THE LURE OF FRESH POWDER
In the few short months I have been your Commander, I have seen where the heart of our combat capability lies — our Airmen. People are our greatest resource; one we must ensure we are training, equipping and mentoring to produce mission oriented results. We must look after one another in the entire ACC family — active duty, guard, reserve and civilian. With the Year of the Air Force Family upon us the expectation is to deliver safe, secure and successful support to each member of the ACC team.

To be successful as a Command we must set and maintain high standards in all of our actions. We must not let complacency or “combat expedient” actions replace technical orders and written guidance. The standards remain the same from your home station to the front lines — we must train like we fight.

To do so, we must identify, and live by the basics. In our work, it is essential that we pay attention to details and take risk management into account in all of our actions. The same applies in our personal lives — where we must embrace our Core Values, regardless of the occasion. Finally, we should work towards both mental and physical fitness, ensuring a balanced personal and professional life.

It is a privilege to serve with you in Air Combat Command. I need your assistance as we focus on winning the current fight and prepare for the future. I believe your enthusiasm, spirit and professionalism will carry us forward — to deliver Global Power for America!

Bev and I wish you a safe and happy holiday season and a prosperous New Year — thank you for your service!
Recently, a SECAF/CSAF letter to all Airmen addressed their deep concern about Airmen who commit suicide. The letter emphasized an “all in” approach for us to support each other in getting the necessary help to prevent suicide. Their stand of “one suicide is too many” is meant to convey that we need to remain vigilant and must not let our guard down in order to prevent the next suicide. Preventing the next suicide requires each of us to be on the lookout for warning signs and then be willing to act accordingly using the ACE principle of Ask, Care, and Escort the person to the safety of mental health professionals.

BY LT COL CATHERINE HALLETT
Suicides in the military remain a concern! According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, suicide is the fourth leading cause of death among 25 to 44-year-olds in the United States with a rate of 19.2 suicides per 100,000. Historically, the suicide rate has been lower in the military than among the general civilian population. However, that all changed in 2008 when the Army had 140 suicides at a rate of 20.2 suicides per 100,000 soldiers. This trend was also seen in the Marine Corps who lost 41 marines at a rate of 19 per 100,000. The Navy had 41 deaths at a rate of 11.6 per 100,000 and the Air Force reported 40 suicides at a rate of 12.4 per 100,000. The Air Force numbers continue to be lower than the Army and Marines; however, the 13 suicides last year in ACC increased the rate to 16.2 per 100,000. As of September 2009, ACC has had 12 deaths attributed to suicide in CY09, which equates to a rate of 18.2 per 100,000, mirroring the civilian rate.

These facts underscore just how serious a problem suicide is, and should spark everyone to realize that if any suicide prevention program is going to be effective, it must involve all of us. The “all in” stance our leaders are promoting that even one suicide is one too many, must be adopted by all Air Force members – AD, civilian, and contractors alike.

The Air Force Suicide Prevention Program has been around since 1996. Its mission is to reduce the number and rate of active duty Air Force suicides by advocating a community approach to suicide prevention and to develop products, resources, and responses to reduce the impact of such factors. Overall, the program has been very effective in increasing awareness and reducing the numbers of suicides. Since its inception, suicide rates in the AF are down 28 percent. It provides the most effective tools possible and continues to explore innovative approaches to identify Airmen at risk and support commanders in their fight against suicide.

Two products that have been developed can be found at http://afspp.afms.mil. These useful tools are the Leader’s Guide to Managing Personnel in Distress and the Frontline Supervisors Training. The Leader’s Guide is designed to help unit leaders at all levels recognize distress-related behaviors, provide support to individuals within the unit, and collaborate with helping agencies. The guide describes a broad range of interventions, resources, and strategies for supporting individuals in distress. The Frontline Supervisors Training is a 4-hour workshop that provides in-depth training on assisting personnel in distress, as well as in suicide prevention. It can be taught by any experienced leader, educator, or helping professional. Commanders’ calls and weekly roll calls are also an effective means to promote programs and services and encourage Airmen to get help.

Central to any suicide prevention program is recognizing distress-related behaviors, both in ourselves and others. We don’t need to wait until a person has reached the threshold of debilitating distress before reaching out. We can’t always tell when an Airman is having emotional difficulties. Anxiety, depression, or problems with alcohol or other substances can often remain hidden from others. Angry outbursts at work, relationship problems, increased drinking, accidents, and mishaps can sometimes be warning signs. Sometimes a caring friend who will listen can make a difference. AF and DoD senior leaders recognize that seeking help is a sign of strength and can assist people to function at their peak at work and at home. Everyone needs help with certain aspects of their lives, and we should all seek help when needed and encourage others to do the same. We must eliminate the stigma attached to asking for help and realize there is no shame attached to offering or receiving mental health services. We need to recognize when an individual is clearly in distress and intervene.

The ACE model of Ask, Care, and Escort is easy to remember and act upon. Asking a person if they are suicidal shows concern. Caring about the individual enough to listen is being a responsible Wingman. And finally, stay with the person and escort them to the mental health clinic or hospital. That just might make the difference between life and death.

Statistics regarding the suicides in ACC for CY09 include:

- 100 percent enlisted, 100 percent males
- 60 percent 25 years and older (average age 26)
- 100 percent relationship problems
- 40 percent deployed 12 months prior — 1 was deployed
- 20 percent previous suicide attempts
- 2 percent pending administrative/legal problems
- 10 percent alcohol problems

https://afkm.wpafb.af.mil/CombatEdge
https://afkm.wpafb.af.mil/CombatEdge

THE COMBAT EDGE
NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2009
The following is a personal account from a former squadron commander, who has asked to remain anonymous:

“I almost died! In fact I came so close to suicide, I’m surprised I’m still around. I had so many problems and felt I couldn’t tell anyone how much pain I was in. Everyone thought I had it all together; when in fact, I hated my life. I kept getting more projects at work and with each additional duty I became increasingly worse. I tried to concentrate but lost focus. I was staying later and later at work, and then going home every night and drinking until I fell asleep, often in the easy chair in front of the TV. My wife knew I was unhappy but she didn’t know how bad I was. I couldn’t tell her just how unmanageable my life had become. I became remote at work, distant to my family, an absent parent to my children, and began having thoughts of killing myself. To this day, I don’t know how I ended up in mental health. I always believed that if you went to mental health your career was over. At the point when I thought I had nothing left to lose, I called to make an appointment.

“The counselor was incredibly kind, but made it clear to me that I needed to go to a hospital where my problems, especially with alcohol, could be addressed. She contacted my chain of command and my wife. My boss drove me to the hospital where I stayed for 28 days. It was there I learned so much about myself, my demons, and how to cope with the day-to-day stressors of my life. My leadership worked very closely with me. They reassured me my career was not over and that they had every confidence I would be back in top form.

“When I was released from the hospital, everyone worked with me to find the right balance between work and home. I accomplished more at work, had time to work out, and had energy left over at the end of each day. I went to counseling and AA regularly and soon felt better than I had in years. I began enjoying life again. I became a better commander and leader, a more loving husband and father, and most importantly, I am alive today.”

The above reflection illustrates the importance of suicide prevention and how the “all in” approach saved a life. If you or someone you know is stressed, don’t be afraid to ask for help. Call the Mental Health Clinic on base or Military One Source at 1-800-342-9647 for assistance. If you are suicidal, get help NOW!

The following number is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year:

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255 or 1-800-273-TALK (Veterans press 1)
The lure of fresh powder

The events of February 23, 2009, by TSgt Jon Griffin

It was just a few degrees above freezing that morning at June Mountain, Calif. My wife and I were planning to return home after a disappointing 2-day snowboarding venture. Cold nights, warmer than average afternoons, and a lack of fresh snow did a number on the terrain leaving the existing trails an icy, slushy mess and a disheartening end to our final trip of the season.

As we stepped outside to begin loading up the car, we were stopped dead in our tracks by a scene of pure beauty. The previous night’s snowfall had been unexpected; and the surrounding area was blanketed with a foot of fresh powder. The thought of leaving was quickly replaced with, “How fast can we get ready?” Ten minutes later we were on the road.

Arriving at the base of the mountain, we were surprised to discover an almost empty parking lot. In fact, on the first chair ride to the top of the mountain, I counted only three fresh tracks on the hill below. I have boarded this mountain several times the year before and have never seen it this pristine and empty. Only 100 yards to go and we will be carving our own trails!

Shortly after pushing off the chair lift, I discovered the true extent to how much snow had accumulated. I was buried up to my shins. Twenty years of experience reminded me that speed, control, and endurance were essential when plowing through snow this deep. My wife, however, was not as versed in these conditions, and I knew she was going to be in for a rough day. We may have made it 5 feet before she went down, and 40 minutes later we arrived at chair lift number four. The nice part about June Mountain is once you make it to chair four all the runs from that point funnel right back to it. This gave me the opportunity to catch three or four runs without losing her in the process.

Although it was exhilarating jamming down the mountain in a cloud of white, I was quickly overcome by muscle fatigue in my right leg. When you are blessed with the opportunity to experience un-groomed trails you learn to shift more of your weight to your trailing leg in order to keep the nose of your board up. This constant battle can be very taxing on the quadriceps; and if you let up just a little bit to relax your muscles, you are going to take a dive. I was only about an hour into my day when I succumbed to fatigue; and after a couple of minor wipe outs, I decided it was time to take a breather for a little while.

Meeting up with my wife again, we decided to head for a nearby food shack to relax and take in the sights. She was already burnt out from the constant struggle of trying to get back up after each spill and noted her wrists, knees, and butt had enough torment for the day. I, on the other hand, got my second wind and was ready for another round. Feeling good and rested, I made my way to the chair lift and was quickly whisked off towards the summit. About halfway through my first run, the burning sensation in my muscles returned, and I was forced to sit a minute. Realizing the stress I was putting on my legs from the hard turns, I opted for cruising down the powdery slope in wider S-turns. This did the trick, and I was once again focused on having a good time. After another hour of riding, a complete loss of feeling in my legs and a few more face plants, I finally came to...
my senses and decided I’d better leave while I was still intact.

Discovering my half frozen and slightly irritated wife still sitting on the deck of the food shack, I broke the news that I’d had enough and we’d better hit the road. During our 3-hour exhibition, the snow crew had finally gotten around to grooming the trails that led to the lodge. My wife was able to execute her “falling leaf” form of snowboarding and was back on her feet with confidence. I, too, welcomed the opportunity to relax my muscles and began the slow, but peaceful decent. On the way down, it finally occurred to me that the temperature had increased dramatically. The sun was out in full force, and the trail was a bit slushy in places. After cresting a small hill, I slowed up near a shaded patch to see if my wife was still behind me. Completely off guard, the back edge of my board caught a ridge in the recently formed ice. My helmet impacted the hardened ground with enough ferocity to send my goggles flying. I don’t know how to completely explain what I was feeling shortly after the fall other than describing it as an eerie sense of serenity. I recall looking up at the chairs on the lift methodically passing by with no interjecting audible sounds. The sight of other skiers on the chair lift must have struck a chord, because my first reaction was to sit up, and that’s when I got sick.

The pain that followed was intense. I have always been hearted the expression, “feel like I was hit by a dump truck,” but to experience it was a different story. My initial thoughts were that I had broken something because of the dull pain reverberating through the bone in my upper left arm. Since I didn’t have time to react to the fall, I didn’t get a chance to put my hands out to break my fall. I landed squarely on my left shoulder and my head whipped back into the patch of ice.

The next explosion of pain came from my head. I have suffered from cluster headaches for 12 years, but my worst episode was nothing in comparison. I felt as if my head was an overinflated balloon ready to pop. To this day, I firmly believe the helmet I was wearing saved me from any permanent damage. If not death itself. Slowly, I returned to my feet, and after a minute or two, I was able to support my head. At this point, I knew I had to seek help.

The call back from the nurse both surprised and worried me. From the symptoms I had described to her, she told me I had sustained a concussion and that I needed to go to the emergency room immediately! She said I could potentially have swelling in my brain and needed a CAT scan to ensure I was all right. At the time, I thought, “I was wearing a helmet; it can’t be that bad.” Yet, unbeknownst to me, only a week earlier Natasha Richardson felt a fall while skiing, appeared to be okay, but ended up dying. She would still be here today had she sought medical attention. Fortunately, I was found to be okay.

In the end, I missed out on a week of work. I was unable to participate in any activities for 6 weeks, and I still suffer from chronic neck pain to this day. My physical therapist also explained to me that my injuries are going to stay with me for the rest of my life.

The constant neck pain will always remind me of what could have happened. Although, we can never be certain when we may have an accident, there were some actions that I could have taken to mitigate my incident.

First and foremost, had I responded to my physical limitations earlier in the day and took more breaks or cut short my first couple of minor spills, my muscles wouldn’t have been so exhausted. With any sport you need to be on your game all the time. If you let your guard down, even for a moment, you are going to get hurt. In my case, I relaxed and failed to keep my edge up.

Second, if I would have exercised some situational awareness, I would have realized the temperature had risen and that the snow would have melted in some areas and turned into ice in the shaded areas. This would have caused me to focus more on the terrain. I have been snowboarding long enough to know what happens when snow melts and re-freezes. Had I paid attention, I would not have entered a shaded area.

Finally, when an accident occurs that results in trauma to the head or neck, don’t be oblivious like me and not seek medical attention. There could be an underlying problem that requires urgent care. A helmet may cushion the blow to your skull, but your brain is still moving. The injury sustained from a sudden impact is caused by the brain colliding with the inside wall of your skull which, in-turn, causes the brain to bleed and swell. Bottom line, know your limitations and react to them accordingly. Don’t under estimate your surroundings or become complacent and always bring your “A” game. If you do sustain a head or neck injury, seek medical attention right away. I could be the difference between life and death.

Don’t let your next snow trip be your last.
For those of you that do not know me, I am an avid hunter. I hunt big animals mostly, e.g., elk, mule deer, moose, whitetail deer, and turkey. I have hunted in various states for the aforementioned big game animals and have been successful at taking a few species. However, there are those that have eluded me ... for now. So, now that we have gotten my credentials out of the way and you know I am not some safety professional writing about hunting safety from behind a desk, I want to share a couple of safety lessons I learned during two of my hunting adventures.
There I was 10,000 feet inverted communicating with the enemy. Oops, wrong adventure! But now that I have your attention, I do have a story with a happy ending that could have ended badly if the chain of events had gone differently. I made my annual trek from my home at Langley AFB to my uncle’s home in Graysville, Ohio, for the 1-week gun season for whitetail deer. My uncle and I hunt on a retired teacher’s farm and are fortunate not to see very many hunters. There are other farms around this one, and the owners do let other hunters on their land. The farm layout is made up of rolling hills with hay fields on the tops of the ridges and the valleys are hardwood bottoms. The deer feed on these fields and seek shelter in the hardwood bottoms. The way we hunt on this farm is to place standers along the field’s edge and have a driver push the hardwood bottoms, in turn, pushing the deer out to the standers.

Early one afternoon I was a stander and the owner of the farm was going to push this hardwood bottom to me in hopes of killing a deer. This particular area has been a good one because I have always seen deer while standing there. I arrived at the spot I wanted to stand and I could see a large area. I wanted to make sure I could see around the trees and other obstacles, so I raised my rifle and scoped the area and found my shooting lanes. I was ready and waiting on the deer to be pushed my way when, all of a sudden, a gentlemen got up from behind a tree some 50 yards away and started walking off to my left through the trees. Of course, I saw him; but he did not have on any orange clothing (required in the State of Ohio). After he was out of sight, I thought to myself, ‘He is a lucky guy because if a deer had come between me and him, I would have shot in his direction’. I had no idea he was sitting there because I could not see him donned in camouflaged clothing.

The lesson to be learned here is that you should always wear orange when deer hunting. You never know when other hunters will show up in your area. The deer cannot see the orange, as some believe, they can only see yellow and blue tones. I have tested this theory by standing 10 to 15 feet from a deer. He could not make me out, but he could smell me and knew something was not quite right. The deer walked around me trying to figure out what I was for about 15 to 20 minutes. So ALWAYS wear your safety gear while hunting so you can return to your family safe and sound and have the opportunity to enjoy the woods another day.
the field to the dirt road I came in on. I wanted to see if anyone was still in the area and then headed to my truck for a much-needed rest. Once I was at the parking lot and saw there was one other vehicle in the lot besides mine, I knew they must have been the hunter to take the turkey.

I sat on my tailgate to reflect back on the experience that had just occurred. I came to the conclusion I was very lucky that I was not shot for I had made some very bad assumptions to put myself in that situation. The first bad assumption, it was late morning and I didn’t hear any calling besides mine, so I assumed I was alone in that area and could make a move on this turkey. The second bad decision made was to keep pushing the turkey. If the turkey is headed in the other direction, he will keep going in that direction because you are following him. A hunter should pick a spot to set up close to him, call a few times, and shut up so the turkey will come to you. You’ll be more successful and a lot safer if you stay put in your area – especially on public land. Please learn from my mistakes and not your own. Hunt safe, wear all of your safety gear, and know your surroundings. This should help you enjoy the outdoors for many years to come.
My safety-related story dates back several winters, sometime in February, while stationed at Yokota Air Base, Japan. As a C-5 crew chief (aircraft maintenance craftsman), one of my duties is to walk the upper surface of the wings to inspect for missing panels or fasteners, corrosion, or any signs of damage that may have occurred during flight.

On this particular night in February, I was dropped off alone to perform a preflight inspection—which included walking the wings—on a transient C-5 on the other side of the runway in an area without airfield floodlighting (ballpark lights). The ambient temperature was 33 to 34 degrees Fahrenheit, just above freezing. The air was moist and wintery-like, although not particularly cold.

In order to gain access to the upper wing surface on a C-5, a common piece of equipment to use is called a Variable Altitude Maintenance Platform, or VAMP stand. It's a large, wheeled stand towed to the aircraft and positioned using a tug or tow vehicle. It has a gasoline engine, similar to a lawn mower engine that drives a screw and knuckle assembly, allowing it to go up or down from approximately 20 to 50 feet. It's designed and manufactured in such a way, like a “goose neck,” to allow the stand to be positioned so that the lower portion is under the wing while the upper portion (platform) extends over the wing about 8 feet, to allow safe access to the wing surface without the user having to step on or close to the edge of the wing. (The leading edge of the wing is a “NO STEP” area.)

This is exactly what I did on the night in question. I positioned the stand and climbed the roughly 35 feet to the wing root area. Scanning the wing with my flashlight revealed a wet surface I believed to be merely dew and not much of a slip hazard, so I removed the safety chain and stepped off onto the wing. As my boot contacted the surface, my foot slipped from under me without warning, causing me to fall backward right back onto the platform. It did not occur to me the “dew” was actually frozen! While it appeared perfectly safe and routine, it never occurred to me to test the surface with my bare hand before stepping onto it. Since the ambient temperature was above freezing, the thought of the wing being coated with ice never entered my head. Lucky for me I was wearing the required safety belt and lanyard, which could potentially have saved my life had I slipped in a direction away from the stand.

The moral of my story is use extreme caution before stepping onto a wet, glistening wing or fuselage surface, regardless of the ambient temperature. If the temperature is at or near freezing, use good operational risk management and remove your glove and test the surface before stepping onto it. If ice is present, take steps to defrost the wing, whether by using a heater or deicing equipment.

DONT’ JUST WING IT
BE SURE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU’RE GETTING INTO

STORY BY TSgt JAMES A. DAUGHERTY | PHOTO BY SRA JONATHAN SNYDER
**Flight Line Safety**

SSgt Leloux, an Avionics System Technician, was the Vehicle Test Controller Operator for launch of the RQ-4A Global Hawk Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Aircraft. He completed his portion of the launch procedure and handed over control of the UAV to the mission operators (pilots) located on the opposite end of the runway in a Launch/Recovery Element via normal communication links. The operators issued a taxi command and the aircraft taxied out from the launch spot to the runway. SSgt Leloux proceeded to collect the main landing gear wheel chocks from the launch position of the UAV and noticed a considerable amount of hydraulic fluid had formed a puddle on the ramp where the right main landing gear had been positioned. He immediately notified his custodian, TSgt Jason Jones, about the hydraulic fluid puddle. By this time the aircraft had taxied to the runway Hold Short Line and was awaiting clearance to enter the runway for take-off. TSgt Jones radioed for Hawk Eye, the UAV chase vehicle, not to release the aircraft for flight or allow it to enter the active runway because of a possible hydraulic leak from the Right Main Landing Gear Brake System. A prompt inspection of the Right Main Landing Gear Brake System confirmed the presence of a hydraulic fluid leak from the right brake line. The aircraft was immediately shut down and the mission was canceled. His actions prevented any number of scenarios from occurring – aircraft departure from a controlled surface, brake fire, or a catastrophic loss of an aircraft valued at over $35M dollars. SSgt Leloux’s situational awareness, and quick actions during this launch are commendable and worthy of this recognition.

**Aircrew Safety**

Tiger 29 departed Davis-Monthan AFB for a 2.5-hour B-1 ferry flight to Ellsworth AFB after a critical capability-enhancement modification. On takeoff roll, Tiger 29 experienced an anti-skid system caution light. The crew continued to Ellsworth where they planned to burn down fuel and land lighter using modified brake application procedures to prevent wheel lockup. During cruise, they also discovered unusual cabin pressurization indications with the cabin pressure reading over 10K MSL above FL210. The crew requested a descent and flew lower than planned, keeping cabin pressure within limits. Compounding the situation, they had a SEF/SIS system malfunction leading to limited aircraft maneuverability. Upon arrival to the local area, the crew seamlessly coordinated entry into a local MOA to burn down fuel. Meanwhile, an IFE at Ellsworth closed the single runway. Tiger 29 immediately stopped burning down fuel and transitioned to max endurance holding. After an hour of max enduring and near divert fuel, Tiger 29 coordinated for an unplanned air refueling, picking their way through more thunderstorms to get to the tanker. Approaching contact position, they experienced an electric system and CSD caution light. The crew immediately took corrective action and decoupled the CSD, shutting down a primary generator. During refueling, the airfield was re-opened. Tiger 29 was in a 30-mile descent to Ellsworth when the GSO radioed lightning within 5 nm of the field. The crew adjusted divert fuel calculations to account for weather deviations and the lower cabin pressure altitude limits and diverted to Minot AFB. The crew declared an IFE and successfully landed near min fuel at an unfamiliar field, down one generator, inop anti-skid, and with reduced maneuverability after a 4.7-hr sortie and safely recovered a $287M asset.

**Pilot Safety**

Capt Sacks demonstrated unparalleled skill and safety awareness while piloting an MQ-9 Reaper assigned to 432 QDet 1 (29 ATKS), Creech AFB, during a combat mission. During this mission, when US ground forces fired their mortars, Capt Sacks quickly radioed the JTAC he had provided the F-16s with his own location as the target coordinates. Immediately, Capt Sacks noticed the JTAC had provided the F-16s with his own location as the target location. Capt Sacks quickly radioed the JTAC and informed him of his error. The JTAC corrected the 9-line and the F-16s successfully dropped two 2,000-pound live bombs (Mk-84s) on the correct target. These quick actions prevented a second possible fratricide. Capt Sacks’ ability to recognize unsafe situations, and act quickly to defuse them, is a huge asset to his wing and the USAF.

**Ground Safety**

Mr. Joseph’s ceaseless efforts and dedication were recognized during the tri-annual ACC Safety Program Management Evaluation (PME) when the 98th Range Wing’s Ground Safety Program earned an “Outstanding” raking and 20 of his safety programs/processes were posted on ACC Safety’s Best Practices webpage. In addition to managing his own wing’s safety program, he also volunteered time to assist other wing safety staffs. He volunteered numerous off-duty hours as the single investigating officer for a Class B fire investigation and was recognized by the U.S. Warfare Center Commander. At the same time he maintained his workload at the 98 RANW and assisted three other wing safety staffs with over 200 work request reviews during their manpower shortages. Mr. Joseph developed a completely automated safety program, allowing unit safety representatives and unit safety representatives to access the entire safety folders. This system streamlined processes, eliminated duplication of work and improved accessibility by wing and unit safety representatives who routinely operate from multiple geographically separated locations. As the Safety Quality Assurance Evaluator for the second and third largest support contracts in the Air Force, Mr. Joseph developed a strong rapport with safety managers for both contracts and provided exceptional oversight and guidance on a wide range of unique operations pertaining to the 2.9 million acre Nevada Test and Training Range.

**Monthly Award Winners – August**

**Flight Line Safety**

SSgt Jonathan C. Leloux
9 AMXS, 9 RW
Beale AFB, Calif.

**Aircrew Safety**

Tiger 29
Davis-Monthan AFB
Ellsworth AFB

**Pilot Safety**

Capt Elliot A. Sacks
42 ATKS, 432 WG
Creech AFB, Nev.

**Ground Safety**

Mr. Joe A. Joseph
98th Range Wing
Nellis AFB, Nev.

**Monthly Award Winners – August**
Crew Chief Safety

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

TSGt Campbell assisted the BASH manager in hazing and harnessing a total of 10,388 birds, as well as removing a number of mammals, including all coyotes and beavers from the Beale flight line in an effort to reduce and eliminate bird and wildlife strikes. He has utilized data from the on-site avian radar to tailor the wing’s flight schedule, eliminating unnecessary flying aircraft during times of identified peak bird activity — protecting lives as well as a $26+ national asset. TSGt Campbell assisted in identifying a deficiency in the SOF’s bird radar system training program, and proactively rebuilt the entire training program for the SOF, as well as re-train existing SOF’s ensuring they were able to properly integrate the bird radar into daily flight operations. He led a regionally-based effort to reduce bird strikes off base by coordinating BASH working groups with civilian authorities at Sacramento Intl and Mather Field. His efforts significantly improved the wildlife abatement programs at both locations, which had regional aviation safety implications, beyond the scope of his AF duties. His initiative successfully identified wildlife attractants that were previously unknown and can now be effectively managed.

TSGt Campbell developed a new spot inspection program that identifies deficient areas that require corrections, and hold the appropriate unit fully accountable. His professionalism, innovation and attention to detail have greatly increased the effectiveness of the Beale AFB Flight Safety program.

TSgt Thomas E. Campbell
9 RW
Beale AFB, Calif.

Unit Safety

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

While handling an influx of air traffic as a result of clear weather following 2 weeks of dust storms, the CERAP experienced a catastrophic failure to their command and control capabilities. After validating seven of their eight assigned radio frequencies were rendered useless, they combined Baghdad and Balad approach control sectors and staffed additional controllers to assist with coordination. Utilizing one VHF radio, line controllers gained positive control of all air traffic over the central one-third of Iraq. The controllers quickly realized equipment failures, therefore initiated local repair actions with three on-base agencies. His can-do attitude and quick actions eliminated potential catastrophic failure of both MAC systems and prevented serious injuries from occurring to munitions personnel. Additionally, Airman Kluener’s efforts to coordinate local refurbishment of the MACs averted shipment to an off-base repair facility and reduced overall maintenance turn around time by 6 months. His prudent and frugal use of available resources saved the United States Air Force $83K in replacement parts, labor, and shipping charges. Finally, Airman Kluener’s technical expertise was crucial in the proper inspection and load testing of the repaired MACs. His superb attention to detail ensured both units were repaired in accordance with technical orders and were durable enough for strenuous bomb assembly conditions.

Airman First Class Kluener exceptionally contributed to weapons safety for the 509th Bomb Wing, 509th Maintenance Group, Whiteman AFB, Missouri. During a periodic inspection of two MAC systems, Airman Kluener diligently discovered the presence of several hairline cracks in the welded joints of the rail conveyor assembly tables and immediately initiated local repair actions with three on-base agencies. His can-do attitude and quick actions eliminated potential catastrophic failure of both MAC systems and prevented serious injuries from occurring to munitions personnel. Additionally, Airman Kluener’s efforts to coordinate local refurbishment of the MACs averted shipment to an off-base repair facility and reduced overall maintenance turn around time by 6 months. His prudent and frugal use of available resources saved the United States Air Force $83K in replacement parts, labor, and shipping charges. Finally, Airman Kluener’s technical expertise was crucial in the proper inspection and load testing of the repaired MACs. His superb attention to detail ensured both units were repaired in accordance with technical orders and were durable enough for strenuous bomb assembly conditions.

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**Flight Line Safety**

**AWARD OF DISTINCTION**

As the 28 BW BASH manager, TSgt Klukas aggressively led the wing’s most visible flight mishap prevention program resulting in an 87 percent reduction in bird strike costs this FY. He single-handedly led an out-of-cycle review of the wing’s BWASH plan, significantly upgrading key elements of the deprecation and migratory impact sections. He also planned and led the Ellsworth AFB BASH working group (a collection of 24 base, state, and federal agency members) activities resulting in zero reportable migratory bird strikes. An ambassador in blue, he led the Safety Office’s community engagement program by accomplishing three MidAir Collision Avoidance (MACA) visits and distributing updated 28 BW MACA pamphlets. TSgt Klukas was the Flight Safety POD for a critical aircraft mishap exercise for the Dakota Thunder ’09 Air Show ensuring the safety of over 59K attendees. He led Flight Safety’s participation in the Bomber Strategic Aircraft Recovery Team exercise resulting in zero flight mishaps.

He also updated the Wing Mishap Response Plan, aligning it with Emergency Operations Center requirements to ensure an effective and efficient response to future mishaps. He was the chief instructor for 15 dedicated crew chiefs during training. His vigilance was highlighted in his leadership of the spot inspection program – 86 spot inspections year-to-date and a 71 percent reduction in flight line safety violations.

**Pilot Safety**

**AWARD OF DISTINCTION**

Maj Larsen was flying a U-2 in a normal low-altitude training sortie at Beale AFB in FITS Danger conditions caused by the mid-summer heat. Approximately 20 minutes into the sortie, Maj Larsen, having just broken ground on the fourth track and go, was swiftly passing through 400’ AGL when the engine started to roll back. The loss of thrust quickly became apparent as it decreased rapidly pushing Maj Larsen against his shoulder harness. This was accompanied by decreasing N1 and N2 gauges and a loss of engine noise. He immediately made an aggressive push over to attain his minimum sink airspeed and selected engine mode SEC in accordance with the Low Thrust or Partial Power Loss checklist. He quickly made a turn toward low-altitude to get established on a segment of the flameout pattern in case the engine failed. The engine in secondary mode started responding to throttle inputs and a possible flameout was narrowly avoided. This allowed Maj Larsen to continue climbing toward a 2,100’ high-altitude overhead the field. He then consulted with his mobile to ensure all applicable checklist items were accomplished. As he approached his high-key altitude overhead the field he set up for a Precautionary Pattern. Reaching high-key, Maj Larsen reduced the throttle to idle and flew the Precautionary Pattern with textbook accuracy. He recognized that the runway was made and started to shorten up his aim point and safely recovered the aircraft.

**Ground Safety**

**AWARD OF DISTINCTION**

SSgt Kirby identified and corrected six facility safety deficiencies, helping to transform the squadron’s dilapidated facilities into a stable and effective working environment. He developed and implemented Lock Out Tag Out procedures for Air Traffic Control and Landing Systems (ATCALS) radar facilities. His actions corrected a 6-year safety program shortfall, and safeguarded four technicians from exposure to hazardous energy/high voltage equipment, and ensured the protection of over $8.4M in ATCALS assets. Ultimately ensuring safety of flight for 25,000 aircraft operations and 30,000 passengers. He also identified HV safety boards’ shortfalls at two ATCALS radar sites and immediately researched required safety board items and requisitioned them through supply channels. He implemented safety inspections for all 332 ECS work centers. During the 165-Item safety inspection, he completed a physical inspection of every work center and checked all section safety binders to ensure AF Form 55s, Job Safety Training Outlines (JSTOs), and other required items were properly documented and filed correctly. From his inspection, he identified 20+ discrepancies and aggressively worked with safety representatives to resolve them. Three work centers had no safety programs and he helped them create safety binders and JSTOs from scratch. He also conducted weekly safety briefings during squadron Roll Calls, ensuring “safety awareness” is at the forefront of everyone’s agenda. During the annual wing safety inspection, the wing safety inspector reported the 332 ECS had an outstanding safety program and lauded the unit’s Confined Spaces Program as “one of the best.”

**Unit Safety**

**AWARD OF DISTINCTION**

Our Security Forces Armors protect $2.67M worth of assets, account for 36,728 rounds of ammunition, and are the consequence for all weapons issues, turn-in, and zero mishaps. They ensured proper clearing barrel and no existing pre-fire plan for their facility. A work order was initiated. They provided occupational safety and health training to 76 SF personnel via the local order requests were initiated. They provided occupational safety and health training to 76 SF personnel via the local Job Safety Training Outline. Lacking documentation, the armory conducted validation training for 21 unit personnel on proper handling procedures of 1.1 explosives in just 407th Expeditionary Security Forces Sq. Armory Element, 407 AEG. Ali Base, Iraq.


Weapons Safety

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

During a review of Technical Order 11-1-38, Positioning and Tie-Down Procedures of Nonnuclear Munitions, SrA Glaze identified safety deficiencies in the current positioning and tie-down procedures for the GBU-28 on the MUNI-226 trailer posing the potential for a catastrophic weapons incident. The 11-1-38 positioning procedures did not allow for the munitions to be safely assembled on the MUNI-226 because the chocks obstructed the installation of the BSG-92 fin assembly. The technical ordering current procedures for positioning and tying down the munitions did not allow for the proper unloading from the MUNI-226 munitions trailer preventing safe installation onto the aircraft. To alleviate this problem, SrA Glaze investigated, researched, and tested new positioning and tie-down procedures for the GBU-28. She coordinated the new process with various outside agencies such as the equipment specialist, item manager, manufacturer, program manager, and weapon load crews. The GBU-28 weapon positioning was changed enabling the asset to be safely loaded and unloaded utilizing MUNI-28/E adapters on the MUNI-226 munitions handling trailer. The outcome of SrA Glaze’s dedication to the B-2 mission and the safety of her fellow Airmen resulted in a proficient and safe method of loading, unloading, and transportation of the GBU-28. Her keen technical ability averted the possibility of a major weapons safety incident and prevented damage to nuclear certified equipment. SrA Glaze’s procedures have been approved by the 509 MUNS, the weapon load training section, and quality assurance. An AFTO 22 has been drafted and awaits final coordination and approval.

Aircrew Safety

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

After initial takeoff, Hawk 61 started a right turn and felt a “thud” on their B-1 aircraft. Both pilots noted the illumination of the #3 EGT and ENG lights. Lt Col Grunden brought the #3 engine to idle. Within seconds, the #4 VIB caution light illuminated and he was forced to reduce another engine to idle. Maj Gerken began running emergency checklists. Lt Col Grunden accomplished his two-engine climb to altitude in the heavy, thrust deficient aircraft to prevent compressor stalls in his two engines. Maj Carignan assisted Maj Gerken with emergency procedure checklists. During the approach, the L BLEED AIR caution light associated with the two engines was illuminated and the aircraft uneventfully, preserving a $280M critical coalition asset.

Superior Performance

NINTH AIR FORCE
Lt Col Brian Toth 22 EFS Balad AB, Iraq
Crew of King 21 71 HQS, 23 WG Moody AFB, Ga.
TSgt David J. Travagliante 407 AES All Base, Iraq
SSgt Derek G. Martinez 506 CES Kirtuk RAB, Iraq
Capt Ruven G. Yanbrough 79 FS, 20 FW Shaw AFB, S.C.
Capt Michael J. Hardwick 506 CES Kandarans Airfield, Afghanistan
SSgt William R. King 62 ERS, 451 AEW Kandarans Airfield, Afghanistan
SSgt Christopher Arflin 379 EAMS, 379 AEW Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar
TSgt Mary Cruz 772 EAS, 451 AEW Kandarans Airfield, Afghanistan
SSgt Nathan R. Flison 362 ERS, 332 AEW Joint Base Balad, Iraq
Capt Kevin Cushalin 777 EAS, 332 AEW Joint Base Balad, Iraq
SrA Stacy M. Powell 332 EFS, 332 AEW Joint Base Balad, Iraq

EIGHTH AIR FORCE
Capt Keegan McConaughy Capt Allen Short
Capt Kathleen Menzina 763 ERS, 55 WG Offutt AFB, Neb.
TSgt David E. Payne 55 AMXS, 55 WG Offutt AFB, Neb.
TSgt Kevin L. Arrington 5 MOS, 5 BW Minot AFB, N.D.
940 Wing Safety 9 FW Beale AFB, Calif.
Maj Ross P. Francoeur 99 RS, 9 FW Beale AFB, Calif.
Capt Alexander DeManss Capt Joseph Musa
Capt Lyle Ostrander Landon Prochnow
Lt Landon Prochnow 763 ERS, 55 WG Offutt AFB, Neb.

USAFWC
SSgt Roger T. LaDoux 57 OSS, 57 WG Nellis AFB, Nev.
SSgt Torrance R. West 57 ANXS, 57 WG Nellis AFB, Nev.
Capt Kirk D. Adams Capt Keith R. Allenhoven
1Lt Eric Davis 57 OSS, 57 WG Nellis AFB, Nev.

TWELFTH AIR FORCE
SSgt Stephen A. DePugh 820 RHS Nellis AFB, Nev.
SSgt Christian R. Barnes 7 AMXS, 7 BW Dyess AFB, Texas

NINTH AIR FORCE
Capt Kathleen Menzina 763 ERS, 55 WG Offutt AFB, Neb.
Capt Alexander DeManss Capt Joseph Musa
Capt Lyle Ostrander Landon Prochnow
Lt Landon Prochnow 763 ERS, 55 WG Offutt AFB, Neb.
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TWELFTH AIR FORCE
SSgt Stephen A. DePugh 820 RHS Nellis AFB, Nev.
SSgt Christian R. Barnes 7 AMXS, 7 BW Dyess AFB, Texas
ACC experienced four Class A flight mishaps in the final 2 months of FY09. An E-3 experienced significant damage when the nose wheel collapsed on landing. A Predator crashed shortly after takeoff on a stateside training mission. We also lost one Predator and one Reaper on separate operational missions. Looking back at FY09, there are some important lessons worth repeating. Mission preparation begins on the ground. There is no substitute for a thorough knowledge of aircraft systems -- even more important with some of today's high technology gadgets. Finally, we can't overemphasize the importance of maintaining situational awareness. Knowing where we are and when we are vulnerable can be the key to preventing a fatal misstep.

Air Combat Command had its second year in a row of maintaining the best mishap reductions on record. Both FY08 and 09 ended with 13 Class A mishaps. Whereas in FY08 the command experienced 10 fatalities, unfortunately in FY09 it sustained 11 fatal losses. Motor vehicle mishaps are still the leading cause of Class A mishaps with nine fatalities and one Permanent Total Disability. Of the remaining three Class A mishaps two were drowning fatalities, one on-duty and one off-duty and the last mishap was a Permanent Total Disability where an airmen fell off the side of a mountain. As we begin a new fiscal year, now is the time to have all our airmen practice good wingmanship and stay vigilant to protect themselves, their families, and coworkers from harm.

We just finished another great year for ACC weapons safety. Instead of providing a bunch of statistics' we just want to say thanks for your effort and dedication. We know you saved lives and millions of dollars in valuable AF assets by performing your jobs in such an outstanding manner. However, as the old saying goes we “can’t rest on our laurels.” We continue to experience mishaps where individuals simply failed to follow guidance. It’s our number one causal factor and try as we may, we can’t seem to eliminate it. We challenge you all to find better ways to improve in this area. If we eliminated mishaps where failure to follow guidance is the causal factor, we could just about eliminate weapons mishaps altogether. Technical guidance was developed over years of trial and error and serves as our most effective tool against mishaps. If we’re waging a war on mishaps, without our most effective weapon, we’re fighting a losing battle. Thanks again and we look forward to continuing to work with you to save lives and resources.

**Flight Notes**

**Ground Notes**

**Weapons Notes**

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**Symbols for Mishap Aircraft**

- A-7
- B-1
- B-2
- E-8
- MQ-1/9
- F-4
- F-16
- F-15
- MQ-4
- T-38
- F-16
- A-10
- B-52
- E-2
- C-130
- AEROSTAT
- E-9

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**ACC experienced four Class A flight mishaps in the final 2 months of FY09.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aircraft Destroyed</th>
<th>Aircraft Damaged</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 AF</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>AFRC (ACC-located)</td>
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</tbody>
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**FY09 Flight**

- 1 AF: 2
- 8 AF: 6
- 9 AF: X 4
- 12 AF: X 7

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**FY09 Ground**

- 8 AF: 5
- 9 AF: 4
- 12 AF: 3
- DRU's: 1

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**FY09 Weapons**

- Class A: 0
- Class B: 1
- Class B: 0
- Class B: 0
- Class B: 0
- Class B: 0

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**Legend**

- Class A - Permanent Total Disability: Property Damage $2,000,000 or more
- Class B - Permanent Partial Disability: Property Damage between $500,000 and $2,000,000
- Class C - Lost Workday: Property Damage between $5,000 and $500,000

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**Symbols for Mishap Aircraft**

- A-7
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- E-8
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- F-4
- F-16
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