THE MOBILITY FORUM

THE MAGAZINE OF AIR MOBILITY COMMAND | SUMMER 2022

Unified Skies:
AMC and NATO

Flight Safety:
Distractions

Airmen Aim High:
U.S. Air Force Celebrates 75th Anniversary

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A Flying Crew Chief assigned to the 40th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron touches the nose of a C-130J Super Hercules aircraft for good luck prior to boarding the aircraft for a mission supporting the Combined Joint Task Force–Operation Inherent Resolve, in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility, July 20, 2021.

USAF photo by SrA Brennen Lege

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18th Air Force Commander Maj Gen Bibb Talks About

Readiness, High Standards, and Getting Back to Basics

Maj Gen Kenneth T. Bibb Jr., 18th Air Force Commander, speaks to Airmen assigned to Little Rock Air Force Base, AR, and members of the local community during a visit to the installation, April 19, 2022.

USAF photo by Amn Isabell Nutt

BY MS. CHRISTINE WALSH, STAFF WRITER

Maj Gen Kenneth T. Bibb Jr. is the Commander of the 18th Air Force (AF) headquartered at Scott Air Force Base, IL. The 18th Air Force provides air mobility forces to Air Mobility Command (AMC) and combatant commanders by ensuring the readiness and sustainment of approximately 36,000 active duty, Reserve, and civilian Airmen at 12 wings and one standalone group.

Bibb came on duty 31 years ago and has served in a wide variety of Air Mobility platforms, from the smallest airplane, the C-12 Huron, to the C-21, which is used for passenger and cargo airlift. He started flying C-12s in support of remote long-range radar sites in Alaska, landing on mountainsides. Bibb later flew the C-5M Super Galaxy, the largest aircraft in the Air Force fleet, and has had the opportunity to fly many AMC aircraft, including the KC-135, C-17, and the KC-46.

Bibb believes the assignments outside of his comfort zone—such as serving as Commander of the 618th Air Operations Center and later as Director of Strategic Plans, Programs, Requirements, and Analyses at the Air Force Materiel Command—have helped to prepare him for his current duties.

Bibb and and CMSgt Chad Bickley, 18 AF Command Chief Master Sergeant, work to ensure that 18 AF Airmen are properly organized, trained, and equipped to be ready for the high-end fight. One of their main priorities is to prepare Airmen for contested global mobility operations, which can happen at any time or place.

"Our primary role is to advocate for our Airmen," Bibb said. "We think the key unit for our nation is the family, and the key unit for our Air Force is the squadron."

Bibb credits AMC Commander Gen Michael A. Minihan with helping to translate the National Defense Strategy for AMC. "He has made a big impact … and really focused us on our most dangerous threat, and that would be the Chinese military in the future," Bibb said. "While we hope to never have to fight, I think his focus on preparing for our most challenging fight has really made us better." Bibb noted that AMC has to be ready for everything, including natural disasters; conflicts with countries such as Iran, North Korea, and China; and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. "When you focus in on the worst-case and our most challenging scenarios, if you focus in on China, it has really helped us to get down to the level of detail that I think we needed to get better and get to the next level, to be ready to support our leaders and our National Defense Strategy."

Bibb said what he loves about the Air Force is serving with other highly motivated Airmen who are willing to sacrifice, serve, and even put their lives on the line for the United States.

"The only advice I have for my fellow Airmen is don't be afraid to set the bar high," he said. "I've never been in a unit with high standards and low morale. I think if you want to raise morale in your unit, the quickest way to do that is to raise the standards and make sure everybody knows that we're part of a championship team. The Airmen we have in the 18th Air Force really are that championship team."

“I couldn’t be prouder of the safety culture that our Airmen have, and I think a lot of that goes back to our wingman culture of looking out for each other and doing the right thing.”

– Maj Gen Kenneth T. Bibb Jr.

CMSgt Chad Bickley, 18th Air Force Command Chief, fist-bumps MSgt Joshua Motzer, 19th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron Specialist Flight Chief, at Little Rock Air Force Base, AR, Sept. 30, 2021.

USAF photo by A1C Isaiah Miller

That level of excellence can be found throughout AMC, Bibb added. “ When you think about it, who else is better in the world at strategical airlift or tactical airlift, aerial refueling, aeromedical evacuation, or for our GAMSS [Global Air Mobility Support System] response support, [and] on-the-ground or enroute support?” he said.

Bibb noted that the job Airmen do can be very dangerous. “Our job is to run to the sound of gunfire and deliver hope where our nation needs it. Balancing that risk is important, and we trust our youngest Airmen to do that. When we talk about mission-type orders and our Airmen being empowered to make decisions, manage risk, and make important decisions that affect the safety of all the Airmen around them, that’s a lot of trust for a 20-year-old or even a 53-year-old like me.”

Bibb explained that Airmen need to be experts in their craft and then be able to lead other Airmen after acquiring that expertise. “I couldn’t be prouder of the safety culture that our Airmen have, and I think a lot of that goes back to our wingman culture of looking out for each other and doing the right thing.”

In a 2020 directive, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen Charles “CQ” Brown challenged all Airmen to “accelerate change or lose.” “‘Accelerating’ doesn’t mean not doing the little things right,” Bibb said. “We have to do the little things right; we have to follow checklists. Accelerating doesn’t mean cutting corners.”

In the past 6 months, Bibb and Bickley have traveled to various locations to meet Airmen in person. “We listened to the stories of our phenomenal Airmen and the tough decisions that they’ve made at the front end of the fight to excel and support our nation,” Bibb said. “I’m so proud of what I get to see our Airmen do every day.”

When he reflects on the past year, Bibb thinks about the medics who were the last ones out of Kabul, Afghanistan, after deploying into Kandahar 3 months earlier. In the final weeks, the last few Airmen manning the hospital had to sleep on the floor and save all their water for the patients. They could not even brush their teeth or shower and had to keep a round in the chambers of their guns to defend themselves. “At the same time, they were completely focused on our patients, evacuating a record number after surgery,” Bibb recalled.

In another example, Bibb said that when the lead aircraft scheduled to airlift the last remaining U.S. forces out of Kabul faced a critical malfunction just before takeoff, it looked like they would have to tail swap. A Staff Sergeant and three Airmen leaped into action. “The mission commander called her [the Staff Sergeant], and she said, ‘Hey, Sir, give my team 30 minutes and we’ll have it fixed. We’ve got your back,’” Bibb recalled. Twenty-five minutes later, the maintenance problem was fixed, the airplanes took off, and the mission was successful.

Bibb also cited the Air Force Air Transportation Specialists who helped make Operation Allies Refuge happen. “It was just incredible for the problems and the challenges they dealt with on the ground, the care they took in taking care of our passengers, the care they took with our airplanes,” Bibb said. “I think about our defenders on board, keeping the crew safe, and helping deliver babies, and helping break up fights, and all the other little things that have to go right to make that happen.”

“As Chief Bickley and I get to look those Airmen in the eyes, I really take that to be the highlight of my career, not anything I did, just watching our Airmen succeed,” Bibb said. “It’s just an honor to be a part of the team.”

The ASAP Report That Wasn't ... But Should Have Been ... ***the Sequel***

BY MR. GORDON GEISSLER, UTRS AFGSC PROGRAM MANAGER

Closeup of an in-flight USAF F-15 based at Royal Air Force Lakenheath Air Base, England.

Photo by Rob Maclennan/SWNS.com

A few years back, a published article entitled "The ASAP Report That Wasn't … But Should Have Been!" was written by a program manager associated with the Air Combat Command. The article recounted a close brush between two Lakenheath F-15s and a number of skydivers, which occurred near the northern part of London, England. Luckily, for all involved, the skydivers and the aircraft narrowly avoided collision. Closure speeds were likely in excess of 400 miles per hour and video footage of the event, which was shot by one of the skydivers, showed that the closest approach was near enough to provide "clearly distinguishable" details of the F-15s. A subsequent investigation by the United Kingdom Airprox Board (UKAB) provided details of the event as well as recommendations on how to prevent additional recurrences.

Unfortunately, for those who do not peruse UKAB reports or steer aircraft in the United Kingdom, little to none of this investigative report was shared. Essentially, the F-15 aircrews played "we have a secret" even when they were made aware of the incident shortly after it occurred. Perhaps the aircrews did not intentionally withhold information, but rather they failed to use a tool specifically designed to disseminate this type of information to other F-15 aircrews, the Combat Air Forces (CAF), and the USAF as a whole. The information obtained and the lessons learned from the London incident, which were applicable to dozens of Mission Design Series (MDS) and thousands of aviators, were relegated to an obscure report within a foreign country and reached only a sliver of the aviation community.

As news of the close call slowly spread through the CAF by word of mouth, it eventually reached the ears of someone familiar with proactive safety and the Airman Safety Action Program (ASAP[1]). They asked: "Did the aircrews fill out an ASAP report?" When it was ultimately determined that the aircrew had not, efforts were made to capture their perspectives before their first-hand knowledge of the event was lost over time. These efforts were successful, and the events of that day were captured in the winter 2020 edition of the *Combat Edge* magazine as summarized previously.

Unfortunately, the "we have a secret" game is not limited to only one MDS, organization, or geographic location. Events and subsequent lessons learned are regularly withheld from the wider aviation community and ultimately forgotten. Opportunities to prevent embarrassment, injuries, and loss of life, as well as to save aircraft and equipment, are lost to time when ASAP is not used.

A similar type of information retention occurred within the Air Force Global Strike Command (AFGSC), where details of an incident made the rounds through AFGSC back shops, bars, and mission planning rooms over the years. It has become a story to tell young crew chiefs or new copilots upon their arrival to emphasize the government purchasing process, to prepare for unforeseen consequences, and to be attentive at all times. Similar to the F-15/skydiver encounter, no one was hurt, no damage was done, and several lessons were learned. However, unlike the F-15/skydiver encounter, this information was neither documented nor captured in an ASAP report. It is the "ASAP Report That Wasn't … But Should Have Been … The Sequel."

This story originated a few years back at Dyess Air Force Base (AFB), TX. They were experiencing a particularly cold snap of weather which, although unusual, is not uncommon or rare for central Texas. As part of normal procedures for those weather

[1] ASAP is intended to enhance and supplement safety programs and hazard reporting; it is not a substitute for appropriate leadership involvement. ASAP is an identity-protected, self-reporting system designed to encourage voluntary reporting of issues that increase risk to operations. ASAP augments existing safety reporting programs by capturing self-reported issues and events not normally disclosed by traditional hazard reporting and mishap prevention programs. ASAP involves leaders and Airmen in the mishap reduction process by capturing self-reported issues and events, analyzing resulting information for trends, educating personnel, and developing and implementing risk reduction or mitigation strategies.

A B-1B Lancer being deiced at Ellsworth Air Force Base, SD, prior to flight.

USAF photo by SrA Adam Grant

SrA Jae Sajonas, 9th Expeditionary Bomb Squadron B-1B Lancer Assistant Crew Chief, drags wheel chocks to a B-1B at Andersen AFB, Guam.

USAF photo by SrA River Bruce

conditions, B-1s are subject to a preflight dousing of anti-ice to remove snow and ice from the fuselage, wings, and control surfaces. As the aircraft was being doused, the fluid would eventually fall or drain down to the concrete ramp and coat the surface under the bombers with a thin layer, where it would reside until it eventually dissipated or washed away. Although not particularly slick by itself, the anti-ice was still a liquid and exhibited the subsequent reductions in friction that are associated with fluids.

Also, around the same time, B-1 units at both Dyess AFB and Ellsworth AFB, SD, were replacing their decades-old wooden chocks with new and "improved" chocks made of plastic and rubber. The new chocks were designed to last longer and were lighter and easier to handle. Unfortunately, and unbeknownst to anyone, the new chocks, which were made of different materials than the wooden ones, reacted differently when placed on surfaces covered with a thin layer of deicing fluid.

At Dyess AFB, after a B-1 was deiced and taxied from its parking location, a second B-1, that had just completed its sortie, was marshaled in to park. After reaching its final parking location, the new chocks were installed and the aircrew shut down the engines. With the engines and power off, the ground crew began their post-flight maintenance actions and the aircrew began to gather their gear before leaving the aircraft for the maintenance debrief. At this point, the pilot, while gathering some items, glanced up and noticed that the buildings in the distance were slowly moving farther away in his side windscreen. Startled, he looked again and everything in view—buildings, trucks, and people—were more distant. After a few seconds of confusion, the pilot realized that rather than everything moving away, his aircraft was actually sliding backward! It quickly dawned on him that the brakes and/or chocks were not holding, and his aircraft was slowly sliding backward like a giant sled on a snowy hill. He quickly alerted the copilot, and working together, they began procedures to perform an emergency auxiliary power unit (APU) start in the hope of getting power back on the aircraft and the brakes applied before sliding into an APU cart, bread truck, or worse.

At the same time, the ground crew also noticed the aircraft was moving, and they were scrambling to stop it. The pilot and copilot completed an emergency APU start and got power on the aircraft, which allowed them to apply brakes and stop the slide. The ground crew quickly reapplied the chocks, and after a few more checks to ensure the aircraft was finally parked, the aircrew shut down the APU and exited the aircraft. A quick check by the aircrew and maintenance showed that the chocks had been correctly installed, but the thin layer of anti-icing fluid on the ramp had been just enough to prevent the chocks from getting the necessary friction to hold the aircraft in place.

Shortly thereafter, the Wing Safety Office was informed of the incident. A brief investigation revealed that the new "improved" chocks had a lower coefficient of friction that prevented them from adhering as effectively as the old wooden chocks. After some debate, the determination was made that use of the new chocks would be discontinued, and the wooden chocks would once again be used until another replacement was found and fielded, which it was.

The first big snowfall of the winter season covers B-1B Lancers on the Ellsworth Air Force Base, SD, flightline.

USAF photo by A1C Corey Hook

The incident at Dyess AFB is just one example of many, and it serves as a reminder that the ASAP program is a tool that anyone can use to mitigate danger—but it only works if it is used.

Overall, the entire incident was considered a "win." The aircrew exercised proper emergency procedures, no one was hurt, and nothing was broken or damaged.

Nonetheless, guess who else was using those exact same "improved" chocks? Guess who else operated in a winter climate? Guess who else was deicing their aircraft? Guess who else had no idea that those exact same chocks had varying properties? It was the 28th Bomb Wing at Ellsworth AFB. The good news is that after several weeks, information about the new chocks made it to Ellsworth, and the AFB discontinued their use until newer, more effective chocks were acquired.

However, from another perspective, several weeks went by during which a known and potentially catastrophic hazard was unaddressed at a locale where the hazard had a higher probability of occurring. Imagine the fallout if an aircraft were damaged or someone was hurt at Ellsworth AFB, and if, during the subsequent Safety Investigation Board (SIB), it was discovered that a sister B-1 Wing was aware of the hazard, but the information had not been shared.

The ASAP program contained the policy, method, and process to share this information and address the problem. A simple ASAP submission by any of the air or ground crew members would have energized a system that could share the information throughout the B-1, Bomber, and/or CAF to inform others of the new chocks' interaction with anti-icing fluid. Perhaps a lack of awareness or possibly hesitation was the reason that this safety program was not used. A golden opportunity to address a significant threat quickly and effectively was lost. Again, it was another ASAP report that wasn't … but should have been.

To clarify, there was no intentional malice. The aircrews did what they thought was right, which was to inform the Wing Safety Office, and the Wing Safety Office personnel did what they thought was right, which was to start the bureaucratic process to remove the chocks from inventory. Notably, a few years ago, neither the proactive safety techniques nor the ASAP program concepts were well-known within the B-1 community.

Aviation, by definition, is inherently dangerous, and threats permeate every aspect of it; any minor issue could theoretically exacerbate the already risky business of flying. Minor omissions, human errors, or equipment failures could, and have, ultimately resulted in aircraft and equipment losses and damages, as well as human injuries and deaths. The incident at Dyess AFB is just one example of many, and it serves as a reminder that the ASAP program is a tool that anyone can use to mitigate danger—but it only works if it is used. The chocks incident should also be a reminder to think about the potential impact on aircraft safety as a whole rather than thinking myopically by limiting information to one unit or one locale. Use the ASAP program for what it was designed to do: share information, identify trends, and engage others. Turn ASAP reports that were *not* into ASAP reports that *were*.

DISTRACTIONS

BY MR. D.J. HERNANDEZ III,
AMC FLIGHT SAFETY

Capt Kyle Capko, Pilot, 19th Operations Group, Little Rock Air Force Base, AR, checks his instruments aboard a C-130J Super Hercules after takeoff from Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA, in support of Exercise Mobility Guardian, Aug. 3, 2017.

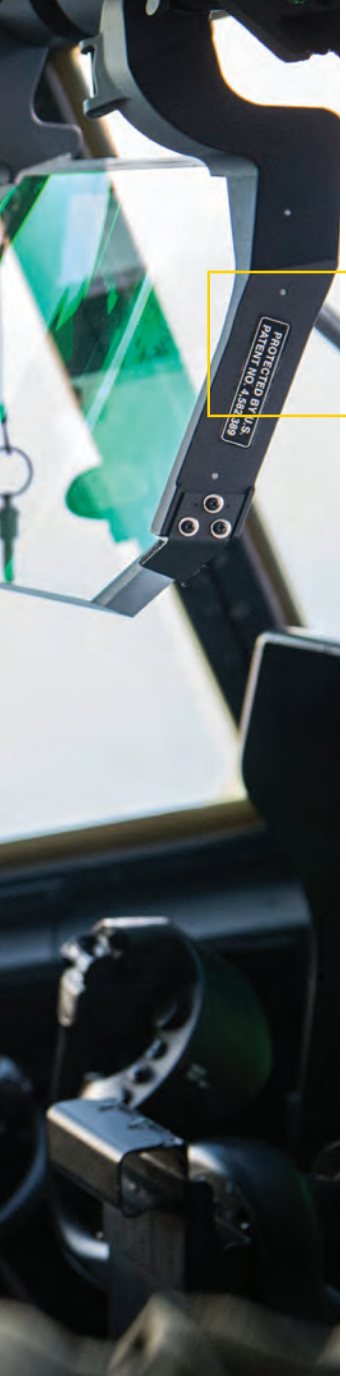
USAF photo by TSgt Gregory Brook

What is a distraction? Although definitions vary, generally, a "distraction" can be described as something that diverts full attention away from something else.

One of the simplest ways to explain distraction is driving while using a cell phone, which contributes to thousands of motor vehicle crashes, deaths, and injuries in the United States each year. For many, using a phone while driving is a hard habit to break; those little electronic devices have become integrated into every facet of life.

A gentleman was driving to work on the interstate—seemingly speeding—with one hand on the steering wheel while the thumb of his other hand was moving rapidly across the bottom portion of his cell phone's screen. One guess as to what he was doing at that moment … texting! Using a cellphone in this manner while operating a vehicle diverts a driver's full attention away from driving safely.

In the same way that distractions have the potential to severely compromise safe driving, they can also compromise flight safety—especially during critical phases of flight. In general, critical phases of flight refer to such aircraft actions as takeoff (when the vehicle leaves the ground) and landing (when the vehicle returns to the ground). The Air Force Manual 11-202, Volume 3, states that in the absence of Major Command guidance, critical phases of flight involve



Managing distractions calls for determining the actions required to resolve them. Working in teams can be helpful.

the following: terminal area operations, including taxi, takeoff, and landing; low-level flight; air refueling; airdrop; weapons employment; flight using night vision devices; tactical or air combat; formation operations (other than cruise); and all portions of any test or functional check flight or aerial demonstration.

Like motorists, when a pilot's attention strays from flying an aircraft, the chance of making a mistake increases. Distractions and interruptions may occur while flying due to air traffic control (ATC), head-down work, and emergencies.

Radio calls from ATC sometimes come at inconvenient times, such as at the beginning of the "before landing checklist" or while operating the flight management system (FMS). Such calls can cause flyers to lose their train of thought, requiring them to start their tasks again from the beginning.

Other types of distractions can come from the head-down work required of pilots. This type of work involves activating autopilot, setting the self-contained navigation system, and looking at the FMS for vital information. While performing these activities, a flyer's attention, no matter how briefly, can be diverted from items on the outside of an aircraft to items on the inside.

Lastly, dealing with an unexpected situation or emergency can serve as a distraction. Emergencies can occur at any time and be major or minor. Either way, an emergency—especially during critical phases of flight—must be resolved safely.

Then how should pilots handle distractions without diverting their attention away from items related to flying? They can utilize the lessons learned in pilot training on how to aviate, navigate, and communicate. Another effective approach is to manage any distractions.

Managing distractions calls for determining the actions required to resolve them. Working in teams can be helpful. For example, on a Mobility Air Force aircraft, numerous crew members are present to discuss and help with potential solutions. Having backup when distractions result in incidents is both supportive and encouraging. One crew member can fly the aircraft as another reads a checklist or answers a radio call. There is also the sterile cockpit rule, which prohibits the performance of nonessential duties during critical phases of flight to help alleviate any interruptions to flying.

Why all the managing? Managing distractions is essential in safely taking off or starting the mission as well as safely landing or ending a mission.

There is a reckoning point in dealing with distractions: can the crew member gain control of it or not? Completing head-down work, such as checklists, when a pilot is least task-saturated is an example of gaining and exercising control over possible distractions. Other examples of control include honoring the sterile cockpit rule and not becoming complacent with experience. Sometimes, because a crew has repeatedly performed the same task, comfortability kicks in; however, rules and processes must always be followed.

The same process applies to driving. Always follow the rules of the road for safe driving. Most U.S. states have some form of hands-free driving regulations that require drivers not to hold or handle their cell phones while operating a vehicle. Therefore, phone calls are best answered and ended via a vehicle's hands-free system in these states. Some systems can also receive and read text messages aloud. When vehicles are not equipped with such systems, some drivers safely pull over and park their cars to answer phone calls and read email and text messages. Yes, pulling over and stopping can lengthen travel times, but these measures can help to ensure safety by allowing the driver to exercise control over distractions. Hopefully, no other drivers are speeding on the interstate with their faces buried in their cell phones.

618th Air Operations Center—
Recent Support of Humanitarian Operations

BY MS. BETTY BARR, STAFF WRITER

Nearly everyone knows the Air Mobility Command's (AMC) mission is *Rapid global mobility ... Right effects, right place, right time!* But what does achieving this mission look like?

The 618th Air Operations Center (AOC) exemplifies AMC's mission statement through its unrivaled command of mobility operations. Located at Scott Air Force Base (AFB), IL, the 618 AOC is, in fact, the Department of Defense's (DoD) largest air operations center. The 618 AOC has been offering quick responses to global crises and humanitarian emergencies for more than 30 years. However, it does not let its impressive legacy lead to complacency. Below are a few recent examples of how the 618 AOC has excelled in using global mobility to provide humanitarian relief.

RECOVERY AND RETURN

On Dec. 6, 2018, six Marines perished when a KC-130J Hercules and an F/A-18 Hornet collided while refueling in midair, off the coast of Japan. The 618 AOC received a short-notice assignment to help the U.S. Navy salvage operations by transporting the Salvage Recovery Package from Travis AFB, CA, to Kadena Air Base, Japan. The 618 AOC sourced, arranged, and executed the transport of 221 short tons of equipment, including deep-sea search-and-recovery and specialized outsized equipment.

"Where a move of this type and complexity may have taken months, the actions of the 60th Aerial Port Squadron [Travis AFB, CA] members and our 618 AOC Global Channel Directorate System Director 'Bookies' decreased the move time to less than 9 days," explained Randy Finney, Division Chief, Global Distribution Channel Operations.

When the recovery operation was completed, the 618 AOC Global Channel Aerial Port Control Center sourced and coordinated the return mission, arranging for transport of the recovered human remains in coordination with the Air Force Mortuary Affairs Office to Dover AFB, DE. The fallen warriors were returned to their loved ones with dignity and ceremony.

PANDEMIC RESPONSE

The COVID-19 pandemic put the world into emergency mode. Since the onset of COVID, 618 AOC has led DoD pandemic response efforts. The 618 AOC has managed the global transport of patients, vaccines, test kits, ventilators, and other medical equipment to Americans stateside and abroad and to U.S. allies, helping communities to respond more effectively to a novel, unforeseen, and potentially deadly situation.

One noteworthy effort was the delivery of a large mobile field hospital in July 2021 to the Suriname Ministry of Health in South America, which was orchestrated by the 618 AOC and U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM). The hospital was donated to Suriname by SOUTHCOM to help local communities cope with

Airmen assigned to the 14th Airlift Squadron prepare a C-17 Globemaster III aircraft for a local sortie at Joint Base Charleston, SC, Jan. 14, 2022. Training sorties prepare the aircrews for real world missions and allow them to deliver rapid global mobility when called upon.

USAF photo by MSgt Joey Swafford

Airmen and Army Soldiers unload pallets of bottled water, Feb. 21, 2021, at Joint Base San Antonio-Kelly Field, TX. Joint Base San Antonio provided emergency response assistance to local officials and agencies in order to ensure the safety and security of the community during and after Winter Storm Uri.

USAF photo by Sarayuth Pinthong

the pandemic but will remain to continue meeting the medical needs of the Surinamese people.

DELIVERING WATER TO THE THIRSTY

In February 2021, Winter Storm Uri—reputedly the worst polar vortex to hit Texas since 1989—caused power outages and frozen water pipes. Millions of Texans had to boil their water before using it. The 618 AOC planned and coordinated the transport of bottled water to staging facilities throughout the state.

"In response to [Federal Emergency Management Agency] requests, and under the purview of [the] U.S. Northern Command, AMC Total Force Airmen have delivered nearly 700,000 bottles of water on 19 C-17 and C-130 missions over the past week," said Gen Jaqueline Van Ovost, then Commander of AMC. "AMC's Airmen are proud and honored to deliver hope to those in need, at home, or abroad."

These examples are just a few of the ways in which the 618 AOC has clearly demonstrated tremendous success in its recent humanitarian relief operations. Sadly, there will always be unfortunate circumstances that arise worldwide. Therefore, the 618 AOC will continue to employ rapid global mobility by having the right effects, at the right place, and at the right time!

618 AOC BY THE NUMBERS

- Brings together **800** active duty, Reserve, National Guard, civilian, and contractor personnel to support global mobility operations.
- Commands a fleet of nearly **1,100** mobility aircraft.
- Maintains **24/7** operations, working around-the-clock to best meet the demands of the mission.

Celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the U.S. Air Force

The U.S. Air Force has accumulated 75 years of proof that there is no limit to what can be achieved.

BY MS. TIFFANY L. TOLBERT, STAFF WRITER

The U.S. Air Force wasted no time in celebrating its vast achievements, kicking off its 75th anniversary celebrations on Jan. 1, 2022, at the Tournament of Roses Parade and the Rose Bowl Game in Pasadena, CA. There, the U.S. Air Force Total Force Band—made up of 75 active-duty Airmen-Musicians from 14 units—performed, and a B-2 Spirit from the 509th Bomb Wing, Whiteman Air Force Base, MO, and the 131st Bomb Wing, Missouri Air National Guard, roared over the parade, as it has for nearly two decades. However, on this go-around, the flyover initiated a year-long anniversary celebration.

The U.S. Air Force officially became one of the three military departments of the United States on Sept. 18, 1947, when the first Secretary of the Air Force, W. Stuart Symington, was sworn in. It had several predecessors before that point. In 1907, the U.S. Army Signal Corps established an Aeronautical Division to take "charge of all matters pertaining to military ballooning, air machines, and all kindred subjects." This division also had iterations as the Aviation Section of the U.S. Signal Corps in 1914, the U.S. Army Air Service in 1918, the U.S. Army Air Corps in 1926, and the U.S. Army Air Forces in 1941.

Several individuals are regarded as founders of the Air Force. Of these founders, according to the U.S. Army, Maj Gen William "Billy" Mitchell is considered the "Father of the Air Force." He served from 1898 to 1925 and advocated for increased airpower. In 1917, he commanded all the aerial units in France during World War I: "At the Battle of St. Mihiel, Mitchell commanded 1,481 American and Allied airplanes. There he demonstrated what airpower could do by massing an assault that sent wave after wave of planes to attack the Germans across battle lines, destroying their ground power."[1]

Another founder is Gen Henry H. Arnold, also known as "Hap," who designated the framework and created the conditions for an independent Air Force following World War II.

Since then, the U.S. Air Force has played pivotal roles in U.S. military wars, conflicts, and operations—with battlefields no longer confined to land or sea. These operations have included the following:

- Cold War (1947–1989)
- Korean War (1950–1953)
- Vietnam War (1955–1973)
- Operation Eagle Claw (1980)
- Operation El Dorado Canyon (1986)
- Operation Just Cause (1989–1990)
- Gulf War (1990–1991)
- Operation Desert Shield (1990–1991)
- Operation Deliberate Force (1995)
- Operation Desert Fox (1998)
- Operation Allied Force (1999)
- Afghanistan War (2001–2021)
- Iraq War (2003–2011)

Shortly after Sept. 11, 2001, with the start of the war on terrorism, the United States faced its longest war ever—an ongoing conflict against an enemy without traditional borders. The technical expertise, bravery, tenacity, and strength exhibited by Airmen in these operations cemented the U.S. Air Force as the most advanced air force in the world.

[1] https://www.army.mil/article/33680

USAF Thunderbirds perform at Columbus Air Force Base, MS, March 25, 2022.
USAF photo by SrA Jake Jacobsen

The U.S. Air Force also takes part in humanitarian operations, protecting the human dignity of others, saving lives, and alleviating suffering. These operations have included the following:

- Berlin Airlift (1948–49)
- Operation Babylift (1975)
- Operation New Life (1975)
- Operation Provide Comfort (1991)
- Operation Provide Hope (1992)
- Operation Tomodachi (2011)
- Operation Allies Refuge (2021)

Additionally, in August 2005, more than 80,000 Air Force, Air Force Reserve, and Air National Guard personnel carried out Hurricane Katrina relief operations, evacuating nearly 33,000 displaced persons and medical patients and transporting over 11,000 tons of relief supplies.

In 75 years, the U.S. Air Force has made many strides in defending this country's air, space, and cyberspace.

Strides have also been made internally with equity, diversity, and belonging. There have been many contributions by women and minorities,

In 75 years, the U.S. Air Force has made many strides in defending this country's air, space, and cyberspace.

including by the Tuskegee Airmen, the first Black military aviators in the U.S. Army Air Corps. The Tuskegee Airmen fought in World War II, serving as air pilots, navigators, bombardiers, mechanics, instructors, crew chiefs, nurses, cooks, and other support personnel. The Tuskegee Airmen were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in 2007 in recognition of their "unique military record, which inspired revolutionary reform in the Armed Forces."[2]

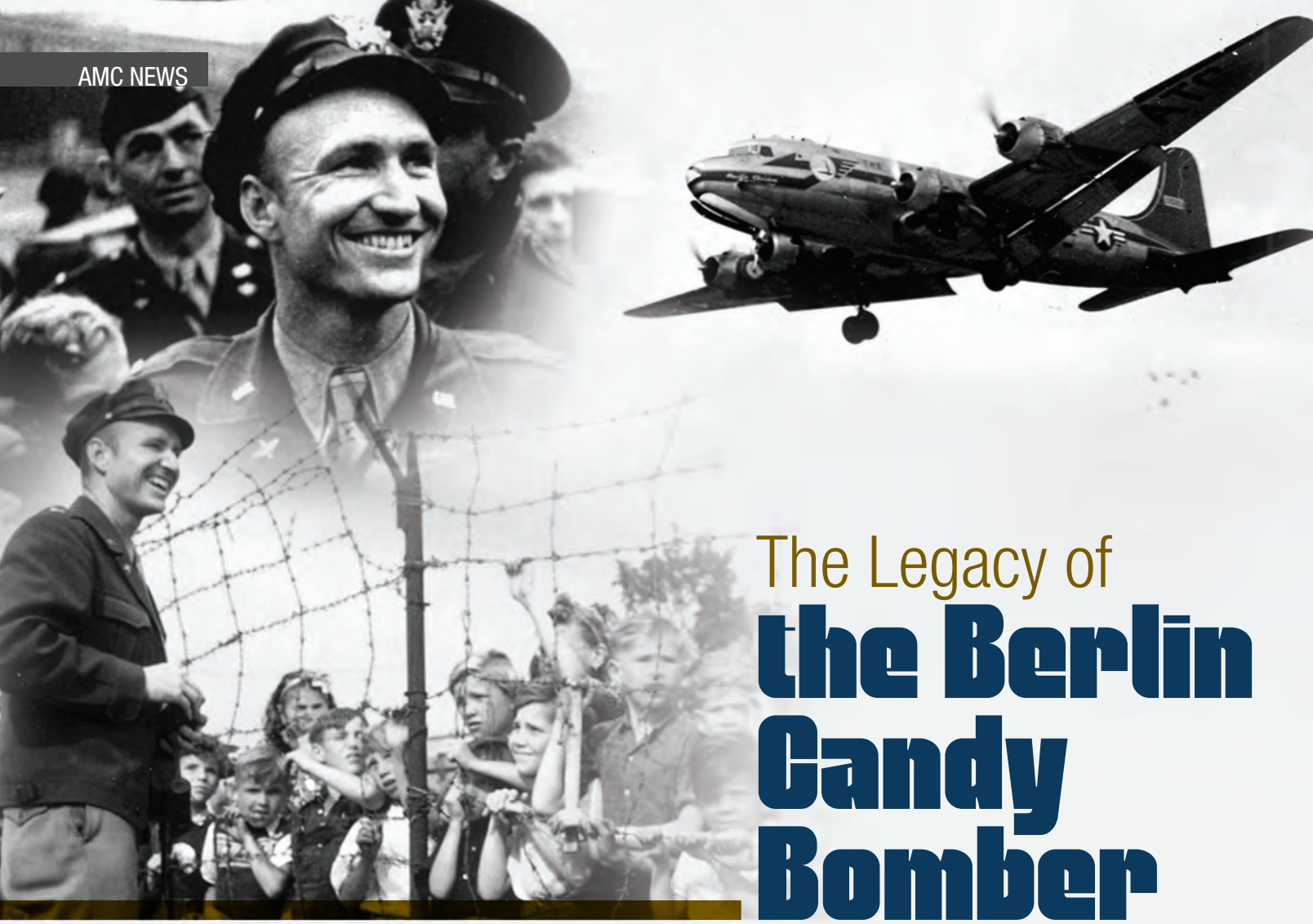
On a related note, SSgt Esther McGowin Blake was the first woman to serve in the U.S. Air Force, enlisting "in the first minute of the first hour of the first day regular Air Force duty was authorized for women on July 8, 1948."[3] Previously, she had joined the Women's Army Corps during World War II after her eldest son, a Lieutenant, disappeared while piloting a B-17 Flying Fortress that was shot down over Belgium.

The theme for the Air Force's 75th anniversary celebrations, which started at the January 2022 Rose Bowl and will include events throughout the year, is "Innovate, Accelerate, Thrive—The Air Force at 75." Various events are scheduled around the United States and worldwide to reflect on the history, values, commitments, accomplishments, and capabilities of America's Total Force Airmen, past and present. Today, nearly 700,000 active-duty, Guard, Reserve, and civilian Airmen remain the heart and soul of the Air Force, the second largest service branch of the U.S. Military. They continue the legacy and mission: "To fight and win—airpower anytime, anywhere."

Seventy-five years later, and the sky is still never the limit.

[2] https://www.congress.gov/bill/109th-congress/house-bill/1259/

[3] https://www.afspc.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/731078/10-achievements-from-women-in-the-military/



The Legacy of the Berlin Candy Bomber

BY MS. LAUREN SCHATZ, STAFF WRITER

The legendary Col Gail S. Halvorsen, better known as the "Berlin Candy Bomber" and "Uncle Wiggly Wings," passed away this year at age 101. He is survived by his five children, numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and the Airmen he inspired. Col Halvorsen impacted countless people throughout his life, and his legacy of compassion will continue to impact many, many more.

Halvorsen is best known for his leadership during the Berlin Airlift, a massive humanitarian mission to aid starving West Berliners following World War II. Conflict with the Soviet Union had resulted in a Soviet blockade that left 2 million residents deprived of necessary supplies, including food and water. The U.S. and British Air Forces orchestrated airlifts for more than 11 months, which were crucial to the survival of the citizens of West Berlin. This project was known in the United States as Operation Vittles.

Although Halvorsen, who had lost friends during the war, originally had mixed feelings about helping his country's former enemy, he was extremely touched by an encounter with a group of German children. Halvorsen spotted the children on the other side of an air base fence and went over to talk with them. According to Halvorsen, the starving children did not beg for treats from those in uniform like other children did but instead expressed profound gratitude for what the Allied Forces were doing. The children even showed more concern for the wellbeing of the Airmen than for themselves. They recognized the importance of focusing on the bigger picture—in their case, to yearn for a freer future. The young Airman's father always emphasized the importance of acts of kindness, so Halvorsen decided to share his two sticks of gum with the group. The youngsters shared the small portion of gum with no one attempting to get a larger piece. Halvorsen was inspired by this exemplar of humanity and promised he would be back the next day with more goodies.

Halvorsen soon began saving and dropping his and others' candy rations, via handkerchief parachutes, down to the children. He would "wiggle" the wings of his plane so they knew it was him approaching. Other Airmen then joined, and "Operation Little Vittles" was born.

Photo above: a souvenir parachute signed by Col Halvorsen.

Photo left: Retired Col Gail Seymour "Hal" Halvorsen, the "Candy Bomber" at a ceremony commemorating the Berlin Airlift in June 2019. The event on Clay Kaserne, Wiesbaden Germany, marked the 70th Anniversary of the Berlin Airlift.

U.S. Army photo by Paul Hughes

In honor of Halvorsen, as a Mobility Airman, think about how you would like to be remembered. Are you creating a legacy of which you will be proud?

With the childrens' eyes to the sky to collect the candy, Operation Little Vittles served not only as a continual act of kindness but also as a symbol of their hope.

Operation Little Vittles grew as Halvorsen's story hit American newspapers. It became a large operation thanks to the support of the Airmen as well as the public, who donated candy and sewed parachutes. What started with two sticks of gum ended with more than 23 tons of candy being provided to West Berlin. Halvorsen once said that although he had many favorite parts of his life, Operation Little Vittles was one of his most treasured memories.

Later in his life, he and members of the Civil Air Patrol organized the Gail S. Halvorsen Aviation Education Foundation to continue the inspiration of the Candy Bomber's legacy. The organization has since earned a Gold Seal of Transparency for its mission to advance aviation education, promote youth leadership development, and enhance community emergency response and humanitarian services.

In honor of Halvorsen, as a Mobility Airman, think about how you would like to be remembered. Are you creating a legacy of which you will be proud? A legacy is often the accumulation of many small deeds. By keeping that in mind, you can make decisions you are proud of when opportunities arise.

As leaders, you will make a difference in the current world and with the next generation of Airmen. Halvorsen carried his father's value of small acts of kindness. By staying true to those kinds of values, you can help carry his torch.

Editor's note: Col Halvorsen was a long-time subscriber to The Mobility Forum, *with records showing a subscription for over 20 years. Throughout the years, he would contact the staff and regularly update his address, always wanting to keep in touch with the activities of AMC Airmen.*

PINS and NEEDLES

BY MR. STEVE LOPEZ, 62D AIRLIFT WING CHIEF OF WEAPONS SAFETY

Question: Why should the Exercise Team Chief contact the safety office to develop a plan and risk assessment before conducting training and exercise events involving ammunition and explosives (AE)? Could it be to preclude an explosives mishap involving loss of equipment, limb, or life?

The *Defense Explosives Safety Regulation* (DESR) 6055.09 states that all exercises involving AE should have the responsible commander approve the plan in writing, ensuring personnel are aware of all hazards associated with explosives operations in a training and/or exercise environment.

Air Base X is a case in point. Base X was tasked with conducting a training exercise involving AE. A Security Forces Team, including an M60 gunner, was assigned to guard a strategic weapon. The aggressor force's objective was to overtake the weapon. In addition, an exercise evaluator who was not trained in explosives safety was assigned for observation.

In this real-life scenario, the aggressors were inserted approximately 1 day's hike to the Ready Alert Pad where their objective lay. The M60 gunner was set up near the weapon on a revetment. The aggressors infiltrated the base and struck the Ready Alert Pad. The Security Forces Team maintained their position until the aggressors went on a full-scale assault. The aggressor's leader called for grenades; therefore, hand grenades were deployed on the M60's position. Unfortunately, one of the grenades landed near the gunner's left thigh, and the next few seconds were the slowest in this young Airman's life. The grenade functioned as designed and ripped the gunner's thigh apart. The scent of sulfur, burned tissue, and dirt filled the air—and so did the screams. The Airman was evacuated by medevac to the local military treatment facility and later passed away due to complications from the wound.

When safety personnel investigate mishaps, they look for the step (or steps) that, if corrected or eliminated, can help prevent the same mishap from reoccurring. Safety personnel discovered several instances where corrections could have helped prevent the Airman's death.

First, the initiation point for the hand grenade simulators and type of grenades used were never discussed during the planning process for the Base X exercise. DESR 6055.09 lists specific minimum distances that must be maintained from personnel and vehicles when simulators are initiated; 125 feet in this case. Only specifically-listed simulators are to be used in training and exercise scenarios. In this instance, one of the aggressors had taken home an unauthorized grenade from a previous training event. The unauthorized grenade was intended for incapacitating personnel and/or demolition, not for use as a training aid. The aggressor intended to use this training exercise as a way of getting rid of the grenade.

Second, the exercise's evaluator lost sight of the aggressors, failed to call a "Knock It Off" when he lost situational awareness of the proximity of the aggressors to the Security Forces Team, and allowed the aggressor's lead to call for grenades.

Third, the exercise was conducted without a developed plan, risk assessment, or approval from the wing commander.

Had a risk assessment been accomplished in accordance with DESR 6055.09, each of the missteps that occurred during this training exercise would have likely been caught and avoided.

Hereafter, for all upcoming training, ensure a plan has been developed and a risk assessment has been conducted. Make sure Wing Safety is in on the planning. It could save a life!

Critical Days of Summer

Out & About ... Take Your Risk Management Tool Kit

Memorial Day weekend starts the AMC's Critical Days of Summer safety campaign. This campaign spans the entire summer and ends on Labor Day weekend. At this time of year, AMC experiences a rise in off-duty mishaps related to travel and recreational activities. This year we may wish to take a bit more caution as much of the nation is easing COVID restrictions, and we shift from a pandemic to an endemic mindset.

For 2022, the Critical Days of Summer theme is "Out & About … Take Your Risk Management Tool Kit." This year we are emphasizing tools such as Deliberate and Real-Time Risk Management to maximize summer fun while staying safe. Simple methods, including Gear/Plan/Skills (GPS), will help our Airmen identify potential hazards in their leisure time by asking these three crucial questions before any activity:

- Do I have the adequate **Gear** to perform the task?
- Are my **Plans** as well thought out as they could be?
- Do I have the necessary **Skills** to perform the activity?

If the answer is "no" to any of these questions, Airmen have exposed potential pitfalls that could lead to a mishap if not addressed.

During the 2021 span of Critical Days of Summer, AMC lost three Airmen to separate motorcycle mishaps. All three of these mishaps could have been prevented if our Airmen, their peers, and their supervisors had taken the time to employ the risk management tools they have available to them. As Airmen, we must recognize when we are pushing our own limits and mitigate risk when it becomes too great. As peers, we need to hold each other accountable when other Airmen are putting themselves and others at risk. As supervisors, we need to be aware of which recreational activities our Airmen are doing off-duty. This knowledge will mitigate any blind spots that may impact not only our Airmen's safety, but civilians' safety as well.

Summer 2022 will undoubtedly be different from previous COVID-era summers. With COVID restrictions easing and ongoing global tension increasing, our Airmen may feel the need to take a breath and get out and about. While more Airmen relax by spending time with friends and family this summer, we ask them to go the extra mile and bring along their Risk Management Toolkit. Then they will be fully charged for Air Mobility duty and prepared for tomorrow's fight.

Map of NATO member countries (in blue).

Unified Skies: AMC and NATO

BY MR. ANDREW HELLERSTEIN, STAFF WRITER

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is a vital force for furthering the United States' international security goals. As evidenced during world events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, this alliance is more valuable than ever. Air Mobility Command (AMC) fulfills a significant role in NATO by providing military and humanitarian aid across NATO territory. Likewise, NATO member nations assist AMC's mission in a myriad of ways.

OVERVIEW OF NATO

NATO was founded in 1949 as a bulwark against the Soviet Union during the Cold War. NATO members commit to defending each other against unprovoked attacks from external parties. The current alliance consists of the United States; Canada; major European nations including France, Germany, and the United Kingdom; and 25 other member states in Europe. In addition to the mutual defensive pact, member nations share resources such as military intelligence, expertise, and equipment.

NATO-AMC CONNECTION

NATO furthers AMC's Rapid Global Mobility vision by allowing access to worldwide airspace. The Rapid Global Mobility initiative seeks to provide global mobility for the successful deployment of allied aircraft around the globe. NATO allies allow AMC and other commands to carry out missions across their borders and supply the U.S. military with direct aid, which further assists AMC's goals.

AN IMPORTANT PLAYER: THE 521ST AIR MOBILITY OPERATIONS WING

One of the main links between AMC and NATO is the 521st Air Mobility Operations Wing (AMOW), which is based at Ramstein Air Base, Germany. The 521 AMOW is the only AMC wing residing in Europe and consists of over 2,700 personnel divided into two groups and 10 squadrons, with 14 geographically separated units located across 18 sites in 13 countries. The wing provides all command and control, enroute maintenance support, and air transportation services for theater and strategic air mobility missions in Europe and Southwest Asia.

The 521 AMOW has been recognized for its accomplishments and

top-of-the-line standards. It has a storied military history and has completed humanitarian missions such as COVID-19 response activities, developing new protocols for crew safety after visits to high-infection areas. The wing conducted the largest humanitarian airlift operation in history, transporting over 34,000 Afghans to Ramstein Air Base during the 2021 evacuation of Afghanistan. It has received prestigious accolades for these and other triumphs, including seven Air Force Meritorious Unit Awards and two Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards. As an example of military excellence, the 521 AMOW is an important piece of America's contribution to NATO. During a future humanitarian or military crisis, the wing will be able to exercise its unparalleled skills to aid NATO operations.

COOPERATION WITH NATO

AMC benefits from NATO resources and cooperates with NATO to complete military objectives. For a recent example, in February 2022, AMC was tasked with transporting approximately 3,000 U.S. Army personnel to the European Theater to help bolster NATO defenses in the wake of Russian military build-up on the Ukrainian border. NATO contributes to these and other AMC missions with its Rapid Air Mobility (RAM) initiative and air mission support.

The RAM initiative provides all allied aircraft on RAM missions with a special callsign to allow them to traverse national borders quickly. This doctrine was used to great effect during the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, as members of NATO used the callsign system to deliver medical supplies to viral hotspots quickly. From April 26 to April 28, 2021, NATO allies conducted a test of this system, which involved a simulated deployment of allied aircraft in cross-border military movements. This system provides allied aircraft, including those from AMC, with a convenient method to cross international borders for their missions.

Beyond the RAM initiative, NATO allies provide in-flight assistance to friendly aircraft, easing the burden on AMC. For example, in 2020, a Dutch KDC-10 from the 334th Squadron, Royal Netherlands Air Force, Eindhoven Air Base, Netherlands, helped refuel a B-1B Lancer during a 23-hour mission. Another instance in 2020 involved Turkish KC-135 Stratotankers helping a B-1B to complete a 29-hour mission. This type of aid supports all NATO members and helps the AMC manage its own resources.

A JOINT EFFORT

As a component of the U.S. Air Force, AMC has the ability to carry out rapid airlifting, aerial refueling, and humanitarian missions around the globe. These skills, exemplified in the 521 AMOW and other wings, will enable the AMC to help fulfill NATO's mission to defend all its member nations.

A1C Seth Johnson, 22d Logistics Readiness Squadron Air Terminal Representative, operates a 25K-loader, raising pallets to be loaded on a KC-46 at McConnell Air Force Base, KS, Feb. 21, 2022. McConnell Airmen and aircraft are a key part of Air Mobility Command's mission, the Joint Force, and the support of our NATO partners.

USAF photo by Amn Brenden Beezley

Airmen Aim High: U.S. Air Force Celebrates 75th Anniversary

The U.S. Air Force celebrates its 75th anniversary this year, keeping in mind the bravery of American Airmen and the skills required of them to defend the United States in the air, in space, and in cyberspace. The following timeline overviews the history of the U.S. Air Force and highlights the many accomplishments made over the past 75 years.

BY MS. KATHY ALWARD, STAFF WRITER

1903–1911: AIR FLIGHT FOR THE FIRST TIME

- After Wilbur and Orville Wright achieved their dream as inventors and aviation pioneers by taking the first airplane flight on Dec. 17, 1903, a decade of innovation followed that helped the United States set a course as one of the most powerful and advanced countries in the world.
- An official new aeronautical division took charge of "air machines" and military ballooning on Aug. 1, 1907.
- First Lt Thomas E. Selfridge became the first officer to fly solo on May 19, 1908. Selfridge was working with Dr. Alexander Graham Bell on experiments using kites to fly. According to the 127th Wing: "Strapped into the center of a giant kite created by Bell, Selfridge made his first flight on Dec. 6 of that year, rising to 168 feet as the kite was pulled by a tugboat on Lake Bras d'Or."

1912–1939: WORLD WAR I: THE UNITED STATES INTRODUCES AIRCRAFT FOR BATTLE

- On July 28, 1914, World War I started in Europe.
- The first U.S. Air Force pilot was shot down by an enemy airplane on March 11, 1918.
- The 96th Aero Squadron carried out the first American daylight bombing mission on June 12, 1918, on Dommary-Baroncourt, France.
- The first American military member practiced skydiving using a backpack-type parachute to jump from an airplane on May 19, 1919.

1940–1945: WORLD WAR II: THE SKIES BECOME A BATTLEGROUND

- All the world's superpowers and many additional countries fought in the deadliest war in human history, World War II. Much of the battle was fought from the sky, including the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, and the U.S. atomic bombings of two Japanese cities almost four years later.
- On April 18, 1942, Col James H. "Jimmy" Doolittle led the first U.S. air raid, known as the Doolittle Raid, using 16 B-25 bombers over Tokyo.
- On Aug. 5, 1943, Col Jacqueline Cochran, an accomplished pilot, became the first director of the new Women Air Force Service Pilots.

1946–1949: UNITED STATES BECOMES A LEADING SUPERPOWER

- The Cold War—a period following World War II between March 12, 1947, and Dec. 3, 1989—was a time of geopolitical tension between the Soviet Union and the United States and their respective allies, the Eastern Bloc and the Western Bloc. The United States was recognized as the world's only superpower when the Iron Curtain fell in 1989 after the Cold War.
- The first Secretary of the Air Force, W. Stuart Symington, was sworn in on Sept. 18, 1947, when the U.S. Air Force officially became its own service branch.
- On Sept. 25, 1947, President Harry S. Truman appointed the first U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff, Gen Carl A. Spaatz.
- On July 8, 1948, SSgt Esther Blake became the first woman to enlist in the U.S. Air Force.

1950–1953: THE KOREAN WAR

- The United States proved itself a global military power in the Korean War, an international conflict between North Korea and South Korea, with China and the Soviet Union backing North Korea and the war ending in a stalemate.
- On March 15, 1951, an LC-97A Stratofreighter successfully refueled a B-47 bomber in the first successful in-flight refueling.
- On Feb. 1, 1952, the Air Force purchased the first high speed digital computer, a vacuum tube-based Univac 1.

1954–1964: THE DECADE AIRMEN SET NEW RECORDS

- Airmen flew higher, faster, and farther in this decade. Col Joseph W. Kittinger Jr., then a Captain, set the record for the highest jump and longest free fall in parachute jumping on Aug. 16, 1960.
- Col Virgil R. Grissom traveled into space as the first Air Force astronaut on July 21, 1961.
- Three B-52 Stratofortresses completed the first around-the-world nonstop flight by a jet aircraft on Jan. 18, 1957.
- A human voice was heard from space for the first time on Dec. 18, 1958, when the Air Force launched the first communications satellite into orbit.

1965–1973: THE VIETNAM WAR

- From 1965 to 1973, the United States battled to stop the spread of communism in Southeast Asia with air superiority, new tactics, and more sophisticated weapons during the Vietnam War. On Feb. 18, 1965, the Air Force launched the first aerial raid, sending B-57s and F-100s to strike Vietcong targets.
- On June 3, 1965, Maj Edward H. White became the first U.S. astronaut to walk in space.

1974–1989: TIME OF RELATIVE PEACE AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES

- On June 28, 1976, female cadets were first introduced to the Air Force Academy, the first of three emerging Department of Defense service academies.
- On May 18, 1980, the Air Force airlifted 61 people to safety using SR-71 airplanes following the eruption of Mount Saint Helens in Washington State.
- On June 18, 1981, the world's first stealth combat aircraft, the F-117 Nighthawk, flew for the first time.

1990–1999: U.S. AIR FORCE MOST ADVANCED AIR FORCE IN THE WORLD

- The United States launched Operation Desert Storm. More than 1,200 flying combat missions were launched within the first 14 hours, and Kuwait was liberated from Iraqi occupation on Jan. 17, 1991.
- The Air Force scored its first F-16 aerial victory on Dec. 27, 1992, by shooting down an Iraqi MiG-25 when patrolling the southern no-fly zone of Iraq.
- Col Jeannie M. Leavitt became the first female fighter pilot in the Air Force on Feb. 10, 1994.

2000–PRESENT: WAR ON TERRORISM

- The United States began participating in the war on terrorism after it was attacked on Sept. 11, 2001. B-2 Spirit bombers flew 44 hours roundtrip in the longest bombing mission in history, from Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri to Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom.
- A C-17 Globemaster III that airdropped 32,400 pounds of humanitarian supplies to four locations in Afghanistan in 40 minutes set the record for the most cargo dropped in the shortest amount of time to multiple drop zones.

Source: https://www.airforce.com/mission/history/overview

A C-17 from Joint Base Charleston, SC, is the first flight to land on the newly reconstructed Pope Army Airfield, NC, Oct. 14, 2021.

USAF photo by TSgt Brandon Gilliatt

The 43d Air Mobility Operations Group: **Continuously Aiming High**

BY MS. LAUREN SCHATZ, STAFF WRITER

The 43d Air Mobility Operations Group (AMOG) is a prime example that indicates you *can* teach an old dog new tricks. The group has shown historical success but does not allow complacency to stifle its preparation for the future fight.

The 43 AMOG plays a crucial role in rapid strategic deployment when the nation faces a crisis. It is best known for its support of the out-load missions of the Joint Special Operations Command and the U.S. Army's XVIII Airborne Corps and 82d Airborne Division missions. This Fort Bragg, NC, military installation is informally referred to as the president's 9-1-1 and is called when a humanitarian or combat situation needs boots on the ground—and fast.

Operating out of Pope Army Airfield in Fort Bragg, the group comprises over 700 Airmen and civilians. It catalyzes swift response through its Airborne Joint Forcible Entry, combat airlift, aeromedical evacuation, aerial port, command and control, and other enabling capabilities.

Its service began as the 43d Bombardment Group flying B-17s during World War II (WWII) and quickly became known as one of the most innovative, aggressive, and effective flying units. It has maintained an enterprising spirit throughout its history, with each generation of Airmen carrying the torch throughout several transitions following WWII, personifying the motto of Willing, Able, Ready. The unit was designated as 43 AMOG on June 14, 2016, and has continued to exemplify a steadfast commitment to achievement and improvement.

Mr. Frank Laras, a former 43d Airlift Wing Vice Commander and now Chief of the 43 AMOG Business Office, has a strong grip on the 43d's operational capabilities. With over 20 years of experience at Pope, he has overseen three organizational transitions. Laras gave insight into the current training efforts and plans.

When not in combat scenarios, the Airmen, including those in personnel, medical, logistics, supply, and maintenance, are in constant preparation for joint contingency deployments. The group conducts frequent exercises

varying in magnitude. "We will use two all the way up to 12 aircraft in a variety of contingency scenarios," Laras explained.

Exercises are executed year-round, and the mock environments of the exercises are crafted to be as realistic as possible. "They will fly over simulated hostile zones, airdrop, and continue to play out the simulated combat scenario on the ground," Laras said.

Training is under continual evaluation, and assessments are scheduled to ensure frequency. For example, after-action reports are generated after each exercise, and the lessons contained in these reports are applied in the subsequent exercises. Additionally, leadership meets on a set basis to brainstorm on how to improve. In these meetings, input from Airmen on every level is taken into consideration, and ideas are tested and evaluated.

Laras shared a unique idea that was implemented. He explained there was a time when drop zones would be heavily lit up so the aircrews could identify them. However, it was brought up that this method did not reflect a realistic combat scenario, in which there would not be time to place lights to illuminate the dark drop zones. Therefore, a new method, which involves sight-angle dropping and a laser-pointer-like device that fighter escort pilots can wear on their fingers and use to "mark" the point of impact on the ground, was born. This idea is just one of the many examples of the Air Force's innovative nature.

The 43 AMOG is currently undergoing a reorganization, or "reorg," to optimize its support of the national defense strategy. Laras discussed the logistics and implications of the reorg, which he believes will be a positive change because it will further the group's goal to "do it safely and do it right the first time."

The most notable change is the transitioning from a group to a wing. This will entail the addition of two colonel leadership positions as well as an additional group and two squadrons.

Currently, only two colonels are each performing the functions of approximately six. Laras explains that for effective training, additional coverage is needed. "In a contingency scenario, many of those colonel functions happen simultaneously," Laras said.

Laras remarked that the additional leadership will also add more oversight to training, which will be critical to the success of the combat training squadron and optimize current efforts.

"We will utilize the same exercises that the Army uses when they simulate their ground war," Laras said. "Airmen will have to be watching out for possible simulated threats, such as sniper fire or chemical attacks. Crews will take off just like they would in a combat scenario, which means making the proper calls maneuvers to avoid enroute air and ground threats. This will ensure that everything will not feel new the first time they deploy."

Although there will be a heightened focus on expertise, leadership will also ensure Airmen adhere to concepts such as the "multi-capable airmen" which increases proficiency in many of the skills necessary to support air operations in addition to an Airman's assigned duties.

The 43 AMOG, throughout its history, has served as a prime example of the importance of pushing forward and aiming high. The group's structured approach to innovation and plans for its reorg allow it to effectively prepare for the future fight. Should the president ring Fort Bragg, Air Force and Army readiness will certainly answer.

Airmen from Pope Army Airfield, NC, Joint Base Charleston, SC, and Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, NJ, take a moment to pose on a C-17 at Pope AAF Feb. 16, 2022. The team, Task Force Gryphon, operated a 24-hour schedule to coordinate the transportation and delivery of personnel and cargo to Poland and Germany in the United States' steadfast commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity in support of a secure and prosperous Ukraine.

USAF photo by SSgt Katelynn Thomas

Airman's Creed Celebrates Fifteenth Anniversary

BY MR. MIKE CREMEDAS, STAFF WRITER

I am an American Airman.
I am a Warrior.
I have answered my nation's call.

I am an American Airman.
My mission is to fly, fight, and win.
I am faithful to a proud heritage,
A tradition of honor,
And a legacy of valor.

I am an American Airman.
Guardian of freedom and justice,
My nation's sword and shield,
Its sentry and avenger.
I defend my country with my life.

I am an American Airman.
Wingman, leader, warrior.
I will never leave an Airman behind,
I will never falter,
And I will not fail.

The Airman's Creed was introduced on April 18, 2007, by former Air Force Chief of Staff Gen T. Michael Moseley to "reinvigorate the warrior ethos in every Airman of our Total Force." It is more than a set of words—it is a set of guiding principles to uplift those who serve in the U.S. Air Force and thrust them toward victory. It also serves as a promise to the United States, and all Air Force members are expected to learn and live the creed to carry out that promise.

Moseley explained that it was a collaborative effort that involved feedback from Airmen throughout the Air Force and was designed to resonate with Airmen past, present, and future. He said it is "about our people and an Air Force that is fundamentally different from any other service." The Airman's Creed replaced the Noncommissioned Officer Creed, the Senior Noncommissioned Officer Creed, the Chief's Creed, and the First Sergeant's Creed. It acts as an airway beacon—a shining light for Air Force members.

As its 15-year anniversary is celebrated, it is important to remember that the Airman's Creed was released on a date that recognizes another important milestone. In 2007, Moseley declared, "it's not entirely out of coincidence that we're debuting the creed on the 65th anniversary of the Doolittle Raiders' heroic strike at the heart of Imperial Japan in 1942. Like many Airmen of the past, the Raiders exemplified our warfighting spirit, and remain an inspiration to us all."

Airmen are willing to pay the ultimate price for country and countrymen, and our creed holds significance to the hundreds of thousands of active duty, Reserve, Guard, civilians, and supporters that comprise the Total Air Force. The Airman's Creed also holds deep significance to many who have never served in the military. On Oct. 7, 2001, President George W. Bush, in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, addressed the nation regarding military strikes against al-Qaida, and a portion of his speech went on to inspire the last lines of the Airman's Creed: "We will not waiver, we will not tire, we will not falter, and we will not fail. Peace and freedom will prevail."[1] The last stanza is a message to the world that the U.S. Air Force is ready to protect and bring the fight to those who threaten the American way of life.

[1] https://www.166aw.ang.af.mil/Portals/59/documents/Airmans_Creed_(20Jul15).pdf?ver=2020-07-12-114801-580

TSgt Adrian Saetern, the 515th Air Mobility Operations Wing Aircraft Maintenance Unit's Regional Training Course Instructor, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, HI, trains maintainers from throughout the Pacific on maintenance procedures on a C-5M Super Galaxy aircraft at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, AK, July 15, 2021.

USAF photo by SSgt Johnathon Wines

AIR MOBILITY COMMAND

WELL DONE AWARD

Presented to

TSGT ADRIAN SAETERN

On July 13, 2021, TSgt Adrian Saetern from the 515th Air Mobility Operations Wing, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, HI, identified a safety hazard within six C-5M maintenance manual tasks for visor operation. This safety hazard directed maintainers to release the Pilot Valve Assist (A-PVA) on the loading control manifold while performing manual operation of the visor system. Once the A-PVA is released, the ramp extension rapidly falls from its own weight when pressure is no longer powering the manifold. The ramp extension's falling can cause major damage to the aircraft and/or personnel deaths. The normal operation of the forward loading system specifically states that the ramp extension must be tied down with tie-down straps when the visor is opened and the ground control switch is incomplete. This procedure has the same effect in manual operation when the A-PVA is released because the ground control switch powers the A-PVA. Saetern took immediate action and submitted six urgent-action Air Force Technical Order Form 22s to add additional warnings and ensure the steps are performed in the proper sequence. Air Mobility Command approved Saetern's recommendations within 24 hours. Saetern's actions drove the release of an Air Force-wide Operational Supplement, and his expertise and keen eye for safety helped prevent future damage to the aircraft and personnel deaths.

Honor the Wonder of the Fourth: Prevent Firework Mishaps

BY MS. TIFFANY L. TOLBERT, STAFF WRITER

Anyone who has been lucky enough to experience the uniquely American phenomenon of the Fourth of July knows what the holiday entails: red, white, and blue decorations; feasts; parades; loved ones; and, of course, fireworks. The holiday culminates with fireworks shows that, when done properly, bring about wonder and joy that is shared across the country. The tradition of fireworks on the Fourth of July dates back to 1777, when the city of Philadelphia, PA, held the first Independence Day celebration in honor of the 1 year anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

Although fireworks are an exciting addition to any celebration, over the years they have, unfortunately, also been the cause of many fires, injuries, and even deaths. According to the National Fire Protection Association, more than one-fourth (28 percent) of fires started by fireworks from 2014–2018 were reported on the Fourth of July. On average, fireworks caused about one-half (49 percent) of the fires reported on the Fourth of July during this time period.

Although it may be safer to enjoy fireworks operated by professionals, many revelers choose to purchase and set them off at private events instead. In recent years, as fireworks have increasingly been ignited on private property, more injuries have also been reported. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, there was a 50 percent increase in deaths and injuries from firework-related incidents in 2020, as compared with 2019. In 2020, at least 18 people reportedly died from firework-related incidents, compared with 12 reported deaths in 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic most likely played a part in this reported increase in injuries and deaths as people avoided crowded public gatherings and most large-scale events were canceled to help curb the spread of the virus.

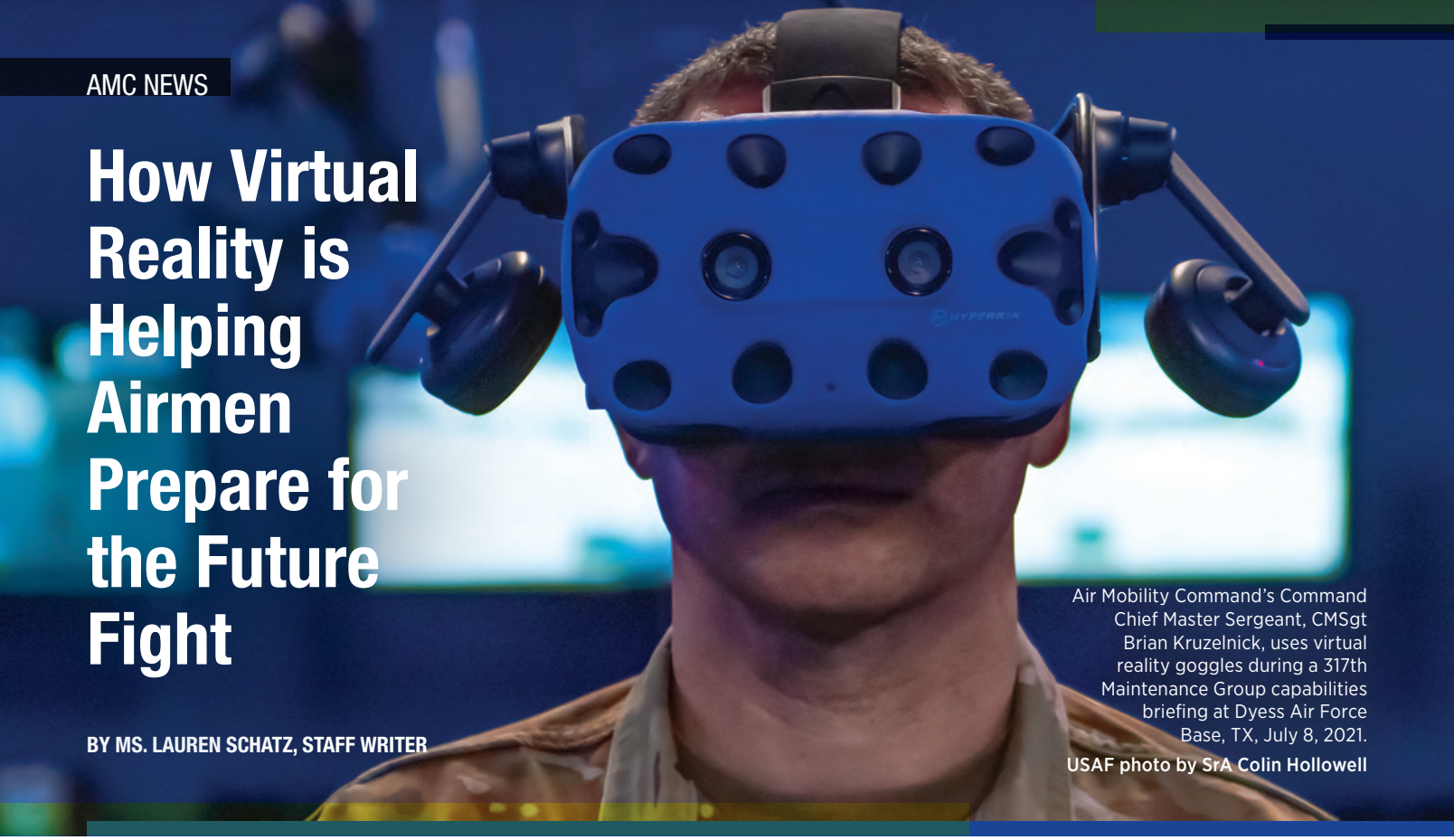
Each year, fireworks injure thousands of people and cause thousands of fires. Although they may be legal to purchase and use on private property in many states across the country, caution should be used, as fireworks can cause serious injuries to the human body. Most firework-related injuries occur to the hands, fingers, head, face, eyes, and ears. Specific types of injuries include burn injuries to the feet from stepping on lit sparklers; burn injuries to the eyelids from holding hot, burned-out sparklers close to the face; burn injuries to the eyes when lighting fireworks and sparklers close to the face; and lacerations to the fingers, arms, and chest when firework shells explode in the hand.

It is important to note that individuals injured during fireworks-related events are not always the individuals using the fireworks. Often, those injured are just standing nearby. Fireworks are also connected to thousands of home, vehicle, and other types of fires each year.

To help ensure a fun, safe time is had by all during the upcoming Fourth of July celebrations (and on any other holidays where firework usage is common or considered a tradition), the safety tips on the next page from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission should be fully reviewed and observed. These tips cover how to properly light, store, use, and discard fireworks.

- **NEVER** use illegal fireworks or fireworks designed for professional or commercial use.
- **NEVER** allow children of any age to handle fireworks without an adult present.
- **NEVER** handle or use fireworks without protective eyewear and gloves. People standing nearby should also wear them.
- **NEVER** use fireworks while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- **NEVER** hold lighted fireworks in your hands or close to your face.
- **NEVER** use fireworks near other people, houses, cars, and flammable materials.
- **NEVER** point or throw fireworks at another person.
- **NEVER** light more than one firework at a time. After lighting a firework, immediately back up, keeping a safe distance from the lighted device.
- **NEVER** relight or attempt to handle malfunctioning fireworks.
- **NEVER** allow pets to interact with fireworks.
- **ALWAYS** light fireworks at arm's length using a taper.
- **ALWAYS** soak both used and unused fireworks in water for a few hours before throwing them away.
- **ALWAYS** follow the laws in your state pertaining to fireworks.

How Virtual Reality is Helping Airmen Prepare for the Future Fight



Air Mobility Command's Command Chief Master Sergeant, CMSgt Brian Kruzelnick, uses virtual reality goggles during a 317th Maintenance Group capabilities briefing at Dyess Air Force Base, TX, July 8, 2021.

USAF photo by SrA Colin Hollowell

BY MS. LAUREN SCHATZ, STAFF WRITER

There is no doubt that recent years have shown a marked shift in military strategies and operations. With strategic adversaries like China and Russia on the horizon, innovative concepts have been designed and implemented to prepare for the future fight. For example, Agile Combat Employment, or ACE, involves spreading out and moving quickly in various environments. It calls for Airmen to be "Multi-Capable Airmen" (MCA), or in other words, proficient in many of the skills necessary to support air operations, rather than only a few.

Backing these concepts requires a tremendous amount of new technology. Technological development within the United States accelerated as a silver lining of the COVID-19 pandemic. This implosion moved mountains in terms of human activity shifting online. Therefore, tomorrow's fight may not need to wait for tomorrow's technology—today, strides are being made to utilize current technology to make training easier, more efficient, and safer!

This technology includes virtual reality (VR) simulators, which place users in a simulated environment via VR headsets. While VR is not considered novel, its growth and prevalence are.

In simple use, VR headsets can be used for video games. For example, a soccer video game traditionally made for a television screen could be transformed to make the player feel as if they are on the soccer field. They can glance to their sides and see simulated players running beside them; they can glance down to see carefully kept grass.

Sadly, this technological feat is often written off as having not much potential outside of making video games a lot more fun to use. However, many people are excited about the future of VR.

The Air Force, for example, recognizes the vast potential for training. The nature of VR is helping prepare for the future fight and mitigate many of the risks involved in traditional training methods. Immersive VR simulators are used to teach a variety of tasks, such as piloting aircraft, maintenance, aerial refueling, emergency medicine, and more.

Following are a few of the reasons VR is being used more and more:

IT CAN LOWER COSTS

While the development of VR training systems can be pricey, the price per person may drop to be relatively low due to the high number of Airmen that can be trained this way. VR technology breaks the limits that traditional training methods often abide by; gone could be the days of limited space and resources. VR also cuts down the number of instructions needed.

According to a recent study, a topic that took over 2 hours to teach through traditional training methods took only half an hour to train using VR. This time savings is dependent on many factors; however, VR training can be built with efficiency in mind.

IT CAN ENSURE MORE EQUAL TRAINING

Again, with limited expertise and with varying experiences, training can differ

greatly. VR technology allows Airmen to receive equal teaching by dispersing the same expertise to everyone. Imagine leadership being able to be in more than two places at once—they could be in thousands of places at once! This innovation could play a key role in ACE and MCA.

IT INCREASES PREPARATION

Some skills are considered achieved when they can be done with "muscle memory," and VR can help Airmen achieve this level. By allowing frequent practice, Airmen can become proficient at many tasks as well as prepare for handling emergency situations. When disaster strikes, every second counts, and ample preparation can be crucial in the successful navigation of perilous situations.

IT CAN BE SAFER—FOR BOTH AIRMAN AND RESOURCES

Learners can be placed in simulated precarious situations without facing real risks, which can be beneficial to both mental and physical health. By lowering stressful reactions, Airmen can handle situations that arise as well as avoid some of the lasting and harmful effects of stress on the body. Not only can VR training keep Airmen safer, but it can keep valuable equipment safer as well. Allowing a novice to learn on certain equipment can create expensive slip-ups, which are not good for the trainer or the trainee. It can also free up or limit the use of aircraft, which are essential for missions.

IT IS A BETTER PLACE TO FAIL

Preparing for the future fight can involve numerous tries, which can be hard on a person (and again, resources). However, the Air Force not only allows slip-ups during training, but often encourages them. If practice makes perfect, why would failure be acceptable? It is not because failure is the end goal, but because accepting failure often allows for more perfect practice. People tend to explore new methods as well as continue improving—all because they are not letting mistakes discourage them. VR can unlock doors to innovation because of the awareness that the environment is simulated and that it is all right to fail if the end goal is improvement.

VR IS APPEALING TO GENERATION Z

The latest generations of Airmen have grown up with video games and technology. The use of advanced VR training can appeal to Generation Z and aid in their recruitment. Not only is VR appealing, but it also may be a smart move due to the learning style of Gen Z—computer learning is widespread among today's schools. VR amplifies the memorability of computer learning by increasing engagement; many would agree hands-on learning typically beats sitting through a long slideshow presentation or reading through theoretical text. Theory can come to life through these immersive, distraction-free, new training methods.

These are a few reasons why the Air Force is rapidly expanding VR training opportunities. There are many noteworthy developments, such as virtual reality suicide prevention training, which is being tested at Scott Air Force Base (AFB), IL, and Travis AFB, CA. This training helps Airmen learn how to best talk to someone in distress. Another exciting advancement is from Dyess AFB, TX, where VR technology is transforming the way C-130J Super Hercules aircraft maintainers are training. VR technology is even teaching Airmen how to paint an aircraft!

There are countless instances of the Air Force taking advantage of the exciting opportunity that is VR. It may never replace hands-on training, but it can certainly fill in needed gaps and speed up the process.

While it is still important to weigh and assess the benefits of real-life vs VR training, VR training certainly should not be ruled out. VR may be able to revolutionize certain areas of training and fill gaps. Real, hands-on training may reign supreme, but VR may beat out text-based teachings. VR may be an important player in winning the future fight.

CMSgt Brian Kruzelnick receives instruction on the use of the 19th Maintenance Group Virtual Reality demo by SSgt Jonathan Allen, 19th Maintenance Group Maintenance Qualification Training Instructor, at Little Rock Air Force Base, AR, Oct. 19, 2020.

USAF photo by 1 Lt Jessica Cicchetto

Swept Up by the Current—*Would You Know What to Do?*

BY MS. LAUREN SCHATZ, STAFF WRITER

Nothing is better than wading into the cool, refreshing water of the ocean on a hot summer day. The sand squishes between your toes as you move farther and farther away from the shore. Completely surrounded by the water, a sense of peacefulness washes over you with each wave.

While a beach vacation is a great stress reliever, there are elements of the ocean that you cannot control. The ocean, while tranquil in many senses, often has hidden turbulence. This turbulence can come in the form of rip currents. Named appropriately, rip currents are strong, narrow channels of fast-moving water that "rip" the seamless pattern of the water and move strongly away from shore, much like a river. These currents are infamous for pulling people down and farther into the water very quickly.

Beachgoers are often surprised at the strength of this type of current and how little control one has against them. Rip currents have been described as having a chain tied to both ankles and being dragged away from the safety of the shore.

Because of the nature, or flow, of rip currents, swimmers can often escape their pull by cutting across or swimming parallel to the shore. Battling a rip current in any other way (for example, swimming against them), is virtually impossible. The strength of the ocean can overtake even the strongest of swimmers.

Many lives are lost each year in the United States due to rip-current-related drownings. In 2021, an Airman was caught in a particularly rough riptide and drowned at Surfside Beach near Freeport, TX, about 60 miles south of Houston. Only 22 years old, the Airman was in prime physical condition.

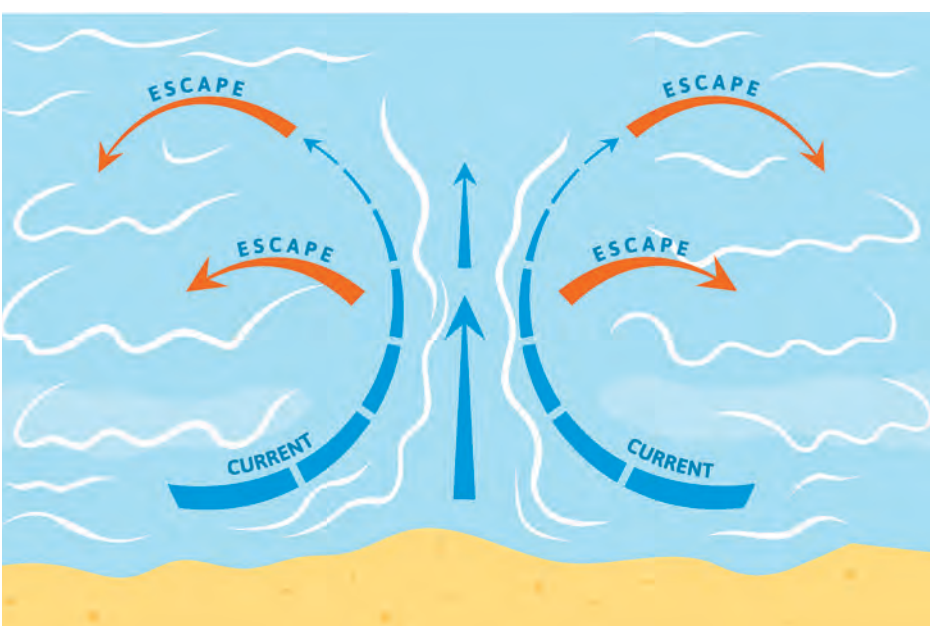
In popular tourist areas such as Hawai'i, there is an average of nearly 40 drowning fatalities per year. In such places, beaches are often crowded, giving people a false sense of security. However, the ocean is often too overpowering for others to intervene, and sometimes, there is simply not enough time to help a person caught in a rip current.

Knowing what to look for before entering the ocean is key and can help save lives.

Although rip currents can arise unpredictably, according to **weather.gov**, the following are clues that a rip current may be present.

- The appearance of a narrow gap of darker, seemingly calmer water between areas of breaking waves and whitewater.
- The appearance of a channel of churning, choppy water near the shore.
- A visible difference in water color near the shore.
- The appearance of a line of foam, seaweed, or debris moving seaward.

When in doubt, do not go out into the ocean, and remember to never swim alone. Swimming in the presence of others can help prevent you from being trapped in a scary, potentially dangerous situation. Remember, if you find yourself caught in a rip current, swim perpendicular to the current rather than against it. Once away from the rip current, you can swim safely to shore. Our great blue oceans offer a lot of fun. A little preparation and a little respect for this powerful environment will help to ensure its fun throughout your visit.



Staying Hydrated—Why It Is Important

BY MS. KATHY ALWARD, STAFF WRITER

Staying hydrated is crucial for good health. Some experts suggest drinking 64 ounces of water throughout the day. Others suggest the rule of thumb of drinking one-third of your body weight in fluid ounces of water each day. What everyone seems to agree on: hydration is important. Staying hydrated can improve brain performance, digestion, heart health, and detoxification while decreasing headaches and joint pain. It also assists with weight management, body temperature regulation, and helps prevent kidney stones and urinary tract infections.

Can you recognize signs of dehydration? They can differ by age group. Infants and young children may need help identifying their fluid needs, so provide them with water frequently and watch for signs of dehydration such as dry diapers for as little as 3 hours, sunken cheeks and eyes, no tears when crying, dry tongue, dry mouth, lethargy, and more. For adults, the signs of dehydration are much different and include dizziness, confusion, fatigue, urine that is darker than usual, extreme thirst, and less frequent urination.

Most of your daily intake of fluids should come from water because regular H^20 is best for staying hydrated. People often consume sports drinks and energy drinks after exercise or strenuous work, but these beverages do not provide the same level of hydration as water because they can contain very large amounts of added sugar and/or caffeine. If you are planning on engaging in strenuous physical activity for more than an hour at higher-than-normal levels, then sports drinks can be helpful. If not, make regular water your go-to.

Age, health, and climate are factors to consider when determining how much water to drink in a day, but there are other ways to stay hydrated besides drinking water, like including water-rich foods in your diet.

Some fruits and vegetables with high water content include lettuce, zucchini, strawberries, cantaloupe, peaches, and oranges. Consuming soup and stew can also help with hydration.

Despite the many methods to stay hydrated, dehydration can still easily occur. Be sure to visit your health care provider if you suspect you are dehydrated. Low blood pressure, especially when moving from a prone to a standing position, reduced blood flow to your extremities, and a faster-than-normal heart rate can all be signs of dehydration. Seek medical attention quickly for the best recovery.

Are You Rally Ready?

BY MS. PAULA COLLINS, STAFF WRITER

Polish the chrome, gather your gear, and grab your maps … summer is here!

For the motorcycle enthusiast, warm weather brings about road trips, bike rallies, and runs. Biker events, large and small, are scattered across the nation. Two of the country's largest and oldest rallies are held in Sturgis, SD, and Laconia, NH. At these and other rallies, hundreds of thousands of motorcycle riders from all over the world converge to experience biker culture at its best. Once there, there are many activities to enjoy, including scenic rides or tours of the surrounding countryside, bike shows and build-offs, campfires, concerts, races, and motorcycle skill competitions. Vendors are also present, selling food, beverages, and memorabilia. Whether a participant or a spectator, everyone is sure to have an enjoyable time.

BE PREPARED

Before making the pilgrimage, which may include traveling hundreds of miles to attend a rally, make plans to maximize the fun. How do you do that? First, make sure your motorcycle is in good condition. You are not going to have fun if you cannot even get there safely. Motorcycle safety experts suggest checking at least six key areas. These areas include the tires, front and rear brakes, head and taillights, horn, and oil and other fluids. Additionally, it is important to wear a properly fitted helmet that is compliant with the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 218. Helmets meeting this requirement usually have a sticker on them that reads, "DOT FMVSS NO. 218 CERTIFIED." Wearing a helmet is one of the most effective ways to prevent a head injury. It is estimated that for every 100 motorcyclists killed, 37 of them would have survived had they been wearing certified helmets. Wear a helmet and inspect your bike before each ride.

In conjunction with a helmet, wear appropriate eye protection (a helmet shield or wraparound goggles); cyclist gloves (preferably leather with gel padding); thick jeans or leather pants; sturdy leather boots that cover the ankles and have good traction; and a jacket, (preferably made of leather) with reflective features to help ensure you are visible to others on the roadway. A leather motorcycle jacket may seem bulky to some, but they are constructed—with vents, pockets, and optional layers—for both comfort and protection. Wearing the proper motorcycle gear will lessen the possibility of serious injury during a fall or crash and will make riding more secure, and is required for Airmen in accordance with AFI 91-207, *The U.S. Air Force Traffic Safety Program*. Experts also suggest packing rain gear, sunscreen, a first-aid kit, and enough water to stay hydrated. On long rides, packing a sleeping bag (even if you plan to stay in an RV or hotel) is a popular suggestion. Having a sleeping bag provides a rider with the option of taking rest breaks during parts of the trip. Never ride tired; it can be deadly.

DRIVE AWARE

Do you know how far you can ride on a tank of gas? Plan stops to rest and refuel, and allow plenty of time to reach your destination. Give the road your full attention—especially if inclement weather is encountered. Motorcycle fatalities were nearly 29 times more frequent (per vehicle miles traveled) than for automobiles in 2019. Fifty-five percent of the 5,114 recorded motorcycle fatalities involved collisions with other moving vehicles. Seventy-six percent were struck in the front but only 7 percent in the rear. Both vehicles were traveling straight ahead in 22 percent of the crashes, but

in 41 percent of the crashes, the other vehicle was making a left-hand turn while the motorcycle was going straight or passing. Twenty-three percent of all fatal collisions were with a fixed object instead of another moving vehicle.

WATCH YOUR SPEED

Could you slow down fast enough to avoid a collision? Are you giving yourself time to anticipate the movement of other vehicles? These are important questions only the rider can answer. If traveling with others, do not allow them to set your driving pace, especially if you are driving in unfamiliar territory. In 2019, speeding was a factor in 33 percent of fatal motorcycle crashes, with riders in the 21-24 age group accounting for a whopping 49 percent of those fatal accidents.

RIDE SOBER

Most bike rally events have vendors who serve alcohol. If you indulge, refrain from driving. Alcohol impairment (BAC of .08 g/dL or higher) was a factor in 29 percent of all fatal motorcycle crashes in 2019. It proved fatal in 42 percent of single vehicle crashes and 21 percent of crashes where two or more vehicles were involved.

LOOKING FOR AN EVENT NEAR YOU IN 2022?

Popular Bike Rallies in the United States:

- **Bama Bike Fest Motorcycle Rally,** Forkland, AL
  http://bamabikefest.com/
- **Bikes, Blues, & BBQ,** Fayetteville, AR
  https://bikesbluesandbbq.org/
- **Daytona Bike Week,** Daytona Beach, FL
  https://officialbikeweek.com/
- **Hogrock,** Cave-In-Rock, IL
  http://hogrock.com/
- **Laconia Motorcycle Week,** Lake Winnipesaukee, Laconia, NH
  https://laconiamcweek.com/
- **The One Motorcycle Show,** Portland, OR
  http://the1moto.com/
- **Republic of Texas Bike Rally,** Austin, TX
  https://www.republicoftexasmotorcyclerally.com/
- **Sturgis Motorcycle Rally,** Sturgis, SD
  https://www.sturgismotorcyclerally.com/

If you love motorcycling during this time of year, you know the journey is as beautiful and important as the destination and that safety is paramount. Be prepared. Drive aware. Watch your speed. Ride sober. And have fun!

Camping Checklists to Keep in Your Back Pocket

BY MS. SOFIA SCHATZ, STAFF WRITER

A camping trip is a recurring plot in movies for a reason. Many things can go wrong—both onscreen and in real life. Realistically, it is smart to prepare for mishaps *before* camping, especially for the worst-case scenarios. Following are a few recommendations to keep in mind the next time you explore the great outdoors.

PLANNING AHEAD

Camping can be a fun, spontaneous activity; however, some prep work should be involved to allow for an even more carefree feeling. Following are some suggestions to help you plan ahead.

- Monitor the weather forecast and check for changes just before your trip. Poor conditions can ruin a camping trip—no one enjoys a muddy campsite and not being able to leave their tent to hike. In some instances, extreme weather can cause injury, loss of personal property, and even death.
- Plan for the "just in cases." Sometimes storms can form unpredictably. Make sure your campsite is not near the highest point of your area to avoid lightning strikes during stormy weather. Do not camp at a low place if a lot of rain is expected.
- Check for wildfires ahead of time by visiting **https://www.fs.usda.gov/science-technology/fire/information** online. Wildfires are common in many areas, especially if it has been a dry season. Because of this potential hazard, lighting a campfire may even be banned in areas with high fire risk.
- Bring a bucket. Speaking of fires, do not be the cause of one. Make sure your campfire is built at least 15 feet from your tent and fill a bucket

with water in case of an emergency. Use the bucket to extinguish the fire before you go to sleep. Never leave a lit fire unattended.

- Pack items that will keep you warm. Camping is not very enjoyable when you are shivering, and being too cold can become unsafe. Depending on the temperature, bring items that will keep you warm at night, including blankets, sleeping bags, sweatpants, outer layers, a coat, gloves, and warm sleepwear. No matter how warm it is by day, it is nearly always cold in the hours before dawn. Also, bring extra clothes in case you get wet.

- Review a map. Learn about the surroundings, particularly nearby roads, in case you lose your way during a hike.

NAVIGATING DANGEROUS SITUATIONS

Okay, so I think I turned this way … that tree looks familiar, doesn't it? I must be getting close. What's that noise? Is that the road? I must have found my way back! Wait… no … I haven't seen that stream before, have I?

Getting severely lost is easier than you think. This possibility is the sad and frightening reality for many. Often, we somehow stumble upon our campsite again and write off the mishap as a fun time; however, not everyone is so lucky. Twenty-two-year-old Jacob Gray got lost on a bicycle ride through Washington state's Olympic National Park. After 18 months of search-and-rescue missions, his body was finally found.

Following are a few suggestions to help you stay close enough to the grid that you can return to it.

- According to the U.S. Forest Service, always remember to Stop, Think, Observe, and Plan (STOP). Assume your phone may lose service and make note of your surroundings.

- If possible, return to a familiar location. It is helpful to mark your starting location with paint, carvings, or flags. However, when in doubt, do not stray too far from your starting point or off your original route.

- Stay put. If you become lost, staying put can be the best thing you can do; rescuers are much more likely to find you within 24 hours if you have not strayed too far. If you have a whistle, use it. You might not be able to hear others–but someone could hear you!

- Stay as warm and dry as possible to prevent hypothermia and frostbite. Find shelter, put on extra layers, and build a fire. Hypothermia, which can cause a decline in mental clarity, is most likely at very cold temperatures, but it can occur even at cool temperatures above 40 degrees Fahrenheit if a person becomes chilled from rain or sweat and wind.

- Stay hydrated. If you have a water-filtering straw, use it. If not, do you know the best water sources? Experts say fast running water is your best bet to protect from getting ill. Also, look for animal tracks nearby as an indicator of a good water source.

- Eat food to maintain energy. Learn ahead of time what berries, plants, and even insects could keep you alive if needed. Pack a few protein bars or other high-energy snacks, such as nuts, and a few snacks with carbohydrates to give you the energy to keep moving—and so eating insects does not have to be an option.

IF EXPLORING GOES AWRY

Exploring nature can be exciting, but injuries can also happen. Following are common injuries and recommendations on how to avoid or best treat them if one should occur.

- Avoid dehydration. If you are out in the heat, you can get dehydrated very quickly. Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water. Eating foods with high water content can keep you hydrated as well.

- Pack sunscreen to protect your skin so that half an hour in the sun does not lead to having a rough time the rest of the trip. Also, be sure to pack a first aid kit. It's common to get lacerations while camping and hiking, especially for young campers who are having fun exploring and might not be careful. If you need to treat a cut, the first step is to clean the wound with antiseptic to avoid any possible infection. Visit a local hospital or urgent care facility for anything that needs immediate medical treatment.

- Anticipate insect bites. Since you are going to be outside most of the camping trip, it's impossible to avoid insects. Try applying insect repellent to your skin and bug spray within your immediate surroundings. Clothing with insect repellent in the material is also now being made. Also, make sure to bring anti-itch ointment in case you are bitten.

- Care for sprains. Your first aid kit should have medical tape and elastic bandages to treat the injury.

These points may sound scary, but you are less likely to encounter any of them if you prepare in advance. With proper planning, you can enjoy your camping trip more with less worry.

Keeping Kids Healthy and Safe During Summer Fun

BY MS. SARAH PRUETT, STAFF WRITER

As an adult you may know how to beat the heat, but do you know how to best protect children from the dangers of the sun?

Thankfully, there are plenty of ways to keep your little ones safe and healthy while having fun in the sun! Whether enjoying a nice, sandy trip to the beach or going for a swim at a pool to cool off, the following tips and tricks can help keep the youngest among us healthy and safe.

BE SMART IN THE SUN

Summer is a time for ample play outdoors. However, the sun gets hot, and it gets hot fast. Make sure to keep children lathered up with sunscreen from head to toe before going into the sun and reapply at least every 2 hours. Give them a fashionable hat to wear and designate places with shade for them to play to limit direct sun exposure to their skin. Children are more susceptible to sunburn than adults, so it is important to be proactive to avoid painful blisters. If a child is sunburned, aloe gel and plenty of fluids should provide comfort and help heal the burn. If they show any signs of fever, headache, or confusion, it is important to seek medical care immediately.

There are also numerous devices to help keep infants and toddlers cool from the summer. A stroller fan, for example, is a battery-operated fan that clips onto a car seat or stroller. Strollers can also be adorned with extra material to shield the sun. However, these materials should be thin fabrics to allow a consistent flow of air. Also, ice packs can be frozen ahead of outdoor outings and can be applied on the neck, armpits, or back to help cool off a child.

STAY HYDRATED

Summer play results in summer sweat, which typically causes the body to dehydrate more quickly. Make sure kids stay hydrated by providing them plenty of liquids to drink, especially water! The Institute of Medicine of the National Academies recommends the following amounts for water consumption per day among children:

- 1-3 years: about 4 cups
- 4-8 years: about 5 cups
- 9-13 years: about 8 cups for boys, about 7 cups for girls
- 14-18 years: about 11 cups for boys, about 8 cups for girls

Squeezing citrus juices, such as lemon, lime, or orange, into water can help add flavor and satisfy the taste buds of picky drinkers. Another way to increase water intake is to eat foods with high water content, such as fruits and veggies. Who doesn't love a slice of watermelon on a sunny day?

PRACTICE WATER SAFETY

In the United States, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, there is an average of 11 drowning deaths per day. With

drowning being too common of an occurrence, knowing even a little bit about water safety can make a world of difference.

Having an honest conversation about water safety and pool safety with children can potentially reduce the occurrence of dangerous situations, as can swim lessons. Swim lessons can start for babies as young as six months old and can help instill

IT ONLY TAKES SECONDS FOR SOMEONE TO DROWN, and often there is no loud splash or other alarming noise to signal a drowning.

water safety measures in kids as they grow. Additionally, never allow children to play around or in water unsupervised; ensure that a sober adult is present, even if the water is in a bathtub or small wading pool. Non-swimmers can drown in as little as a foot of water or less if they fall in face down and panic. It only takes seconds for someone to drown, and often there is no loud splash or other alarming noise to signal a drowning.

Unfortunately, many attentive parents have tragically lost their children due to how quickly and silently drownings can occur.

Although nothing takes the place of vigilant supervision, there are also devices that can help protect kids around pools, such as safety nets. A safety net is fastened on and sits above the pool water; therefore, if a child (or animal) were to accidentally fall in, they would be caught by the net and prevented from falling deep into the water. High fencing and locked gates around a pool are also recommended safety devices.

Although summertime brings about the hottest weather and brightest sun rays, there are always ways to stay safe while enjoying seasonal activities. Be aware, alert, and on guard, especially while supervising children.

MISHAP-FREE FLYING HOUR MILESTONES

6,500 HOURS

157 ARW, Pease ANGB, NH

Col John Pogorek

5,000 HOURS

344 ARS, McConnell AFB, KS

Maj David M. Henze
TSgt Killian W. Stone

157 ARW, Pease ANGB, NH

Col Jeffrey Cole
Lt Col Michael Sanders
Lt Col Wiley Semrau
Lt Col Ian Tate
MSgt Glen Starkweather
MSgt Nathan Tarleton

3,500 HOURS

350 ARS, McConnell AFB, KS

Lt Col Jeremy J. Broussard
Lt Col Brian J. Potter
MSgt Jeremiah B. Ibarra
MSgt Blake J. Landry
MSgt Anthony L. Montani
MSgt Cleigh M. Robbins
MSgt Chelsey J. Thornhill
MSgt Jesse P. Wright

344 ARS, McConnell AFB, KS

Maj Jarrod N. Jones
Maj Christopher L. Mantle
Maj Nathan J. Reineke
Maj James C. Tomlin
Maj Steven D. Zumwalde
MSgt Eric D. Flanders
MSgt Russ B. Hobbs
MSgt Derek T. Lyles

157 ARW, Pease ANGB, NH

Col Amy-Lou Emanuel-Bassett
Col Nelson Perron
Lt Col Nicholas Alcocer
Lt Col Michael Callaghan
Lt Col Daniel Chacon
Lt Col Christopher Dillman
Lt Col Walter Hale
Lt Col Ryan Jones
Lt Col Jackson McFarland
Lt Col Paulo Morales
Lt Col Toby Pellenz
Lt Col Marc Zubricki
Maj James Lux
Maj Matthew Valentino

2,500 HOURS

350 ARS, McConnell AFB, KS

Lt Col Daniel W. Barrows
Lt Col Andrew P. Bowers
Lt Col Jacob R. Parker
Maj Jonathan A. Bergkamp
Maj Aaron R. Brown
Maj Eric J. Gall
Maj Simon G. Mohr
Maj Jack P. Ryan
Maj Andrew K. Teigeler
Maj Richard N. Wiseman
CMSgt Benjamin L. Cobb
SMSgt Ben W. Davis
SMSgt Aaron J. Tessman
MSgt Charles C. Adams
MSgt Bobby R. Jones

344 ARS, McConnell AFB, KS

Lt Col Ki W. Kwak
Maj Jonathan W. Avera
Maj Michael A. Champagne
Maj Christopher S. Driggs
Maj Keven R. Dunbar
Maj Thomas A. Gorry
Maj Nicholas J. Reed
Maj Marshal O. Russell
Maj Mark W. Sajowitz
Maj Kyle C. Schafer
Maj Carson L. Slater
Maj Benjamin L. Taliaferro
Capt Sebastian Constable
Capt John H. Rush
Capt Marcus S. Watson
TSgt DeVaughn T. Granger
TSgt Daniel J. Hernandez

157 ARW, Pease ANGB, NH

Lt Col Russell Campbell
Lt Col Brian Carloni
Lt Col Paul Kell
Lt Col Matthew Mills
Maj Matthew Hallman
Maj Matthew Turk
Maj Christopher Williams
Capt Trevor Britt
MSgt Daryl McPhee
TSgt Natalie Belongie
TSgt Michael Culver

TO SUBMIT MISHAP-FREE FLYING HOUR MILESTONES:
Send your request to: **mobilityforum@us.af.mil**
HQ AMC/SEE, 618.229.0927 (DSN 779)

Please submit as shown in the listings above (first name, last name, sorted alphabetically within rank).

QUICKSTOPPERS

Proactive Safety Begins with Addressing Safety Culture

BY MAJ STEVE BOSTWICK,
AMC FLIGHT SAFETY

The primary objective of Air Force safety is simple: mishap prevention. The service has implemented many tools and practices throughout the years to support this altruistic endeavor. In order for the safety apparatus to function properly, the Air Force relies heavily on the input and feedback of our Airmen executing the mission. Unfortunately, the purpose of Air Force safety is not commonly appreciated, as many personnel are unaware of the opportunities available to them in preventing future mishaps.

Not only are many Airmen unaware of the Air Force's safety mission as a whole, those who are familiar are often hesitant to trust safety professionals' intentions. There is apprehension that a safety investigation following a mishap would be similar to an Inspector General-led unit inspection, or perhaps that submitting a report through the Airmen Safety Action Program (ASAP) will somehow result in a career-ending punishment. When these hesitancies are shared among multiple Airmen, a breakdown occurs in the Air Force's safety mission. This breakdown results in a culture where personnel are unwilling to present information or share experiences that may one day prevent a mishap.

To combat this seemingly tenacious problem, Airmen must learn to trust the Air Force's safety enterprise. As many men and women in the armed forces have learned, trust is not given; it is earned. Education is the first tier in Airmen earning this trust. Airmen must be taught early in their service career that, collectively, everyone is a safety professional. Assessing risk and applying appropriate mitigation strategies is inevitably a subconscious process that we attempt to harness through safety programs and procedures. Leaders should instill within their teams the concept that safety's purpose is to save lives, not inflict punishment. Leaders should continue to educate their teams on the available safety tools within the inventory. It is imperative for personnel occupying active safety roles to share what they know so other Airmen can gain insight and learn from past mishaps. This obligation requires safety offices to proactively connect with their units and ensure the communication is collaborative, not siloed.

Many in the Air Force have reservations about the safety reporting procedures, which inevitably harms our readiness and capability. By focusing on mending this predisposed culture of mistrust throughout the branch, Air Force safety can focus on and accomplish its true purpose more effectively: mishap prevention.

Airmen walk and look for debris during a foreign object damage prevention walk at Ramstein Air Base, Germany. The 86th Airlift Wing Foreign Object Damage Prevention Program helps to ensure the safety of vehicles, personnel, and aircraft, and is essential to the everyday operations of the flightline.

USAF by A1C Class Savannah L. Waters

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A DAY IN THE LIFE

SSgt Rafael DeGuzman-Paniagua, 305th Aerial Port Squadron Special Handling Representative, secures a pallet of equipment on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, NJ, March 24, 2022. The 305th Air Mobility Wing is sending equipment to Europe as part of the United States security assistance to Ukraine.

USAF photo by SrA Joseph Morales