



www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

by Col Howard Stendahl, Command Chaplain, Langley AFB, Va.

Preventing Fitness Injuries

by Maj (Dr.) Anthony Beutler, Uniformed Services University, and Capt Justin Gray, Langley AFB, Va.

WHAT MAKES YOU STRESS?

by 1Lt Ryan "Tab" Seymour, 325 AMDS, Tyndall AFB, Fla.

REMEMBER FAMILY

by Capt. Shannon Collins, 8th Fighter Wing Public Affairs, Kunsan AB, Republic of Korea



On the Cover

MSqt Patrick LaDue and his voungest son, SrA Gabriel LaDue, had the opportunity to spend a couple of days together in Iraq as Airman LaDue was heading home after completing a deployment with the 557th Expeditionary Red Horse Squadron.

> cover photo by MSqt Brian Davidson

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THE COMBAT EDGE

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SAFET

A good friend of mine, Butch, used to tell me repeatedly, "Every day is a bonus." It was his common greeting. Was it possible he had an overly optimistic view of life? I haven't seen him in a few years, but his message plays over and over in my head. You have to love the power of positive suggestion; and I've used the line more times than I can count!

The following is just one of many examples of how the power of positive energy can have an impact on those around you. Have you ever met a person whose positive energy just lights up the room? Studies show that a person's heart can broadcast electromagnetic waves and they can actually be received by something I'll call your "energy radar." If you subscribe to the possibility of this being true, read on.



CMSgt Marty Klukas Command Chief Master Sergeant

It was my promotion celebration to CMSgt and I was carrying the once beloved "jeep." "DT" must have had his "positive energy cloaking device" activated that day because I never saw or felt his presence. I turned my head for one moment and the jeep was gone! He may have been stronger, but I was a bit faster and finally ran him down -- ultimately saving me a hefty bar tab and the shame of begging back the jeep from the local command chief. DT was one of those people who would frequently "white-out" your energy radar. He had the "every day is a bonus" attitude; he never gave up -- certainly not on the day he acquired my jeep!

Fast forward 2 years ... DT's vehicle was hit by an improvised explosive device in Afghanistan and his world was forever changed. Most folks are familiar with his story: He was read his last rights on three occasions; and his angel of a bride and son could only wait for their husband and father to bring back energy to their lives. Months later DT awakes ... he never gave up. His defining moment may have been when a nurse at Brooks Army Medical Center accidentally dropped the sheet covering the mirror that had prevented him from seeing what the fire had done to his face and body. Would Junior view him as a monster, or could he power through with the positive energy he used as a "weapon of goodness" all of his life? He never gave up.

Now fast forward 4 years ... DT and his families (including his Air Force family) stuck together through thick and thin. Over 100 surgeries later, he has many reasons to feel sorry for himself or ask, "Why me?" But that's not DT; he's the one motivating his teammates, whiting-out our "energy radars." He turns challenges into opportunities and is soon reenlisting as a wounded warrior. DT lives the spirit of "every day is a bonus!"

All Airmen are charged with technical, mental, physical and spiritual readiness. It's fairly easy to determine the technical and physical prowess of our warriors, but really tough to get at the mental and spiritual aspect, unless of course you "know your Airmen." Knowing DT made a difference in my life. He inspires those around him to look at the "bright side." Getting to know and investing in your Airmen is worth every ounce of energy. It can literally mean the difference between life and death. Every day is a bonus!



STORY BY COL HOWARD STENDAHL

nen the sun is out and you're in the company of friends and colleagues, when one has a line number upon returning from deployment or a remote tour and enjoying reunion with loved ones, life is good. When the time comes for an Airman to retire from active duty and look forward, with anticipation, to new experiences, it becomes another occasion to announce that "life is

Yet, for an increasing number of our brothers and sisters in Air Combat Command, in recent months, their decision was not for life but rather to end their lives.

Suicide claimed a significantly higher number of ACC members last year; elevating our rate of suicide to 22 per 100K of population, the highest rate of any major command in the Air Force -- higher than the Army, Marine Corps or Navy. The urgency of this concern can scarcely be overstated at HQ ACC as Personnel, Medical, Safety, Chaplains, and others work together for our Commander to find a healthier way ahead.

It became personal for me at a staff meeting a few weeks ago when a colleague quietly shared with me news of the tragic suicide of another Airman, only incidentally mentioning his name. My colleague had no idea that it was the name of a dear friend with whom I had served and that this unwitting announcement was like a boxer's blow to my body. The stunning news literally took my

breath away. Suicide became a much more personal loss that still haunts me and, at times, ambushes me with grief when I least expect it. "Would that he might have called me ... what did I miss ... was there a note?"

I have experienced the loss of a dear friend, seen the heavy grief of a family and a military organization left without a unique and priceless member. I am not a physician, and I remain unable to identify the pathology in a patient's mind and body that would lead to selfdestruction. I am not a social scientist or behavioral therapist who can identify trends in human interaction or markers of behavior that incline a person toward what might be their worst mistake.

As a chaplain, I tend to view human experience through a spiritual lens, and I view suicide as the total loss of hope. Indeed there can be psychiatric illnesses that drive a person to this circumstance, or situations in life that some hurting people see as insurmountable. From a spiritual perspective, I see it as despair. The word is literally from a Latin root – de-without and -sperare, to hope. There are even related words that help us understand further, such as spirare, which means to breathe. We know these words also in English, such as "respire" and "inspire," all relating, in my view, to "life is good" experiences that make us breathe deeply and feel inspiration. People despair and lose hope when, in their view, these experiences are forever out of reach.

So how can one maintain the joy in breathing and hope for what is to come amidst all the challenges and circumstances of life that drive an increasing number of us to bring it to an end?

First, experience teaches me that all the suicides I have studied have been committed in aloneness. People kill themselves when they are alone. I cannot recall an incident of someone in ACC taking their life in the company of another person. Whenever someone has confided to me that they are contemplating taking their life, I commit to that person that they will not be alone. If, in my view, they need mental health assistance (which is often the case), I will not leave them until they have presented themselves for that care. If I am certain they will not harm themselves, I will leave them only when assured they will not be alone and that there will be appropriate follow-up.

Second, from a spiritual perspective, community is key to mental and spiritual health. People find peace and security among other people. The darkness of despair and fear grows in aloneness. Those of us who have deployed know the confidence and peace of mind one has, even far from home and potentially under fire, knowing that we serve in units devoted to looking out for each other, for our "Wingmen." No one deploys totally alone, and lessons learned from previous conflicts teach us that units that train and deploy together serve more successfully.



Biblical writers have known this for centuries. The Hebrew word "shalom" captures the keys to knowing "life is good." Perhaps the most widely known word in Biblical Hebrew, with the possible exception of "Amen" or "Hallelujah," "shalom," usually translated "peace," captures more than merely the absence of war. It can mean safety and security, good health, and harmonious relationships with others in community. In our own way, in our AF culture, we teach and practice these very things. Core values are hardly new, but ancient truths remind us of the importance of each person in the community we share. "Life is good" together. Tasks are only half as difficult when shared with another, burdens less than half as heavy when borne with a colleague.

Heroes of our culture model shalom in sometimes surprising ways, giving us examples of facing challenges with the support of community, guiding us in ways of finding peace and coping instead of despair. They need not be Generals or Saints, but often ordinary Airmen performing extraordinary acts.

My hero is a Staff Sgt. named Matt. When things get dark or despair tempts me to go it "alone," his example inspires me. Matt served as an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) technician in the AF Reserve until the events of September 11, 2001. He asked to return

to active duty in response to the attack on our nation and served three tours of duty in Iraq. I admire EOD technicians greatly, as they put themselves at risk so others -- often civilians -- can live and work safely.

Matt was on his 184th mission, on his third tour, when summoned to the likely site of an improvised explosive device (IED). When others around were at a safe distance he employed all his robots and tools, but eventually found himself immediately over the device – and it detonated. In the explosion he lost his eyes, his left arm was blown off, and his face badly burned. He lay dying, except for the efforts of his SrA colleague who knew his self-aid and buddy care well enough to stop the bleeding and get him transported to an EMEDS facility, then to Balad, Landstuhl, and eventually Walter Reed, where his wife Annette saw him for the first time after his injuries. Though scarcely able to identify him for his injuries, she never left his side thereafter.

I met Matt at the Center for the Intrepid at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio. He became well-known there for his calm, gentle manner and courage despite his injuries. The Commander of AETC, General William Looney, pinned a Purple Heart and Army Commendation Medal on Matt at the Randolph AFB Theater in front of standing room only onlookers. The General was visibly moved as the NCO -- though once gravely wounded and now blind -- wore his Service Dress with such dignity for the first time with a prosthetic arm.

During that ceremony, Matt was assisted to the lectern where he addressed the packed auditorium. Matt spoke with amazing clarity. He said, "Thank you. Thank you for the privilege of serving with all of you in our Air Force community." He thanked the SrA who saved his life, all the EOD colleagues who serve so selflessly in a time of great challenge, and expressed gratitude for every person in our AF and sister services. He spoke to Annette and thanked her in front of everyone, that though his world went dark on that day in October 2007, she will always be the light in his life.

I wept for the admiration of Matt and his courage, along with all the others blessed to hear this heroic NCO. It was a community of EOD with whom he served who saved his life; a community of medical caregivers who restored him and continue to strengthen him. It was a community of faith who heard Matt and Annette renew their marital vows to each other a few weeks thereafter at the Randolph chapel, and a community of senior leaders who worked to promote him, justly, to TSgt prior to his retirement.

As I stood in line to shake his hand, I was deeply honored to know such a hero. From behind eyes now darkened by war, he smiled and said to another wellwisher, "Life is good."

Celebrate life. Celebrate the community of our Air Force. Be a faithful Wingman.

Life is good!



Preventing

In Today's Military

BY MAJ (DR.) ANTHONY BEUTLER and CAPT JUSTIN GRAY

njury prevention is a funny term. Like "global warming," "human performance optimization," and "political change," injury prevention has many different and sometimes completely opposite meanings to different people. But looking more narrowly at musculoskeletal injury, the statistics are frightening and clear. Too many people are too frequently hurt in the military. And as people train more frequently to meet the new twice-a-year fitness testing standards, the chances of a running or other fitness injury is even greater. Can't we do something about it?

Photo by: SSgt Barry Loo



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THE FIRST STEP IN PREVENTION

Musculoskeletal injuries are extremely common and costly in the military. The statistics are staggering. In the peacetime military (i.e., pre-2001), musculoskeletal injuries accounted for 50% of deaths, 50% of disabilities, 60% of clinic visits, and were the leading cause of hospitalization and lost duty time. In fact, more duty days are lost to tears of the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) than to any other single non-combat, musculoskeletal injury. Who knew that 3-on-3 basketball could look so much like hand-to-hand combat! But if musculoskeletal injuries are so common and costly, can they be prevented? The causes of injuries in basic training and other military environments are well documented, and offer several valuable lessons:

Lesson 1 – Don't Smoke. Smoking is one of the two universal, independent risk factors for injury. Smoking at least doubles your risk for musculoskeletal injury and it is an entirely modifiable risk factor. With a little effort on your part, your local Health and Wellness Center can help you quit smoking today.

Lesson 2 – Be Fit. Decreased fitness is the second universal, independent risk factor for injury. It's not just your heart that you hear screaming at you to get off the couch. Muscles, tendons, cartilage and bone need stressing to maintain their functions.

And they just don't hold up well when your "six-pack"

becomes "one-lump."

Lesson 3 – Stretching is not necessarily for everyone ... warming up is. We have studied stretching and jumping jacks until we're blue in the face (literally). Stretching prior to working out has little effect on injury rate and no effect on muscle soreness. This is probably because people at the extremes of flexibility (too much or too little) have a higher risk of injury than people with normal flexibility. Assuming that stretching improves your flexibility -- a big assumption -- what happens if you make every Airman stretch regularly? People who are less flexible may become more flexible, and that will result in less injury risk. But the people who started off normal may become hyper-flexible and, therefore, more prone to injury, thereby cancelling out any overall injury prevention. So stretching for the masses is out. However, warming up before exercise does help. Proper warm-ups are associated with improved performance and less muscle soreness. Increasingly literature shows that specific warm-up programs prevent injury when performed regularly and correctly. We do a lot of jumping jacks and pushups in the military and just about any way you warmup is probably better than no warm-up at all. But if we had a program that could warm you up, and in the same 8-minute period prevent 50% of all leg injuries, squadron PT might change significantly. To review sample injury prevention warm-ups, go to the following website and click on the Exercise Manual: http://www.usuhs.mil/fap/iprlprojects.html#adsoccer.

Lesson 4 – There are LOTS of Proven Ways to Prevent Musculoskeletal Injury. Of all the injury prevention data, the most widely applicable in the military is the prevention of ankle sprains. There are several simple things that can decrease injury risk: 1) Ankle braces and balance training to prevent recurrent sprains, 2) Replace running shoes frequently; every 6 months or every 300 to 400 miles, and 3) Wear stability shoes no matter the foot type. Research shows that prescribing shoes based on foot type actually INCREASED injuries in basic training troops. Implementation of these and other easy interventions will go a long way toward an injury-free military.

WHERE CAN I GO TO LEARN MORE?

The Injury Prevention Research Lab at USUHS is working hard to understand the best ways to prevent and treat injuries. The Injury Prevention Research Lab is a part of the USUHS Consortium for Health and Military Performance (CHAMP). CHAMP is pushing the frontiers of injury prevention, nutrition, and medical treatment for the war fighter. If you have ideas about injury prevention or treatment, check out USUHS Family Medicine website: www.usuhs.mil/fap/iprl.html

http://www.usuhs.mil/mem/champ.html.







What Makes You

STRESS

BY 1LT RYAN "TAB" SEYMOUR

onflict exists all around us. In fact, the military was built as a result of conflict. Without it, there would be no reason for the organization's existence. Within the military culture, there can be conflict that is quite stressful at times. Stress can be defined as physical, mental, or emotional strain, tension, or conflict. There are variables that can contribute to the stress we must endure on a day-to-day basis. These changing variables have a direct effect on how well we are able to do the necessary things for mission accomplishment, family welfare, or task completion, and still expect to have a little time to relax.

Stress can be a performance enhancer, but it can also act as a performance killer. As war fighters, we must ensure the stress we encounter is maintained at a manageable level. When we are exposed to an environment with a low stress level, issues of complacency, inattention, and habituation are likely to develop.



The opposite stands true as well. Our performance will begin to suffer when we have an increased amount of stressors affecting us. Channelized attention, task saturation, and negative distractions are commonly identified anomalies in high-stress situations. Our physical and mental performance will react to stress in a good way when we are under a manageable amount of stress, provided it's coming from a positive

You may be asking what would qualify as a "positive source" of stress. If you've ever played a competitive sport, you probably know exactly what I mean. Examples could be anything from the first tee butterflies in your golf game to practicing emergency procedures in the aircraft. If used in the proper manner, this stress will motivate you to perform at your best. We must channel it to get positive results. Here are a few other examples of positive stressors:

- Making difficult decisions (buying a new car or home; separating from the military)
- Taking a test
- Upcoming deadlines
- Enrollment in a rigorous course
- Completing a task while being evaluated

We must also identify the "negative stressors" in our environment that could invite poor performance. Generally speaking, this type of stressor would qualify as events that are out of our control. Here are a few examples to give you a better idea:

- Doing more with less
- Dissatisfaction with work environment/supervision
- Poor financial state due to suffering economy
- PCS cycle/moves
- Deployment of family members or co-workers
- Family Issues (marital/children/ death in family)



Currently, many people have increased amounts of stress on their mind and body that must be recognized. The precise physiological and others in this respect. If the response for an increase in the level of negative stressors is usually different from person to person. Generally, an overstressed individual will have drastic changes in behavior such as:

- Increased Frustration/Anger (short fuse syndrome)
- Interpersonal Issues
- Financial Irresponsibility
- Lack of Motivation
- Fatigue
- Defensive/Argumentative

As Airmen, we should be doing a daily self-evaluation -- for ourselves, as well as for the individuals we work effectively. We must use mental with on a regular basis. If you've been working in the same place for a our advantage to eliminate some of while, you probably have a good idea the stresses we are battling. Find

of the different personality types and a method that works best for you. what can push their buttons. It is critical that we take care of ourselves stress level of just one individual is excessively high, it could affect everyone in the crew or environment resulting in a potential disaster. We can avoid this type of event by implementing the appropriate coping strategies.

The first, most important, coping strategy is communication. We must create an environment where our fellow Airmen are comfortable addressing issues with their leadership. When this communication is lacking, the leadership connection will quickly become severed. Prioritization is another key to dealing with stress and physical coping strategies to

Would you rather hang out with friends or just have time to yourself? Should you go on a vacation or simply relax at home?

Regardless of how you decide to deal with things that stress you out, it must first be recognized. In order to succeed, use positive stress as a motivator, and reduce negative stress so that you can think more clearly. Moderating the quality (positive or negative) and quantity (too much or not enough) of stress we are dealt can result in enhanced performance. As William Ellery Channing once said, "Difficulties are meant to rouse, not discourage. The human spirit is to grow strong by conflict."

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A REAL LIFE STORY BY CAPT SHANNON COLLINS

hirty years ago on Dec. 29, my father forever changed my life, as well as the lives of his other family members. He took a shotgun and shot himself in the head. His death certificate reads, "Self-inflicted gunshot wound."

I can't tell you how many times I've heard people joke about something being so bad, "that I should just shoot myself."

As I hear songs like "Butterfly Kisses" and "Daddy's Hands," as I watch a movie like "Father of the Bride," that phrase, "self-inflicted gunshot wound," echoes in my mind.

I will never have that special relationship between a father and a daughter. I won't have anyone to walk me down the aisle or to celebrate Father's Day with. And it isn't because of a tragic automobile accident or a physical disease. It's because of suicide.

The American Association of Suicidology's Web site states that suicide ranks second as a cause of death among young Americans, age 18-24, behind accidents and homicides. It's the 11th leading cause of death overall.

In 2008, the Air Force had 38 suicides, which equates to 11 suicides for every 100,000 Airmen. This matches the Air Force average for the past 5 years -- since the beginning of OIF. Of those Air Force members who committed suicide in 2008, 95 percent were men and 89 percent were enlisted. Army officials reported 140 confirmed or suspected suicides in 2008, a rate of 20 per 100,000 Soldiers, twice the national average. Army experts attribute the increase in suicides to the frequency at which Soldiers deploy.

In March and April of this year, I worked at the Air Force Mortuary Affairs Office at Dover Air Force Base, Del. It is the final stop for military men and women who die overseas, primarily those who sacrifice their lives for our freedom while serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. The remains are processed and sent home to loved ones for burial and last rites. I witnessed more than a few who came back, not because of an improvised explosive device or mortar attack, but from suicide.

My father served in the Air Force in the late 1960s as an enlisted aircraft maintainer here in South Korea. He served in a remote location during the Vietnam War and went into the war. His letters say he missed his family but that he was proud to serve. When he returned home from the war, he wasn't quite the same. He had lost many friends and may have suffered survivor's guilt, something many Airmen, Soldiers, Sailors and Marines face nowadays while serving back-to-back deployments. He was 30 when he shot himself. He was buried New Year's Eve. His sister found his body.

Those who consider suicide need to remember the family members they leave behind, the ripple effect they have on the lives around them. The AAS Web site states that the survivors of suicide, the family members or friends of people who have committed suicide, represent "the largest mental health casualties related to suicide." For every suicide, the Web site states that there are at least six survivors. Based on this estimate, approximately five million Americans became survivors of suicide in the past 25 years.

"Suicide, being such a low frequency event, is extremely difficult to predict," said Dr. (Maj.) Leigh Johnson, a psychologist and flight commander for the Kunsan Air Base Mental Health Clinic.

"More than 90 percent of all people will think about suicide at some point in their lives,

but very few will actually complete suicide," she said. "Suicide prevention is an area where the Wingman concept really is critical. Co-workers and peers, who see each other day in, day out, are truly those who are best positioned to identify when someone is struggling, when his or her behavior has changed. Having the courage to reach out to another Airman who is having a difficult time is the first and most critical step toward suicide prevention."

Each military base offers a range of support agencies with people to help, such as mental health clinic professionals, the chaplain staff, the sexual assault response coordinator, and the military family and life

"We have a range of helping agencies on base available to Airmen but these agencies are powerless to help until someone self-identifies or is brought in for help," Maj Johnson said. "It really comes down to looking out for each other and having the courage to access one of the support agencies if you're struggling."

Maj Johnson is well aware of the stigma that is associated with the use of mental health services among military personnel.

> "The reality is that 95 percent of the time, if an active duty member comes to the mental health clinic of his or her own accord, there is zero career impact," she said. "We'd prefer that people use the resources available to them rather than allowing things to snowball. It's when things snowball that they start to spill into work performance, and that's when visits to mental health translate into duty restrictions."

She also said that coming to the Mental Health Clinic doesn't mean that an individual is "crazy" or "broken."

"The Air Force recruitment system filters out those who have significant mental health disorders," Maj Johnson said. "So, the majority of what we deal with is problems in life that many of us face and can use help with from time to time: mild depression or anxiety, difficulties at work, marital problems. We know that it takes courage for people to walk through our doors; it's hard to admit when we're struggling and to reach out for help.'

> My father struggled for years over the effects of war, over family trials and tribulations. The family jury is out on why my father did what he did. We always will wonder. Photos and memories of him from others, his dog tags, a medal -- these will be all I ever have of him.



My sister, brother and I will never really know who our father was or what he could have been. No matter how overwhelming a situation can be, whether it is financial difficulties, receiving punishment in the military or personal life's twists and turns, people who consider suicide as the only way out should think of their parents, and the family and friends who may be far away but who care for them. Chaplains, mental health representatives, co-workers and supervisors are there to listen.

For more suicide statistics, visit the AAS at www. suicidology.org or the Air Force Suicide Prevention Program Web site at http://afspp.afms.mil. Visit www. survivorsofsuicide.com for more survivors of suicide information or to join a support group. For immediate help, call a base chaplain or a staff member in the mental health office.

DECEMBER - JANUARY AWARDS OF DISTINCTION

Aircrew Safety



CAPT ROBERT HARMS & LT AARON DOVE, 335 EFS, 451 AEW, BAGRAM AB. While en route to an air refueling tanker, Capt Harms and Lt Dove's aircraft experienced multiple emergency procedures. When they attempted to connect to the tanker, the boom auto disconnected. Upon the second connection attempt, they lost the ability to transmit on their radios. With a fuel pump failure, low on fuel, depressurized, unable to transmit via radio, and intermittent radio reception, they executed a tower flyby displaying the NORDO signal. After a second flyby, they successfully diverted to Kabul. (Jan 10)

Crew Chief Safety



SSGT MICHAEL THOMAS & SRA WILLIAM HUNT, 379 EAMXS, 379 AEW, AL UDEID. During their search for engine inlet plugs, they discovered what appeared to be water, but was actually jet fuel (JP-8) spraying in all directions from a loose line. They immediately notified a crew working on an adjacent parked B-1 and called the production superintendent and the maintenance operations center. Their quick and decisive actions prevented JP-8 from migrating to the nearby B-1 bombers, potentially saving their aircraft, their 22K of ordnance and the lives of maintenance personnel. (Dec 09)

SSGT STEVEN H. JORGENSEN, 9 AMXS, 9 RW, BEALE AFB CA. Upon inspection of an aft fuselage section, SSgt Jorgensen identified a severely burnt wire stemming from a large wire harness. Tracing the wire harness to the external power receptacle inside the aft fuselage, he realized there were personnel on the aircraft with power applied ready to perform ops checks. He immediately instructed them to power down the aircraft. Maintenance supervision was informed of the anomaly and the repair effort coordinated. His findings resulted in initiation of an AFTO Form 22. (Jan 10)

Flight Line Safety ————



MSGT MATTHEW SMITH & SSGT RACHEL CAZIER, 407 AEG, ALI BASE. MSgt Smith and SSgt Cazier were driving along the runway when their vehicle was struck with incoming enemy rounds. They took cover, noted the position and directed civilian and military workers to the nearest shelter. Once the attack subsided, Post Attack Reconnaissance teams were released and a cordon set up, closing off all traffic in and around the point of impact. The point of attack was reported and EOD summoned to assess the area. Their prompt and safe actions created a safe environment. (Dec 09)

A1C SAMUEL S. CARR, 28 AMXS, 28 BW, ELLSWORTH AFB SD. During crew change ground operations, A1C Carr was connected to the aircraft and noticed smoke billowing from the right over-wing fairing area. He notified the crew who completed boldface procedures, while directing nearby vehicles to move out of the incident area. He assisted the aircrew as they emergency ground egressed the aircraft and safely evacuated the incident area. His timely and precise actions prevented major aircraft damage and preserved a \$283M national asset. (Jan 10)

TSGT KEVIN M. FERRARA, 332 ECES, 332 AEW, JOINT BASE BALAD (JBB). TSgt Ferrara identified over 1,400 fire and life safety deficiencies. His corrective actions prevented a potential catastrophe and provided safe living quarters for over 4,000 residents. He identified a major grease build-up in a kitchen exhaust system; instituting on-the-spot corrections with the on-duty manager and coordinating with AAFES management to conduct a thorough cleaning of the system as well as establish a reoccurring cleaning contract to prevent future occurrence. (Dec 09)

SENTRY AMU DAYSHIFT, 380 EAMXS, 380 AEW. Quick thinking and prompt action of Dayshift personnel protected the lives of 25 maintainers and 6 aircrew members during a storm which delivered the average annual amount of rainfall in just a few minutes with winds in excess of 50 knots. Their combined efforts safeguarded two E-3 AWACS aircraft and six LOX carts. They completely averted the loss of this mission-critical asset and ensured uninterrupted LOX availability for two aircraft. (Jan 10)



CAPT JENNIE A. YOUNG, 960 AACS, 552 ACW, TINKER AFB OK, While performing aerial refueling in an E-3 AWACS, Capt Young was notified by the boom operator that fuel was spraying from the #3 engine. She completed the "precautionary Engine Shutdown" checklist, declared an in-flight emergency, and executed a three-engine approach to landing without incident. Once on the ground, maintenance personnel determined that a pressurizing and dump valve and associated components had failed. Capt Young's superior airmanship and systems knowledge saved a \$1.3M engine. (Dec 09)

MAJ MATTHEW R. EDWARDS, 99 ERS, 9 RW, BEALE AFB CA. While flying a U-2 combat sortie in support of OEF, Maj Edwards experienced communication difficulty with the controlling agency. As the problem persisted, he lost the ability to transmit on every radio. With radar unable to hear any of his radio calls, he was able to ascertain that they could hear a break in squelch. Using this squelch break, he was able to work out a very basic communication with the controllers and recovered the aircraft without incident. His actions resulted in a safe recovery and prevented the loss of a national asset. (Jan 10)

Unit Safety Management

COMBINED EN ROUTE APPROACH CONTROL (CERAP), 332 EOSS, 332 AEW, JOINT BASE BALAD. While handling daily operations at OIF's busiest radar approach control, the CERAP experienced an unexpected communications failure. Controllers worked tirelessly, switching between available frequencies and utilizing airborne pilot relay of control instructions to ensure all airborne aircraft understood and complied with ATC's precise control instructions. During this extensive outage, the CERAP team ensured safe transition of over 70 civilian airliners and more than 200 mil aircraft. (Dec 09)

332 EXPEDITIONARY LOGISTICS READINESS SQUADRON, 332 AEW, JOINT BASE BALAD. After discovering leaked fuel from vents on two 200K fuel bladders, the Fuels Management Team had to devise a method of getting accumulated water from atop the bladders; determine root causes for the accumulation and resulting spill; and develop procedures to prevent reoccurrence at Balad while bringing awareness to MAJCOM and other deployed locations. Findings in hand, they developed operational checklist and stepby-step procedures, providing fuels operators the tools and guidance to safely remove the water and prevent reoccurrence. (Jan 10)

Weapons Safety

SSGT AARON L. TAYLOR, 407 ELRS, 407 AEG, ALI BASE. SSgt Taylor's acute attention to explosive safety resulted in 90 MQ-1B Predator OIF combat sorties without mishap. He tirelessly ensured all safety measures were met and taken while performing flight line recovery operations of five defective AGM-114 Hellfire missiles. His decisive actions mitigated any potential catastrophic loss of life and combat weapons systems. (Dec 09)

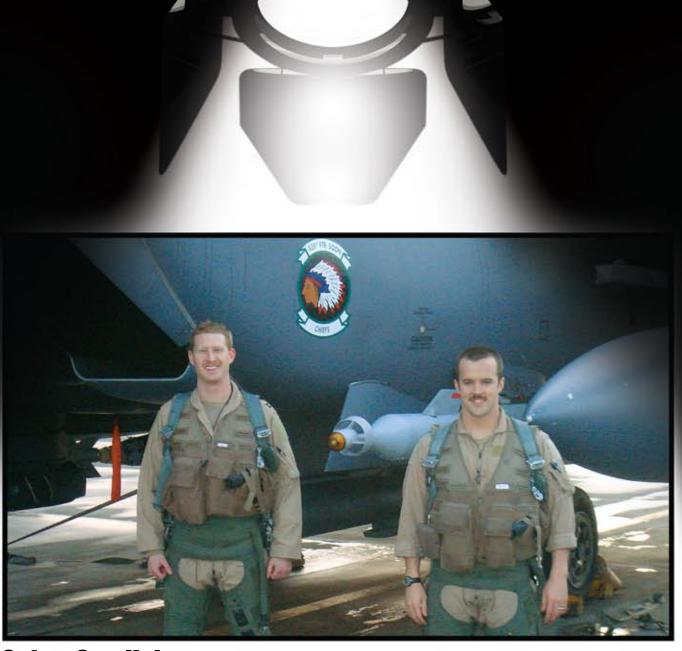
SSGT GERALD K. SEMCHUK, 451 EMXS, 451 AEW. During the reloading of one of the SUU-25 dispensers, a fellow crew member's hands slipped while handling a LUU-19 flare; the flare impacted the ground setting off the ignition timer. SSgt Semchuk immediately responded by calmly taking hold of the flare and holding the release mechanism firmly in place until the timer expired, preventing the flare from igniting. Munitions Control notified EOD of the situation. EOD immediately responded and confirmed the flare was safe and declared the situation all clear within 30 minutes. (Jan 10)

Congratulations to all winners!



THE COMBAT EDGE MARCH / APRIL 2010 21 https://afkm.wpafb.af.mil/CombatEdge

FY 09 ACC ANNUAL AWARD WINNERS



Safety Spotlight

Capt Justin Elliott and Capt Prichard Keely, 335 EFS, Bagram AB. Dude 01, a flight of two F-15Es, took off to support a Troops In Contact (TIC) situation over a US outpost, Combat Outpost (COP) Keating, in eastern Afghanistan. Dude 01 planned to remove in place Dude 25 flight, currently in support of the TIC. When Dude 01 arrived, the ground situation was chaotic. US forces were surrounded by insurgents and taking effective fire. The insurgents penetrated the outer perimeter and US forces were engaged in close quarters fighting. Dude 01 flight arrived on station as Dude 25 reached bingo fuel and an expeditious handoff took place. The Joint Tactical Air controller (JTAC) tasked Dude 02 to track enemy personnel inside the COP. Capt Keely, Dude 02B, found the insurgents and suggested a weaponeering solution of 2xGBU 38s. Dude 02 proceeded 10nm to the east of the COP to set up for their attack. In the turn to final, Capt Elliott, Dude O2A, received a master caution and Utility A hydraulic failure indications. Communicating this to Capt Keely, they decided to continue the attack: knowing the ground forces needed the support, and the Utility A failure would not affect the weapons delivery. Dude 02's successful employment neutralized the insurgents, buying the ground forces precious time to assess the situation and refocus their defense of COP Keating. Dude 02 remained on station to support Dude 01's attacks and act as a communication relay between Dude 01 and the JTAC. When the ground situation was alleviated, Dude 02 returned to base with Dude 26 in chase. Upon returning to the airfield, Dude 02 expertly managed their gas, knowing their hydraulic failure would close the runway, and the alert aircraft needed to launch to continue supporting the TIC. While holding over the field, they initiated a handoff to the launching alert. Now low on fuel and with no time to string the cable, Dude 02 landed opposite direction taking the approach end cable. The quick decision making of Capt Elliott and Capt Keely contributed to the safe return of a \$54M combat asset, and more importantly the saving of coalition lives on the ground. (Aircrew Safety Award of Distinction Dec 09)

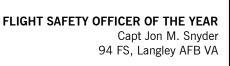


COMMANDER'S AWARD FOR SAFETY 8 AF. Barksdale AFB LA

WING SAFETY PROGRAM OF THE YEAR 332 AEW, Joint Base Balad, Iraq



WING CHIEF OF SAFETY OF THE YEAR Lt Col Charles J. Wallace 4 FW, Seymour Johnson AFB NC





FLIGHT SAFETY NCO OF THE YEAR SSgt Brandon M. Corwin 355 FW, Davis-Monthan AFB AZ

CREW CHIEF SAFETY OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD SSgt Scott L. Shipman 28 AMXS, Ellsworth AFB SD



FLIGHT LINE SAFETY OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD MSgt Jeffery S. Wilson 28 AMXS, Ellsworth AFB SD

WEAPONS SAFETY OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD MSgt Franklin K. Richardson 2 BW. Barksdale AFB LA



LOGISTICS SAFETY **OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD** Mr. James Laughlin

GROUND SAFETY OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD MSgt Marci J. Thompson 1 FW, Langley AFB VA



GROUND SAFETY SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD TSgt Tanja Orwig 4 FW, Seymour Johnson AFB NC

9 RW. Beale AFB CA



TRAFFIC SAFETY **OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD** 332 ECES, Joint Base Balad, Iraq



THE COMBATEDGE MARCH / APRIL 2010 23 22 https://afkm.wpafb.af.mil/CombatEdge

As of January 31, 2010 **FY10 Flight** Aircraft Aircraft Fatal Destroyed Damaged 1 AF 8 AF 9 AF 1** 1x2 12 AF **USAFWC** ANG ACC-gaine **AFRC** ACC-gaine

FY10 Ground As of January 31, 2010			
	Fatal	Class A	Class B
8 AF		0	0
9 AF	İİ	2	0
12 AF		1	0
DRU's	İ	1	0

FY10 Weapons As of January 31, 20		
	Class A	Class B
8 AF	0	0
9 AF	0	0
12 AF	0	0
AWFC	0	0

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 \$50,000 and \$500,000

(Class Description Effective October 1, 2009)

** Non-rate Producing * Fatality

= Fatal due to misconduct

Flight Notes

We've turned a new calendar year maintaining historic rates for Flight Safety — no new mishaps for the last 2 months. We applaud everyone flying, maintaining, controlling, and supporting our aircraft and crews. With that, the coming months tend to bring the "spring spike" -- an increase in mishaps. Complacency because of warmer weather and sunnier days is one of the factors. Don't get complacent when it comes to flight operations. Our combat successes stem directly from daily operational practice using Risk Management in all we do. Keep up the good work, but don't let your guard down to avoid the spring spike.

Ground Notes

Air Combat Command lost two Airmen in January 2010. The first was struck by a hit and run driver and the second succumbed to a suspected heart attack while performing a 2-mile run. Spring is fast approaching and with that, all the outdoor activities it brings. Practice sound Risk Management in all you do.

Weapons Notes

The weapons safety community is off to a very good start in preventing mishaps this FY. The "weapons safety community" includes all of you who handle explosives, or guided missiles, not just the weapons safety managers. We've had a couple of mishaps involving AIM-9 missiles with broke radomes and sheared umbilicals, but no other trends to key in on. As history has taught us, crew communication is paramount when handling missiles. Continue to be vigilant and keep up the good work!















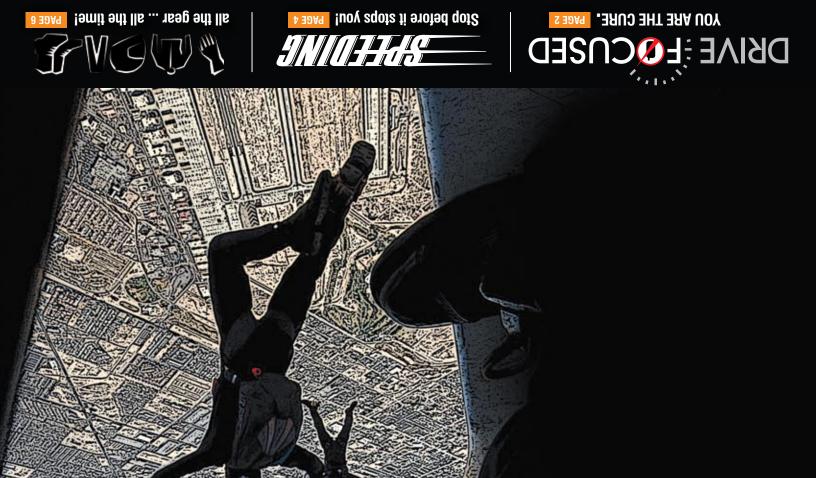


24 https://afkm.wpafb.af.mil/CombatEdge









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