



Bridge Chat Overview and Importance

September provides us with several opportunities to highlight the importance of 'Service Before Self.' This month holds the 20th Anniversary of 9/11, and marks the end of our time in Afghanistan. September 11, 2001 was a harrowing day, and in the midst of the tragedy was the courage and perseverance of individuals who chose to sacrifice their lives for the safety and security of others and of our great nation. September also marks the end of our time in Afghanistan. After 20 long years of giving so much to support democracy and to eliminate the terrorist threat, we are proud of our brave Airmen and their willingness to answer the nation's call to serve.

September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. Committing to mindfulness and intentionally putting the needs of others before ourselves play a large role in suicide prevention. We are grateful to our Airmen and families, who make a daily commitment to placing the needs of others ahead of their own. Your Air Force family stands beside you to support you through the good times and the tough ones. Seeking help is a sign of strength.

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

Service Before Self

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:

Afghanistan wasn't for nothing: <https://bit.ly/3jozyQy>

"The best example of service before self comes when you see your leaders, bosses, commanders and chief executive officers leading the way. Things flow better when it comes from the top down. In our lives, we all are leaders whether at home or work, so let's set the example."

– Master Sgt. Stephen Wilkerson,
437th Maintenance Operations Squadron first sergeant

Related Resources

Our "Ragged Old Flag" represents the millions of men and women who chose 'Service Over Self' regardless of the cost. This tribute features Medal of Honor recipient and retired U.S. Marine, William Kyle Carpenter: <https://bit.ly/3yHVtYb>

Military OneSource provides direct, 24/7 access to professional help for those battling mental health issues, substance abuse and suicidal thoughts. <https://bit.ly/3uz7Yn2>

"Make time to connect with our Airmen, Guardians, and families. Remind them that they are not alone. They are relevant, valued and loved members of our high performing team."

– Gen Mark Kelly, ACC Commander

Suggested Discussion Questions

1. What does 'Service Before Self' mean to you?
2. What does this look like in our daily lives?
3. September is the anniversary of 9/11, and marks our departure from Afghanistan. How do these anniversaries highlight the core value of 'Service Before Self'?
4. What are some things we can do to support those affected by these events?
5. Describe a time when someone else's decision to put service before self helped you?

Service in the military is a calling. No one raises their hand to get rich.

– James Wilson, Arkansas Air Force Veteran