



Bridge Chat Overview and Importance

William Pitsenbarger is a Medal of Honor recipient known for putting “service before self” on missions, including going behind enemy lines to save lives. He exhibited the Warrior Ethos that Airmen must have to complete the mission. The Warrior Ethos means never accepting defeat, refusing to quit, and never leaving a fallen Airman behind. Making tough decisions under pressure is what we do as Airmen. Developing the Warrior Ethos within ourselves is what enables us to keep the mission first in the process.

Chat Reminders

- ▶ **Based on feedback from the field:** August 2019 resilience tactical pause feedback told us that our teammates overwhelmingly want continued, sustained and consistent opportunities to talk with their leaders.
- ▶ **Leaders have flexibility.** HQ ACC provides the topic, but the timing, delivery, and discussion questions are at the commander’s discretion.
- ▶ **Cohesive teams built on trust and synergy are more effective**

Above all else...

Demonstrate respect for human dignity

Warrior Ethos

Bridge Chat Purpose: Create cohesive, high-performing teams that foster trust and connection through flexible and consistent small group discussions; in direct response to overwhelming feedback from the CSAF 21’s Resilience Tactical Pause.

Getting the Conversation Started

VIDEO: Watch this short story about pararescueman William Pitsenbarger: <https://bit.ly/3wLTDEd> (4:22)

“Our Airmen deserve to be led – actively led. And they deserve engaged leaders who are present and involved. Hands-off leadership is not leadership at all”

– CMSAF JoAnne S. Bass

Related Resources

The Warrior Ethos is best explained through the stories of Airmen who exhibit it. Captain Lance P. Sijan, Medal of Honor recipient, is a shining example of the courage, faith, and grit it takes to accomplish the mission and more. Watch his story here: <https://bit.ly/3fXT0AJ>

“Cowardice asks the question: is it safe? Expediency asks the question: is it politic? Vanity asks the question: is it popular? But conscience asks the question: is it right? And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular – but one must take it simply because it is right.”

– Martin Luther King, Jr.

Suggested Discussion Questions

1. How do you define courage? Share a practical illustration.
2. Feeling free to make difficult decisions under pressure is vital. How do you support your team in this way?
3. What’s the impact of each Airmen on your team developing the Warrior Ethos within themselves?
4. What impacts an individual’s propensity to choose courage in difficult moments?
5. Who is someone you think of when you hear the phrase “Warrior Ethos?”