dangerous and cancer-causing chemicals. For this reason, homeowners should avoid disposing of leaves this way. If you decide to burn leaves, wear a protective mask. Burning leaves should only be attempted far away from a house or other structures. Always check the weather forecast before starting to burn leaves as this activity should not be attempted in windy conditions.

Exercise Candle Caution

Candles are a great way to give a room that warm glow, but they can also cause fires. According to the National Candle Association, almost 10,000 house fires start with improper candle use. Never leave candles burning if you go out or go to sleep, and keep your candles away from pets and kids.

Change Smoke Alarm Batteries

Change the batteries in your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors every six months. Also check the alarms when new batteries are installed. Check and replace any fire extinguishers that have expired.

Members of the Motorcycle Mentorship Program (MMP) ride along skyline drive, Shenandoah National Park, Virginia. The purpose of the MMP is to establish voluntary installation-level motorcycle programs where less experienced and seasoned riders can create a supportive environment of responsible motorcycle riding and enjoyment. Photo by Cpl. Michael Slavin





KNOW YOUR LIMITS

By TSgt Richard B. Warnos, Jr.

It was a picture-perfect fall afternoon in southern Georgia, the kind of day that beckons riders to hit the open road. The sun was shining, and the temperature was a comfortable 75°F, making it ideal for a motorcycle ride. My friends and I, three riders in total, decided to explore some of the winding back roads that snake through the countryside. As an experienced rider, I was at the front of the pack, followed by a friend who was relatively new to motorcycling, and another seasoned rider trailing behind.

The first 20 minutes of the ride were smooth. We cruised through the countryside, enjoying the breeze and the open road. Shortly afterward, as we ventured deeper into the back roads, the terrain began to change. The road started to twist and turn, with sharp curves and challenging corners. These types of roads can be a thrill for seasoned riders, but they can also be intimidating for those who are still mastering their skills.

As a more experienced rider, I naturally had no trouble navigating the curves at a quicker pace, while my friend, still new to riding, struggled to keep up. At first, I didn't think much of it, but soon I had pulled far ahead, leaving my friend in the dust. I was concerned for a moment, knowing my friend was still a beginner. At the same time, I knew how exciting it feels to want to keep up with more experienced riders, and I assumed he would be okay.

What happened next unfolded quickly. As I rounded a corner, I glanced back and realized that my friend was no longer behind me. Panic set in as I quickly made a U-turn and retraced my route. The sight that greeted me was alarming. My friend had overshot a turn, lost control of his bike, and ended up in a ditch off the side of the road. Thankfully, he was standing, albeit bruised

and scraped, and walked away from the incident with only a few cuts and bruises. Sadly, his bike was beyond repair.

In that moment, I felt a mix of relief and guilt. I was glad my friend was all right, but I also felt responsible for the accident. I knew I had made a mistake. I had not taken the time to warn him about the importance of knowing his limits. In my own rush to enjoy the ride, I hadn't thought about the pace I was setting for the group. I should have slowed down to match my friend's skill level, ensuring he felt comfortable and confident while riding.

I wasn't the only person responsible. As a new rider, my friend should have understood the risks of pushing himself too hard. Riding, especially in a group, requires not only technical skill but also self-awareness. It's vital to recognize when you are outside

your comfort zone, and take a step back.

The incident served as a wake-up call for all of us. Group rides are about camaraderie and fun, but they also require responsibility. We must keep the skill levels of everyone in the group in mind, and make sure the pace is safe for everyone. It's not about showing off or keeping up, it's about ensuring that everyone arrives safely.

In the end, my friend's mishap was a reminder of one of the most important lessons in motorcycling: Know your limits. Whether you are an experienced rider or a beginner, it's crucial to ride within your ability and communicate openly with others about what you are comfortable doing. The road always will be there; your safety always should come first. 🍂

Photo by Cpl. Michael Slavin



HALLOWEEN Safety

To help you and your loved ones enjoy a safe and happy Halloween, here are some tips from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

- Wear costumes that say “flame resistant” on the label. If you make your costume, use flame-resistant fabrics such as polyester or nylon.
- Wear bright, reflective costumes or add strips of reflective tape so you’ll be more visible; make sure the costumes aren’t so long that you’re in danger of tripping.
- Wear makeup and hats rather than costume masks that can obscure your vision.
- Vibrantly colored makeup is popular at Halloween. Check the FDA’s list of color additives to see if the colors are FDA approved. If they aren’t approved for their intended use, don’t use them. This is especially important for colored makeup around the eyes.

Safe Treats

- Don’t eat candy until it has been inspected at home.
- Eat a snack before heading out to avoid the temptation of nibbling on a treat before it has been inspected.
- In case of a food allergy, check the label to ensure the allergen isn’t present. Tell children not to accept—or eat—anything that isn’t commercially wrapped.
- Parents of very young children should remove any choking hazards such as gum, peanuts, hard candies, or small toys from the Halloween bags.
- Inspect commercially wrapped treats for signs of tampering, such as an unusual appearance or discoloration, tiny pinholes, or tears in wrappers. Throw away anything that looks suspicious.



A child in a Halloween costume poses for a photo Oct. 24, 2018, at Kadena Air Base, Japan. To ensure a safe and fun Halloween, parents and guardians are encouraged to incorporate lights or reflective materials into costumes or carry glow sticks or flashlights to increase visibility during hours of darkness.
Photo by SSgt Micaiah Anthony



Is It Done Yet?

Doneness Versus Safety

Kids popping into the kitchen or dashing by a barbecue grill ask impatiently, “Is it done yet?” Is done the same as safe? How does the cook know? Appearance and color are not reliable indicators of safety or doneness. Studies have shown that using a food thermometer is the only way to tell if harmful bacteria have been destroyed, yet only about 15% of people consistently use them.

What Is “Done”?

Doneness may be defined as the condition of being cooked to a desired degree. While food safety experts emphasize the internal temperature that ensures destruction of pathogens in food, doneness reflects subjective qualities such as appearance, texture, and optimum flavor of a food according to one’s taste. These indicators are not reliable for safety. Only a food thermometer can ensure cooked food is safe. Visual signs of doneness should be reserved for situations in which doneness is reached after the food has reached a safe temperature.

What is “Safe”?

Foods are safely cooked when they are heated for a time and at a temperature sufficient to kill harmful bacteria that cause foodborne illness.

Poultry

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) recommends cooking whole poultry to a safe minimum internal temperature of 165°F. Check the internal temperature in the innermost part of the thigh and wing, and the thickest part of the breast. For accuracy, do not allow the probe to touch bone. If poultry is stuffed, the center of the stuffing must reach 165°F. Only by verifying the internal temperature of both the bird and the stuffing with a food thermometer can a consumer be sure the product has been thoroughly cooked.

Beef, Pork, Lamb, and Veal

Cook all raw beef, pork, lamb, and veal steaks, chops, and roasts to a minimum internal temperature of 145°F. For accuracy, do not allow the probe to touch bone, fat, or gristle. For safety and quality, allow meat to rest for several minutes after cooking.

Ground Meat and Poultry

The appearance of meat and the color of the juices are not accurate indicators of doneness. Ground beef may turn brown before it reaches the temperature at which bacteria are destroyed. A person grilling hamburgers and judging doneness by how they look is taking a chance. A hamburger cooked to 160°F (165°F for ground poultry) is safe, regardless of color.

Combination Dishes

Casseroles and other combination dishes must be cooked to 165°F. These are dishes that consist of cooked foods along with raw ingredients like eggs and milk that are combined and then heated to finish cooking and enhance flavors. Bacteria can survive if the meat or poultry component of a casserole was merely browned, or if the casserole was not heated thoroughly. This is especially true if the dish was assembled in advance and refrigerated.


No More Guesswork

Using an accurate food thermometer takes the guesswork out of cooking. No more cutting into your turkey or roast to see if it looks done. Simply place the probe into the food, and it will indicate the temperature. You’ll know if it needs to cook a few minutes more or if it is finished. This is especially helpful with combination dishes such as lasagne or egg casseroles that may brown on the top before they are heated thoroughly.

FSIS reports that, even if hamburgers look fully cooked, one in four may not be safe, yet only 6 percent of home cooks use a food thermometer for hamburgers, and only 10 percent use one for chicken breasts.

Food safety experts encourage people to get and use a food thermometer—dial or digital. By using a food thermometer to check if meat, poultry, and egg dishes are done, you also prevent overcooking and guesswork. Food cooked to a safe internal temperature is juicy and flavorful. If you use a food thermometer, then you’ll know the answer to “Is it done yet?” Food thermometers may be found in many grocery, hardware, or kitchen stores.

Here are some tips for using it:

- Insert the food thermometer into the thickest part of the food, making sure it doesn’t touch bone, fat, or gristle.
- Cook food until the thermometer shows an internal temperature of 160°F for hamburger, pork, and egg dishes; 145°F for beef, veal, and lamb steaks and roasts; and 165°F for all poultry.
- Some food thermometers may be left in while cooking, and some may not be. Be sure to know which kind you have.
- Clean your food thermometer with hot, soapy water before and after each use. 

Harnessing the Power of Social Connection: A Revolutionary New Approach to Suicide Prevention

By Maj Kevin R. Feiszli

With National Suicide Prevention Month coming up in September, here is a timely message of hope and optimism. First, some statistics: Suicide remains a chronic public health crisis in our nation. From 2000-2022, the U.S. saw a 36% increase in suicide, resulting in the deaths of 49,316 of our fellow Americans in 2023 alone. Put another way, approximately one death every 11 minutes. Sadly, the military has not been spared from that trend. According to the Annual Report on Suicide in the Military, 363 active-duty members died by suicide in 2023 (compared with 331 deaths in 2022, and 328 deaths in 2021), adding to the growing evidence of an active-duty suicide rate that has gradually trended upward since 2011.

Given such statistics, one might conclude that suicide is simply an unsolvable problem; however, the Air Force refuses to give up, and continues to work to protect our Airmen.

Enter the Wingman-Connect Program (WC-P), along with Dr. Peter Wyman and his team at the University of Rochester. The WC-P is a newly-developed suicide prevention program that is being actively studied at Air Force bases around the world. Instead of simply reacting to and treating people with an already elevated suicide risk, the WC-P attempts to harness the power of social groups to stop suicidal thoughts before they occur. In a landmark study published in 2020, the researchers tested the theory that suicide prevention skills often are learned from close peers. In other words, if you strengthen the unit or social network, you strengthen the individual. From 2017-2019, a total of 1,485 tech school Airmen across 215 classes at Sheppard AFB were split between the WC-P group and the control group. They participated in six hours of facilitated, experiential group activities spread over three days. In the WC-P group, activities were organized around meaningful sharing, which encouraged participants to learn positive coping strategies

from one another. This in turn strengthened their bonds and positioned their social group to better support one another during future times of need. This experiential training, listed as career enhancement training to participants, was based on the principles of kinship, purpose, guidance, and balance, which Wyman and his team argued are integral to career success and physical/mental health.

Ultimately, the study was a smashing success; results not only demonstrated that WC-P reduced suicide-risk scores, improved depressive symptoms, and led to fewer work-related issues (e.g., corrective actions for poor performance), but it also demonstrated sustained improvement at follow-up six months later. Following this achievement, the Air Force spent \$5 million on additional research funding for the WC-P. Current plans include expanding the program to a base near you, with the intent of at least 500,000 Airmen having completed WC-P training by the year 2035.

Keep an eye out for an opportunity to participate in the Wingman-Connect Program. You could end up being a part of the next breakthrough in suicide research! 🚀



First Term Airmen perform a team building exercise during a Wingman Guardian Connect class at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri, May 13, 2025. The WGC program is designed for FTA and incorporates workshops, team activities and open discussions to encourage social connection and strengthen resilience. Photo by SrA Joseph Garcia

SAFE STORAGE: Safely store firearms at all times to protect yourself, your family, and your friends.

"A greater percentage of ACC decedents of suicide, relative to the Total Force, died using a firearm - 75.0% versus 68.4%" ~2020 DAF Stands Report pg. 67



Did you know?

Putting time and distance between a person who is suicidal and a firearm may save a life for three reasons:

- 1 A suicidal crisis is often brief.
- 2 Suicide can be impulsive. The time a person goes from thinking about suicide to acting on it can be less than 10 minutes.
- 3 Unsafe storage of firearms can increase risk of death by suicide up to four to six times, for all members in your household.

Protect yourself and your family and friends. Stop, Lock, and Live.

How to Identify Someone in Crisis

Is your loved one, or are you, experiencing any of the following?

- Acting withdrawn or out of character
- Engaging in risky behaviors, such as increased substance use (especially alcohol and medications)
- Having feelings of hopelessness, depression, or suicidal thoughts
- Making a plan or researching ways to die
- Saying good bye, giving away important items, or making a will
- Displaying extreme mood swings
- Experiencing changes in eating or sleeping habits

Safe Storage Tips

- Keep firearms locked and unloaded.
- Separate firearms and ammunition when not in use.
- Use a gun lock, trigger lock or gun safe to store your firearm in your residence.
- Store your keys separately from the lock or safe, or use a combination lock box.
- Make sure household members or roommates understand firearm safety practices.

Safe Storage Options:



Cable and trigger lock: Prevents a firearm from being loaded and fired.



Gun case: Provides a safe storage solution that secures, conceals, protects, and legally transports a firearm.



Lock box: Provides reliable safety for a firearm.



Full-size safe: Allows you to store multiple firearms in one place.



Safe Ammunition Storage: Allows you to safely store firearms and ammunition separately.

In times of distress, consider out-of-home storage options. Before bringing your firearms to any of these places, call ahead to make sure they can store them.

Please note that some local and state laws require weapon registration for legal storage. Always follow the law in your jurisdiction.

In times of distress, consider:



Family members, friends, or neighbors



Police department



Gun shop



Shooting range



Armory



Commercial storage facility




Pawn shop

Every second counts in suicide prevention. Safely storing personally owned firearms can give someone an extra moment to change their mind about suicide.



**DEFENSE
SUICIDE
PREVENTION
OFFICE**
www.DSPO.mil



“The game was afoot, and we were being demolished. The score was not even close, but we had given it everything.”

Pushing Through for No Gain

By SSgt Robert M. Peppers, Jr.

The game was afoot, and we were being demolished. The score was not even close, but we had given it everything. I had been sprinting up and down the field for 30 minutes, my legs burning, my breath coming in short, ragged bursts. A teammate on the sideline called to sub for me, but I shook my head and waved him off. No way! I wasn't about to sit out now, not when I could help my team turn this game around. My competitive nature told me I had more to give. I needed to push through, but my body already had decided otherwise.

With all the non-stop running, I had gassed myself. My reactions were sluggish, my footwork sloppy, my balance wavering. I knew I was tired, but I convinced myself I could just fight through it. Not but a few moments after waving my teammate away, I sprinted to the ball and tried to stop. My legs didn't care what I was trying to do; they wanted to rest. Instead of planting my foot and pivoting, I tripped, sending myself flying. Normally, I would have braced for impact, rolled, caught myself—something. I was just too drained to react. I hit the ground hard, all my weight crashing onto my shoulder.

Pain shot through my shoulder as I popped back up—trying to act as though nothing happened. I put a thumb up and tried to “soldier on.” Then I reached for my shoulder, which felt like it was on fire. I instantly knew something was seriously wrong. A teammate helped me to the sideline, and my wife rushed me to the ER.

The diagnosis was that I had torn my AC joint. I needed surgery, followed by a



Airmen at Dover AFB participate in a Wing Sports Day Soccer Match.
Photo by Mauricio Campino


long and grueling year of physical therapy. One moment of poor judgment, refusing to acknowledge my limits, had cost me months of recovery. I now have to carry a scar as a permanent reminder of what happens when you don't listen to your body. They say hindsight is 20/20, but now I know it also to be a brutal teacher. It's clear to me that not subbing out wasn't about strength or determination, but my ego. I tried to tough it out, and the ground showed me just how tough I really was.

This accident happened to me while playing soccer, but exhaustion doesn't only happen in sports. It can affect everything we do. If we decide to push ourselves beyond our physical limits, fatigue will slow our reaction time and affect our coordination and judgment. It can make even the simplest actions a struggle, and can turn tasks from routine to hazardous. Exhaustion can be detrimental no matter what we're doing.

The lesson was painful, but it stuck. There is no shame in taking a break when you need it. Strength isn't about pushing through exhaustion, but rather knowing when to stop. Had I stepped off the field that day, I wouldn't have spent the next year recovering from an injury that never needed to happen. I ignored my fatigue, and I paid the price. What will you do? 🍷

The Man Who Ran Through Fire

By SSgt Adam Van Lange



Many folk have heard of a man walking on water, but have you heard of a man walking on fire? The event took place in Florida, where the weather can be very unpredictable. One minute it can be stormy, the next it can be sunny. It also can be muggy, which means we often have fog.

Cuthbert is a professional firefighter who takes his job seriously. He not only likes to train, but he also likes to educate people on various topics having to do with firefighting. One night, before a group of 18 officers, Cuthbert was demonstrating one of their propane training aids. It was a small device that produces a good-sized fire. They were all standing around the clearing in the forested area, waiting to see a demonstration of how the fire protection personnel would respond to

such a fire using minimal water and equipment.

Cuthbert went through all the proper procedures to get started. He set up an igniter box that continuously created a spark, then turned on the propane gas and listened to ensure it was working. We waited for the gas to ignite, but nothing happened. He shut the gas off and walked up to the igniter box to see if it had become damp. After determining the box was working properly, he thought the problem might have to do with the gas line. He went back to the tank and fully opened the valve. Still nothing. He went back out to double-check the igniter box, leaving the gas on.

Propane is 50% heavier than air, and will settle to the lowest available point. What Cuthbert failed to realize was that, on that windless night, the gas was lying near the ground, blending in with the fog. While Cuthbert was re-examining the box, his co-worker said "I don't think we..." BOOM! Fifteen feet in every direction went up in flames. Cuthbert

sprinted out of the huge ring of fire, high-stepping the entire way. Thankfully, there were no injuries, and the crew on standby just around the corner got to show their skills. Lessons were learned.

Following proper safety practices when working with propane is crucial to preventing accidents and ensuring safe operations, especially in variable weather conditions. Propane is commonly used in industrial, residential, and recreational applications. In different weather conditions such as extreme heat or cold, its behavior can change, affecting its flammability and increasing the risk of leaks.

If you ever deal with a gas grill, gas stove, or any other equipment dealing with propane or any other flammable gas, learn from Cuthbert's mistake. Shut the gas off. Wait a few minutes. Don't allow sparks or flames into the area until it is clear, and you have corrected the issue. Always monitor propane levels in tanks, check for leaks, and follow manufacturer guidelines to ensure safety in all weather conditions. Finally, keep a water source or extinguisher nearby. 🌟



Home Fire Safety Checklist

Is your home free of fire hazards?

- ☐ Check electrical appliances for loose or frayed cords. Do not place wires under rugs.
- ☐ Check for outlets overloaded with plugs; including TV, computer, stereo, and printer.
- ☐ Install GFCI (ground fault circuit interrupter) outlets in your home; especially near sources of water like your bathroom, kitchen and laundry room.
- ☐ Use the correct bulb wattage for home light fixtures.
- ☐ If any appliances spark, smell unusual or overheat, replace or get repaired by a professional.
- ☐ Lamps and nightlights should not touch any fabrics (bedspreads, drapes).
- ☐ Electrical blankets are unplugged when not in use. Check for frayed or loose cords and any odd smell. If a problem is detected, replace.
- ☐ Supervise children around the stove and microwave.
- ☐ Candles should be out of reach of children and pets, curtains and furniture. Never leave candles unattended.
- ☐ Perform annual inspection of furnace or heating system.
- ☐ Space Heaters: Keep out of walking paths; Keep away from children and pets; Place away from beds, newspapers, magazines, and any fabrics, including curtains, sheets, tablecloths are not within 3 feet of space heaters; Unplug when not in use.
- ☐ Fireplaces: Keep the fire place clean; Cover your fireplace with a screen/ Only burn wood, as papers and other materials can escape while burning and ignite something nearby; The fire should be completely extinguished before leaving the room; Have your chimney cleaned professionally once a year.
- ☐ In the Kitchen: Keep an eye on appliances when in use; Make sure appliances are turned off and unplugged when not in use; When using pots and pans, use the rear burners and turn the handles inwards/ Do not wear loose clothing while cooking.

Make Safety a *Family Holiday Tradition*

By following these safety tips:

Trees and Decorations

Christmas Tree: Keep it well watered and away from heat sources.

Decorations: Ensure sharp or breakable decorations are out of the reach of small children.

Lights and Candles

Burning Candles: Place them on a stable surface, away from items that can catch fire and extinguish them before leaving the room.

Holiday Lights: Check the label to ensure they have been tested for safety, follow the intended outdoor or indoor use and throw out damaged sets.

Other

Working Smoke Alarms: Have one on every floor of the home and in every bedroom, test them every month and change the batteries every year.

Ladders: Select the correct one for the job and place it on level and firm ground.



USCPSC



Find more safety tips at **CPSC.GOV**

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