



# MOBILITY FORUM

THE MAGAZINE OF AIR MOBILITY COMMAND | WINTER 2023-2024

**728 AMS  
Airmen Played  
Critical Role in  
Turkish Earthquake  
Relief Efforts**

**Maintenance  
ASAPs On the Rise!**

**Celebrating 15  
Years of Excellence:  
The 521 AMOW**

**Mobility Guardian 2023 Exercises  
Readiness and Interoperability**

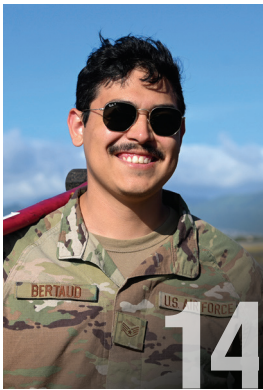
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**AIR MOBILITY COMMAND**  
Gen Michael A. Minihan



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SSgt Andrew Flint, left, and A1C Andrea Medranda, 37th Airlift Squadron, Ramstein Air Base, Germany Loadmasters, sit on a C-130J Super Hercules ramp during a simulated cargo drop during a Hispanic heritage flight over Germany, Sept. 6, 2023. In celebration of National Hispanic Heritage Month During the flight, an all-Hispanic crew, including the loadmasters, pilots, maintainers, and medical personnel, participated in an aeromedical flight training sortie, providing real-world aeromedical evacuation practice.

USAF photo by SrA Edgar Grimaldo

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# Happy Holidays, Mobility Warriors!

As we approach the holiday season, I find myself reflecting upon a year that was nothing short of extraordinary. The passion and commitment exhibited by our team of Total Force Mobility Airmen remains unparalleled, and my gratitude is unending. Airmen are the magic that powers the heart and soul of the Mobility Enterprise, and I am truly inspired by our team every day.

Air Mobility Command (AMC) sets the tempo for the Joint Force, and we are moving at a blistering pace. The deployment, maneuver, and sustainment tempo we set is unmatched by any other force in the world. From humanitarian support to combat operations, every mission showcases this peerless capability and our nation's unwavering commitment. Our unity and strength resonate globally, reinforcing our allies' confidence and giving pause to those who might wish to challenge the rules-based international order. Nothing this year illustrated our commitment more clearly than Mobility Guardian 2023.

Your efforts during Mobility Guardian were monumental. With tenacity and determination, we exploded into theater, moved with agility, and executed the gamut of capabilities in the most demanding environment on earth. We operated hand-in-glove with our allies and partners in every aspect of the exercise. Together, there can be no doubt—we are ready. As we look to 2024, it is imperative that we create irreversible momentum for the hard-won gains of the past two years. The challenges ahead may be daunting, but there is no doubt in my mind that this team will meet and overcome anything that comes our way.

Operationally, the pace has been incredible. It feels as though AMC has played a role in every major event throughout the year. Together, we provided humanitarian support after the earthquake in Turkey, we delivered security assistance to Ukraine, we conducted a non-combatant evacuation operation in South Sudan, and that is just the beginning of the list. We celebrated 100 years of aerial refueling and continued to bring more KC-46s online while divesting our KC-10 fleet. We transported and supported the President as he conducted high-level

meetings throughout the United States, Europe, India, and Vietnam.

These triumphs do not come easily, and I am incredibly grateful for the sacrifices made by every one of you who make every day in AMC a success. I would particularly like to thank those of you who will not be able to spend this holiday with loved ones because you are flying, fixing, or supporting our non-stop missions around the world. Your dedication is a testament to the unyielding commitment and love for our nation and for each other, and your sacrifice is felt deeply.

The “Warrior Heart” ethos—elevating mind to the same level as body and craft—remains our guiding principle in creating a strong and resilient force. Warrior Heart is not a program, but rather, about our climate and our culture. While we continue to expand our efforts in family support, housing, and education, nothing replaces the positive effect we have on each other as brothers and sisters in arms. During this holiday season, take a moment to reflect, to appreciate, and to refresh. If you can, reach out to a fellow Mobility Warrior, especially those away from home. Remind them that we are, and always will be, a family.

To our Active Duty, Guard, Reserve, and Civilian Airmen, you are the heartbeat of Air Mobility Command. My wife, Ashley, and I are filled with gratitude and pride for everything you represent. Let us embrace the promise of 2024 with fervor and determination.

I wish each of you peace, joy, and love this holiday season. LET'S GO! 🇺🇸



Gen Mike Minihan, Commander,  
Air Mobility Command

**The “Warrior Heart”  
ethos—elevating  
mind to the same  
level as body and  
craft—remains our  
guiding principle in  
creating a strong  
and resilient force.**



The C-130 Hercules is one of many in the 618th Air Operations Center's fleet of nearly 1,100 mobility aircraft.

## Breathing Life into Mobility Operations: The 618th Air Operations Center

BY MRS. LAUREN FOSNOT, STAFF WRITER

If Maslow had created a hierarchy of needs for the U.S. Air Force, the 618th Air Operations Center (618 AOC) would arguably be positioned at the top.

In fact, the 618 AOC's constant presence is so vital to everyday operations that its commander, Col Corey A. Simmons, compares the organization to oxygen, necessary for the survival of the global mobility mission.

"We're oxygen. It's just supposed to be there. All of us breathe in and breathe out this element that allows us to enable our day," Simmons explained. "But if we turn the oxygen down, or God forbid we turn it off, it's the only thing you can think about: 'How do I get it back?' That's what the AOC brings to the fight."

Simmons stated this analogy is applicable to Air Mobility Command (AMC) in general, but especially to the 618 AOC, being the execution arm of operations.

Situated at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, the 618 AOC earns the execution arm title by providing the critical command and control and support necessary for approximately 100 to 150 missions daily. These missions include responding rapidly to crises, executing humanitarian efforts, and maintaining readiness around the globe.

"You pick your natural disaster or man-made operation, and we are going to have a touchpoint," Simmons remarked.

To accomplish this wide reach, the 618 AOC operates around the clock, every single day of the year. This constant support sustains and bolsters the countless endeavors of AMC.

"I would argue that if we shut down for a day, every combatant commander would be on the phone with U.S. Transportation Command asking what's going on," Simmons said.

Ensuring seamless execution of a multitude of complex missions takes experience and excellence in leadership, both elements that Simmons possesses. Taking the reins as Commander of the 618 AOC has been a culmination of the colonel's distinguished career.

"I have been serving for about 25 years, and it probably took all 25 of them to be prepared to fulfill this role," Simmons said.

Simmons's path to command at the 618 AOC has been shaped by his time as a trainer pilot and an AMC pilot, which he commented gave him the appreciation of "what we do and how

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## AOC stands for more than air operations center, according to Col Simmons:

**A**irmen are the magic.

**O**perations run 24/7, 365 days a year.

**C**ompetence and credibility must be sustained.

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we do it.” His various leadership roles, particularly as Wing Commander of Travis Air Force Base, CA, and as Chief of Staff at Air Mobility Command, provided him with a deep appreciation for the “how” of AMC operations.

Simmons noted that the Chief of Staff position honed in on the “why,” deepening his knowledge of AMC’s shift toward a more postured stance and what the 618 AOC does to enable that.

“I am very blessed to have experiences that have enabled me to sit in this chair at this very unique time,” Simmons said.

To further illustrate how his vantage point supports AMC’s objectives, Simmons drew an analogy from the world of sports. He compared his time at Travis to being the head football coach of his beloved Chicago Bears and likened his role as the 618 AOC commander to being the Commissioner of the National Football League (NFL). In this capacity, his responsibility is not just coaching a single team, but overseeing multiple teams’ operations, ensuring they are strategically positioned for triumph.

“Even the most diehard football fans may not know who the NFL

Commissioner is, but they know he is good at his job,” Simmons remarked. “The NFL has a brand that most people enjoy, and so does the 618 AOC; I plan to uphold that brand’s reputation.”

The colonel’s extensive background has certainly prepared him for leading a pivotal organization; equally crucial are his adept leadership abilities.

While overseeing the 618 AOC, Simmons says he asks his teammates to consider three things:

1. “No one knows how to do your job better than you; take ownership of your role.”
2. “Be credible. It is each of our duties to uphold the credibility of the 618 AOC.”
3. “Be accountable. Mistakes happen—never on purpose. The teammates that I want to be around are ones that own their mistakes and develop courses of action to mitigate and correct them. If we don’t spend time pointing fingers, we can get back on track faster.”

The colonel noted that to keep collective readiness a goal, it is



Col Corey A. Simmons, Commander,  
618th Air Operations Center

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paramount that Airmen put safety at the forefront of their efforts. As commander, he charges the 618 AOC to act as an extension of the crew, ensuring that they have every opportunity to be safe while executing the mission.

“Impossible is just a barrier,” Simmons says. He hopes empowering the individuals within the 618 AOC will further the success that has been set by previous 618 AOC leaders.

“The previous commanders of this organization built it into the preeminent air operations center on the planet,” Simmons stated. “My intention is to follow the legacy of giants that have sat in the seat before me.”

There is no doubt Simmons will keep that momentum going. As AMC prepares for the future fight, the 618 AOC will continue to fly under the radar, breathing life into today’s ready and lethal mobility forces. 🇺🇸

# The Earth Is Not Flat, and Stabilized Approaches Are Good for the Mobility Air Force

BY MR. JAMES BUSBEA, C-5 MFOQA FLIGHT DATA ANALYST

There is a never-ending supply of misinformation available on nearly every imaginable subject, including stabilized approaches.

Even rational and logical individuals, as aviators are known to be, can be misled if they are not receiving information from a credible source. Let us take a few minutes to set the record straight and clear up some common misconceptions about stabilized approaches and the associated Military Flight Operations Quality Assurance (MFOQA) analysis.

The USAF modeled its stabilized approach program on the commercial airline industry's best practice. The Flight Safety Foundation (FSF) Approach-and-Landing Accident Reduction Task Force (ALARTF) is considered to be the genesis of the stabilized approach concept that was adopted by the airlines in the late 1990s. In March 1998, *A Study of Fatal Approach-and-Landing Accidents Worldwide, 1980-1996*, commissioned by the United Kingdom Civil Aviation Authority in support of the FSF ALARTF, indicated that 46 percent of the fatal accidents involving commercial airlines between 1980 and 1996 occurred in the approach-and-landing phase. Unstable approaches contributed to many of those accidents and, therefore, garnered significant focus in the FSF ALARTF report. The USAF recognized that many of its mishaps were also associated with the approach-and-landing phase and implemented stabilized approach

guidance that closely aligns with the recommendations of the FSF ALARTF report.

As MFOQA capability developed, the USAF began tracking unstable approach trends in each of its MFOQA-capable Mobility Air Force (MAF) airplanes around 2008. The USAF uses approach stability analysis as a tool to identify hazards in order to mitigate risk and reduce the frequency of events—*not as a scorecard of compliance with stabilized approach guidance*. Approach stability analysis has many practical uses, such as identifying seasonal, historical, and location-specific trends.

Seasonal trends show when the highest rates for unstable approaches are likely. Table 1 illustrates seasonal unstable approach trends for a typical MAF airplane averaged across 12 years. The seasonal trends of this Mission Design Series (MDS) are indicative of the MAF fleet. MFOQA analysis shows that the by-month unstable approach rate for nearly every MAF airplane peaks in April. It follows that these spring unstable approach trends closely correlate with a seasonal increase in gusty winds. Therefore, it is a good idea to brush up on procedures, limits, and techniques for dealing with winds before spring arrives.

Historical trends not only show progress toward reducing unstable approach hazards but also identify areas in which to concentrate our efforts. Several MAF platforms have

reduced their unstable approach rates by more than one-half since MFOQA analysis has been tracking them. However, analysis shows certain facets of approach stability (speed, descent rate, bank, etc.) remain persistent drivers of unstable approaches by MDS despite lower overall rates. For example, Figure 1 illustrates historical trends for another MDS, indicating a plateau in the leading unstable approach event rate since 2014. Do you know the leading driver of unstable approaches in your airplane, what causes it, and **how** to avoid it?

Location-specific trends can draw attention to challenges with local approach procedures, Air Traffic Control, terrain, and weather phenomena. Pilots can study location-specific approach stability trends during mission planning while decisionmakers can use these trends to improve conditions. MFOQA provides a monthly by-airport breakout of unstable approach rates and triggers for each MAF airplane. Before you fly your first approach into an unfamiliar airport, it would be wise to educate yourself about the unstable approach trends for that location.

Despite the MAF making remarkable strides toward improving approach stability and a nearly universal recognition across the commercial industry that stabilized approaches reduce mishaps and save lives, many USAF pilots remain skeptical. A common contention is that the

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	By-Month
January	23.1%	19.1%	15.4%	9.1%	7.5%	11.1%	8.2%	10.3%	8.7%	5.8%	6.8%	8.3%	9.2%
February	28.8%	19.7%	18.3%	5.3%	8.5%	9.0%	9.3%	8.7%	11.1%	9.3%	7.4%	9.3%	9.9%
March	30.1%	16.0%	9.5%	8.8%	10.7%	11.4%	8.5%	9.6%	9.4%	8.2%	8.0%	7.3%	9.4%
April	21.2%	19.4%	10.2%	9.0%	12.4%	11.2%	8.1%	10.1%	9.9%	9.2%	8.8%	8.7%	10.2%
May	34.0%	13.4%	10.1%	6.4%	10.7%	8.6%	11.3%	9.1%	8.2%	7.3%	8.3%	9.6%	9.6%
June	22.3%	15.2%	4.1%	7.9%	7.2%	10.6%	10.6%	9.5%	7.8%	8.3%	7.4%	7.3%	9.0%
July	17.8%	13.9%	9.0%	7.1%	8.9%	10.5%	8.7%	10.7%	7.1%	8.6%	7.8%	7.7%	8.9%
August	22.0%	18.0%	8.5%	7.5%	4.7%	9.3%	7.8%	10.7%	10.0%	8.8%	10.2%	6.5%	9.2%
September	15.2%	15.3%	10.3%	6.0%	8.3%	12.4%	7.3%	6.9%	8.5%	8.4%	7.4%	4.8%	8.2%
October	7.1%	13.4%	8.6%	7.1%	7.9%	9.7%	7.6%	6.8%	7.9%	8.6%	5.6%	7.0%	7.7%
November	15.0%	9.7%	7.3%	8.5%	7.9%	10.7%	7.8%	7.9%	7.9%	8.5%	5.8%	6.1%	8.1%
December	16.8%	12.0%	11.6%	6.6%	5.9%	10.5%	7.4%	7.5%	7.6%	6.6%	5.0%	4.3%	7.6%
By-Year	20.6%	15.6%	10.5%	7.3%	8.4%	10.4%	8.7%	9.0%	8.7%	8.2%	7.5%	7.4%	

Table 1. Seasonal Unstable Approach Trends (Typical for Mobility Air Force) for 2011–2022.

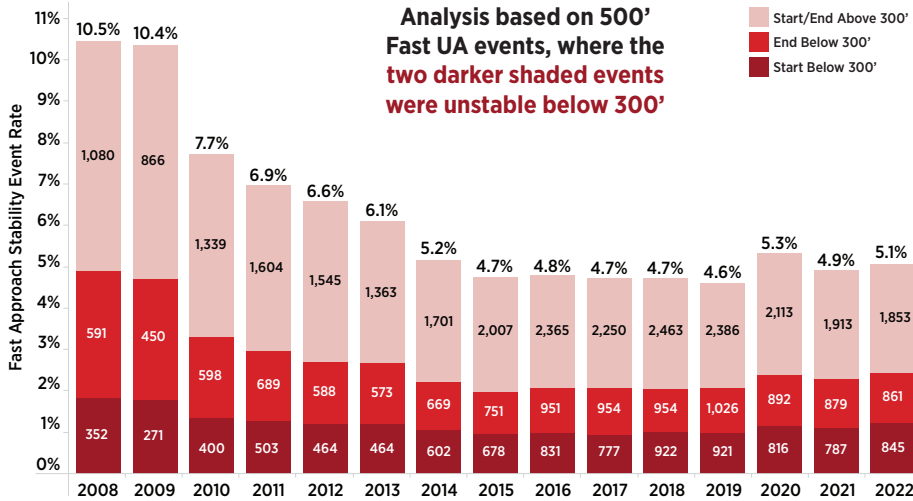


Figure 1. Graph. Historical Unstable Approach (UA) Trends (Fast Example).

the boundaries of how pilots **should** be flying during the final approach segment, thus discouraging operation in a flight envelope where any pilot’s ability to safely land the airplane might be uncertain.

Some pilots are only onboard with certain aspects of approach stability because they assign a personal level of importance to individual stabilized approach criteria. For example, speed slow (five knots below target) is widely perceived to be the most important of the stabilized approach criteria. The minimum target airspeed is a function of stall speed ( $V_{STALL}$ ) and is typically 20–30 percent above  $V_{STALL}$ . Flying five knots below the target airspeed is far from falling out of the sky. That is not to suggest that you should not care about flying below the minimum target airspeed, rather to illustrate how we can be biased to recognize speed slow as an unintentional pilot error and view deviation from

stabilized approach criteria are arbitrary and overly conservative. The premise of these criteria is not to identify when an approach is unsalvageable but to define acceptable deviations from target parameters. Unless you are the parent of a teenager, you probably have not thought much about road signs recently. Yellow

“advisory” signs suggest a speed that engineers have determined will allow you to safely traverse a particular section of roadway. Like yellow speed limit signs, USAF subject matter experts and airplane manufacturers (of newer airplanes) establish stabilized approach criteria that represent



## “Tactical” does not equate to recklessness and “deliberate” does not equate to limiting combat capability.

other stabilized approach criteria less critically. Instead, we should view anything more than a momentary or minor deviation beyond **any** of the stabilized approach criteria as an “undesired state.” AFMAN 11-290, *Cockpit/Crew Resource Management (CRM) and Threat & Error Management (TEM) Program*, defines an undesired state as *Operational conditions where an unintended situation results in a reduction in margins of safety. Undesired states are a result of ineffective CRM/TEM practices and may lead to an incident, accident, mishap, or mission failure.*

On every approach, there are numerous tasks, distractions, and threats competing for a pilot’s attention. The objective of every approach is to orchestrate a cacophony of information and pilot workload into a symphony that culminates in a safe landing and rollout. Stabilized approach strategies simply place the airplane in the optimal position, configuration, and energy state for the pilot to achieve this goal. A stable final approach segment reduces the pilot’s workload, where the margin for error is thinnest and requires only minor adjustments instead of significant corrections.

Pilots do not intentionally set out to fly and land from unstable approaches. However, good intentions are sometimes counteracted by ineffective risk management and decisionmaking. Ineffective risk management stems from an impulsive methodology devoid of prior evaluation or mitigation strategy for approach stability threats. Ineffective risk management compels reactionary corrections and dependence on undesirable remedies or compromises such as prolonged use of idle power, late/unbriefed configuration changes, overreliance on additional drag devices (if applicable), or simply tolerating


the unstable approach attribute(s) until conditions improve. The burden of fixing an unstable approach close to the ground is the penalty of poor risk management and can diminish a pilot’s bandwidth to cope with emerging threats and tasks. Effective risk management involves a deliberate assessment of threats to approach stability so hazards can be anticipated and preempted. As a bonus, effective risk management increases the pilot’s capacity to recognize and mitigate additional, unforeseen threats during the approach.

Lapses in risk management are compounded by indecision. Fortunately, the stabilized approach philosophy transforms an otherwise complex and subjective issue—the right time to abandon an approach—into a straightforward no-brainer. Predefined criteria draw an objective and tangible line in the sand to facilitate recognition of the undesired state.

When grappling with the logic of approach stability, many pilots seek causality. If I am required to fly a stable approach or go around, then adverse consequences must follow each unstable approach that does not go around, right? **False.** A stable approach does not guarantee a stable touchdown and an unstable approach does not guarantee an unstable touchdown. To the casual observer, this apparent contradiction seems to undermine the premise of approach stability. However, this notion is easily refuted. Can a fast-steep approach contribute to a long-fast touchdown? Absolutely. But a perfectly stable, partial flap approach with a late power pull can also produce a long-fast touchdown. The fact is, approach and touchdown stability usually have a distant relationship because skilled pilots and forgiving conditions

(long-dry runways, low aircraft gross weights, conservative landing performance calculations, etc.) often prevail and keep them separated. Stable approaches set the stage for stable touchdowns but do not provide a guarantee.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not address the camo-face-painted elephant in the room—tactical approaches. Commercially derived stabilized approaches and the military purpose of our weapon systems seem to be at odds. However, each time we take an airplane out of the fight with a preventable mishap, we are doing our adversaries’ job for them. “Tactical” does not equate to recklessness and “deliberate” does not equate to limiting combat capability. Air Force Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (AFTTP) 3-3.C-17 drives home the point perfectly with this statement: *“Safe and successful arrival execution depends on proper energy management, regardless of the type of arrival and approach to be flown. **Any approach type, when planned and managed properly, can be executed as a stable approach.**”* Professional military aviators are up to the task of flying tactically sound and stable approaches at the same time.

The stabilized approach philosophy has been around for a long time and is not going away. Do not think of it as an arbitrary requirement that has been unfairly levied upon USAF pilots. The stabilized approach is a proven and effective tool for managing risk and reducing the likelihood of mishaps. Moreover, the principles of this philosophy are applicable to every type of approach and can actually make the pilot’s job easier. Therefore, filter out all the misinformation and embrace the truth: stabilized approaches are good for the MAF. 



# Expanding the Weapons Safety Toolbox

BY MR. RAY TRAYLOR, 19TH AIRLIFT WING  
WEAPONS SAFETY MANAGER


**W**eapons Safety Managers (WSM) do not physically lift wrenches any longer or build up munitions, or load them on airframes; however, they still need the right tools for the job. We need to expand our capabilities from time to time to meet the needs of future wars and missions. When new munitions arrive on station, the maintenance crew must add new tools to their toolboxes to perform maintenance on the new items. The potential to be placed in a bare-base environment with any mixture of the five branches of service is a possibility for a WSM, and familiarizing ourselves with the way other branches conduct business regarding their explosives safety programs will only make us a force multiplier. There are several different ways we can achieve that; one is through continued education.

The Army Safety Career Program 12 (CP-12) and Explosives Safety Professional Certificates, Levels 1 and 2, are options for us to expand our toolboxes. You can find out about the CP-12 program through the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center website at <https://safety.army.mil/CP-12/Certificate-Programs>. The Air Force Safety Center (AFSEC) has an Air Force-equivalency matrix that identifies training you may have already taken that will count toward the CP-12 program at the following link: <https://www.my.af.mil/gcss-af/USAF/ep/globalTab.do?channelPageId=s6925EC1335180FB5E044080020E329A9>.

The Explosives Safety Professional Certificates, Levels 1 and 2, can be obtained only after completion of the CP-12 program and completion of the computer-based training located on the Department of the Army Defense Ammunition Center website, <http://dactces.org/index.php>. Explosives Safety Certificate Level 2 requires students to take both an Advanced Explosives Safety Management Programs (ESMP) Workshop and a Deviation Process Workshop, which can be taken without having the CP-12 certificate in hand; however, the Army does require that all the computer-based training be completed prior to attending the workshops. Workshops are instructed by the U.S. Army Technical Center for Explosives Safety, which is the equivalent to the AFSEC.

The ESMP Workshop, addressed in Department of Defense (DoD) Instruction 6055.16, establishes written guidance on the safety of ammunition and explosives (AE) during production, transportation, storage, handling, use, inspection, maintenance, munition response

actions, demilitarization, and disposal. The Deviation Process Workshop addresses the use of a Department of the Army Form 7632, documenting deviations and risk acceptance involving AE or chemical agents.

One final suggestion to expand the toolbox would be the Defense Acquisition University Munitions and Explosives Safety Community Hub located at <https://www.dau.edu/cop/ammo>. You must register for an account and request access to the Hub. There is a lot of good information on this site, including items like a basic load ammunition holding area (BLAHA) inventory Calculator, BLAHA design, reduced quantity-distance storage, the "Yellow Book," "Emergency Response Guide," hazardous materials transportation, and much more. Although we are not required to complete continued education training each year, we cannot let complacency take hold in our profession. We must look for ways to increase our knowledge and capabilities to meet the U.S. Air Force's needs, both now and in the future. 



Col Adam Bingham, 6th Air Refueling Wing Commander, participates in an exercise with the 6th Civil Engineer Squadron Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit at MacDill Air Force Base, FL, Oct. 20, 2022.

USAF photo by AIC Sterling Sutton



## Maintenance ASAPs On the Rise!

BY MR. LALO MAYNES, AMC FLIGHT SAFETY

Throughout the Air Force, in Air Mobility Command (AMC), and within the aviation industry, head injury is the number one reported injury to the body. I wonder if mechanics who struck their heads had submitted an Airman Safety Action Program (ASAP) report describing “Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How” their incident occurred, how many injuries could have been prevented. You can help prevent future mishaps by simply telling your story and describing how it happened.

ASAP reporting in the maintenance community is slightly increasing but needs much more participation so that AMC staff can effectively resolve problems maintainers experience in the work environment. Airmen need not ignore problems or situations they experience. Thinking “Someone

else will fix it,” makes us part of an ongoing problem because by saying nothing, we accept complacency. Soon this accepted problem becomes normal. Safety professionals call this “The Normalization of Deviance,” which has been cited in reports for many major accidents across the globe, including the tragedies of the space shuttles Challenger and Columbia, Three Mile Island, and the aviation disaster at Tenerife, Spain.

The Air Force and AMC need your participation in the ASAP program. During an interview with Maj Gen David Sanford, Director of Logistics, Engineering and Force Protection, Headquarters AMC, I asked, “From a senior leader perspective, what do you believe to be the best avenue to reach or educate our young Airmen on the importance of ASAP reporting?”

The Airman Safety App empowers service members and civilians to report safety concerns virtually anywhere and anytime. Reports are made anonymously and sent to the Airman Safety Action Program Safety Center without the use of personal information. To download the app on a mobile device, visit the Apple App Store or the Google Play Store.

USANG photo by SrA John Linzmeier

Sanford replied that currently, ASAP is briefed during maintenance human factors training and annual refresher training. He believes the best avenue to reach Airmen would be for the Wing Safety office to coordinate with Maintenance Group Commanders to visit units to educate personnel and provide statistics and trend analysis per DAFI 91-202, *The US Air Force Mishap Prevention Program*. A positive attribute of ASAP is its accessibility from any device with an internet connection. Otherwise, reminders through shift changes, commander’s calls, fliers posted around the units, and scannable QR codes are crucial to educating our Airmen.

I also asked, “Are Maintenance Group Commanders asking Wing Safety to provide ASAP feedback, such as actual benefits of using ASAP?”

## The purpose of ASAP is to allow self-disclosure of threats, errors, and hazards without fear of disciplinary actions.

Sanford replied, “Well, here’s where relationships matter, specifically in this example, between the Maintenance Group and Wing Safety. This shouldn’t be a one-way pull system as both entities need to invest time and energy into ASAP and safety holistically. There are responsibilities for both parties: Maintenance Group to ask and inquire and pull information, then disseminating [the information] to the lowest level through appropriate avenues and channels [such as] commander’s call, chain of command, shift changes, etc. Wing Safety is the ultimate advisor to units within the wing, so it must be invested and involved by pushing information out, specifically DAFI 91-202 [*The US Air Force Mishap Prevention Program*], and being available to the units for questions, comments, and concerns.”

During our discussion, Sanford also suggested, “If you experience a problem or issue that you think needs to be addressed, then please allocate time at the end of your shift to submit an ASAP.”

Today, this program is being used by all of the major U.S. airlines, with continued success as each program matures. According to the Federal Aviation Association’s website, the U.S. aviation industry has been using ASAP since November 2002.<sup>1</sup> In the United States, as of April 2022, there are 438 private aviation companies who participate in this program. ASAP

can be used in any organization that is willing to be transparent with their reports. If you are hesitant to file, your ASAP report can be filed anonymously.

When a report is submitted, it goes to the Operations Risk Assessment and Management System (OpsRAMS) office where personnel are assigned to process ASAPs. Those reports are visible only to them. The ASAP team provides identity protection to guarantee that no one outside of the ASAP program will know who the submitter is. The ASAP is triaged to redact any information that could be used to identify the submitter, such as date, time, location, mission, or any other determining details provided in the report. After the ASAP is triaged, it is sent to the applicable subject matter expert on the AMC staff for comments and resolution.

The ASAP program is explained in DAFI 91-202, *The US Air Force Mishap Prevention Program*. Paragraph 5.10. says, “The ASAP is a voluntary, web-based capability to report error and hazards by Airmen in all functional areas.” This program is an integral part of AMC’s efforts to reduce mishaps and improve operation and training focus.

Maintenance and Aerial Port personnel and aircrews are encouraged to report any issues they encounter operationally that could lead to an accident or incident, ensuring proper attention can be levied to mitigate the risks. Additionally, Airmen are encouraged to report their honest mistakes so that others can learn from them and not make similar mistakes in the future. All ASAP reports are posted on the ASAP Scoreboard in the Air Force Safety Automated System (AFSAS) website at <https://afsas.safety.af.mil>.

The purpose of ASAP is to allow self-disclosure of threats, errors, and hazards without fear of disciplinary actions. This concept is defined in DAFI 91-225, *Aviation Safety Programs*, paragraph 1.2.3.3.: “Data collected for, or analyses generated from aviation safety programs shall not be used to initiate crew qualifications downgrade, take adverse personnel action, or monitor personnel performance.” This program affords submitters, regardless of Air Force Specialty Code, the ability to report hazards or errors without the fear of reprisal. There are a few conditions under which the ASAP identity protections may be excluded, such as criminal acts, substance abuse, intentional



Airmen assigned to the 15th Maintenance Squadron (MXS) and 154th MXS perform a C-17 Globemaster III home station check at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, HI, Aug. 7, 2023.

USAF photo by SSgt Alan Ricker

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.faa.gov/initiatives/asap/asap-participants>

falsification, and intentional disregard for safety or security.

When submitting an ASAP, your submission can be anonymous; simply leave out your contact information. However, submitting an ASAP anonymously prevents the ASAP team from contacting the submitter if more information is required to resolve the issue. Of the maintenance-related data collected by the AMC ASAP team, 57 percent of submitters included their contact information.


All ASAP data is stored in AFSAS. Between January 2019 and May 2023, the total number of aircrew-reported ASAPs was 4,505. During this same period there were only 94 ASAPs submitted by maintainers. The left column on the graph in Figure 1 indicates the total number of ASAPs. The bottom denotes the year (numbers in parentheses are the total number of reports that year), and the right column, the “Contact Info Rate,” is the percentage of reports that included submitters’ contact information.

With an increased abundance of data, the ASAP program will provide leadership, trainers, and supervision with an aggregate view of issues affecting the safe and efficient execution of the mission. In a previous article in *The Mobility Forum*, Bill Krouse from AMC’s OpsRAMS office stated, “An active ASAP program enriches the search tool incorporated in the ASAP software to allow an individual to search for and likely find numerous ASAPs about a specific event, location or MDS [Mission Design Series].”<sup>2</sup> As safety professionals, our job is to conduct studies and analyze gathered data. The purpose of that analysis is to help prevent mishaps and present conclusions based on useful data. ASAP captures that data by way of incidents Airmen submit.

What is the easiest way to submit an ASAP event? On your cell phone or

laptop, go to either the Google Play store or Apple’s App Store, search for “Airman Safety App,” and download the ASAP application.

When composing the ASAP report, submitters should be constructive and factual, while remaining positive and professional. Please remove emotion from your narrative and provide the facts as you know them. If needed, the ASAP Team at AMC will endeavor to resolve any differences in perspective and work with all involved to mitigate the risks that have been identified.

AMC Flight Safety urges Maintainers, Aerial Port personnel, and all other flight line personnel who are interested in improving the safety culture within their units and across AMC to not ignore that hazard you experienced on the flight line or in your work center. Submit an ASAP and let others learn from what you have experienced. 

*A special thank you to the AMC OpsRAMS ASAP Team and MSgt Justin Hunter for collecting data for this article.*

<sup>2</sup> Krouse, Bill. “Aviation Safety Action Program (ASAP) Reports: Why Should I File One?” *The Mobility Forum* 27, no. 3 (Fall 2018): 9–10.

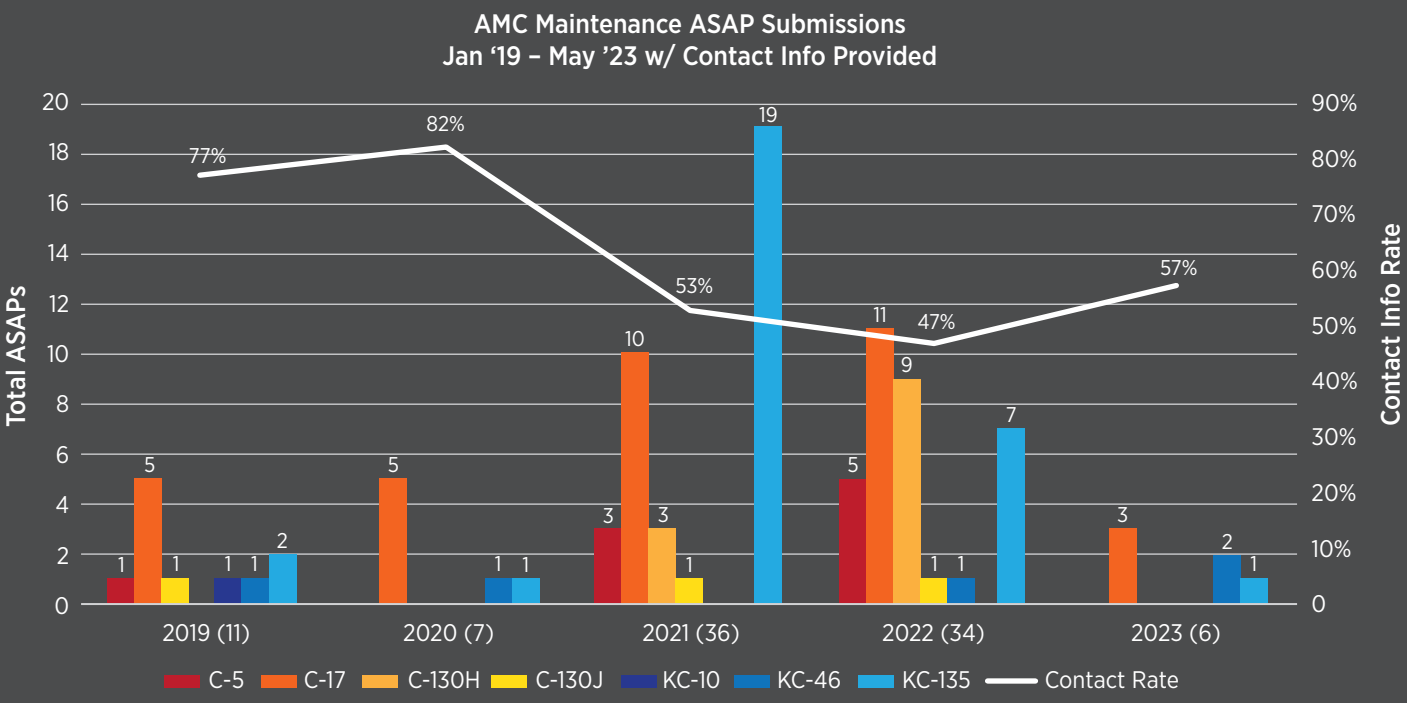


Figure 1. ASAP Submission Data, USAF

# AFFORGEN: The Next Step in the Pursuit of Perfection

BY MRS. LAUREN FOSNOT, STAFF WRITER

The Air Force undoubtedly boasts an unwavering commitment to readiness. To ensure the readiness needed to support the future fight, the Air Force is introducing a new deployment model.

Mark Johnson, Chief of Air Mobility Command's (AMC) Global Force Management Deployment and Policy Branch at Scott Air Force Base, IL, says this deployment model will transform the way Airmen train. Johnson further explained that the model focuses on "the training processes needed to create a highly functioning and ready force, prepared for potential conflict against peer competitors around the world."

The new model, called Air Force Force Generation, or AFFORGEN, will replace the current Air Expeditionary Force construct. The new and improved model is on a 24-month cycle, which is composed of four 6-month readiness phases: (1) Prepare, (2) Ready, (3) Available to Commit, and (4) Reset. Airmen build high-end readiness through the Prepare and Ready phases, deploy during the Available to Commit phase, and reintegrate during the Reset phase.

The goal of AFFORGEN is to provide a more predictable and balanced rotation schedule for Airmen and crews while ensuring that they are ready and capable to meet any mission. This peak readiness is verified via a certification exercise event.


After certification, Airmen can be deployed. "We are being very disciplined in addressing crises and making sure deployed Airmen

have had the 18 months of training time before being eligible to be sent forward," Johnson said.

This predictable and stable rotation schedule for Airmen and crews is beneficial for a number of reasons. First, this focused training enhances Airmen's core competencies while also focusing on the concept of Multi-Capable Airmen as it allows them to focus and work toward the goal of being certified. Second, according to Johnson, "By scheduling deployment further in advance, Airmen can train and certify as a team together. When they land down range, there is already the cohesion built—they are all already on the same footing." The improved camaraderie is due to being able to spend more time together as a team. Finally, AFFORGEN will enhance the quality of life and morale of Airmen and their families because they will have more stability and predictability in their schedules. Johnson discussed how this model will also enhance routine AMC missions, as the military's transportation needs exist 365 days a year.

According to Air Force Chief of Staff Gen Charles Q. Brown, Jr., AFFORGEN is one of the drivers for culture change, freeing up the mental capacity for Airmen to focus on the tasks ahead. Looking ahead of the model, the Air Force anticipates that AFFORGEN will reach initial operating capability in fiscal year 2023.

AFFORGEN is not just about deploying forces, it is about generating forces that are ready and capable to meet any mission. As Brown said, "AFFORGEN is not just an acronym; it's our way forward."

The Air Force embodies constant advancement, and initiatives like AFFORGEN exemplify this pursuit of perfection. This approach ensures a state of constant readiness and progress, avoiding complacency at all costs. 



# MOBILITY GUARDIAN 2023

## EXERCISES READINESS AND INTEROPERABILITY



BY MS. KATHY ALWARD, STAFF WRITER

**A**ir Mobility Command (AMC) recently conducted a large, full-spectrum readiness exercise: Mobility Guardian 2023 (MG23), in the Indo-Pacific region with seven participating countries: Australia, France, Japan, Canada, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and the United States. MG23 had two main themes this year, according to Lt Col Jacob Parker, MG23 exercise director.

Readiness was one of the main themes of MG23, according to Parker, who said that this exercise demonstrated not only the readiness of Air Mobility Command and Mobility Air Forces that were participating in the exercise but also the readiness of coalition partners that were taking part in the exercise.

Interoperability with coalition forces was the other theme, according to Parker. “And the way we did that is we broke [it] up into different phases for the exercise. So, Phase 1 was the ability to rapidly get into theater. Phase 2 was setting up the operations and executing the operations out of centralized locations. And then Phase 3 was the ability to move out

to dispersed locations and execute operations out of those dispersed locations,” Parker stated.

Parker said there were also unexpected themes, emphasizing that these exercises focused on the interoperability with coalition forces that were co-located to Andersen Air Force Base in Guam. “So initially, whenever we were going through the planning, we had different locations set up for our coalition forces. And at the mid-planning conference, about six months prior to execution, we decided to bring all of the coalition together at Andersen Air Force Base, which really increased the interoperability across the coalition forces because we were all there doing the same mission, working together to focus efforts to ensure that we’re achieving the objectives of that interoperability for Mobility Guardian,” said Parker.

Parker stated it proved useful, as he gave the example of the typhoon that hit Andersen Air Force Base about three weeks prior to going into the Mobility Guardian 2023 execution. The typhoon drastically affected the number of combat air forces, limiting their ability to truly test Agile Combat

Employment (ACE) at the scale they were hoping to achieve, according to Parker. There were still forces that they were able to test and validate for some of the ACE concepts that they had discussed during the past couple of years. “And we took away a lot of very good lessons learned for how we support and enable those ACE concepts for not only the fighters but also for the joint force,” Parker said.

According to Parker, this year’s exercise enhanced AMC’s capabilities and readiness by supporting recent initiatives such as the Air Force Force Generation Model (AFFORGEN). They were able to validate the concept of expeditionary air bases (XAB) and take away lessons learned that they can carry forward into the future, according to Parker. “AFFORGEN is a new concept that Headquarters Air Force came up with as far as presenting Force packages to be able to deploy anywhere around the world. And so, Mobility Guardian provided us the opportunity to ... present forces in that manner, so we rapidly deployed the mission generation force elements across all of our different mission sets within the Mobility Air Forces. But it also



USAF photos, left to right, by SSgt Malissa Lott, courtesy photo, SSgt Bailee Darbasie, top: AIC Kadielle Shaw, bottom: TSgt Alexander Cook, TSgt Heather Clements, and SSgt Malissa Lott.

presented us the opportunity to stand up the expeditionary air base concept—it's also known as XAB—that is a part of this AFFORGEN model. And so, for the first time ever, we were able to push out this XAB concept into not only Andersen Air Force Base, which is where all of the coalition forces were at, but we also pushed an XAB down to Darwin," Parker explained.

There were many unique challenges presented to mobility operations in the Indo-Pacific theater, Parker stated. "If we look at the INDOPACOM [Indo-Pacific Command] theater in its entirety, and you look at the map of the INDOPACOM theater, you'll see that 90 percent of it is water. And even then you start looking at locations that we can use in the INDOPACOM theater, and they're separated by nearly 3,000 miles," said Parker, who emphasized the importance of understanding the challenges that exist with limited basing options and the tyranny of distance that comes with this theater.

The mobility air forces encounter those same problem sets, Parker emphasized, so the airlift capabilities

and the ability to rapidly maneuver the joint force around the theater is extremely important. According to Parker, no one else in the world can do that at the same speed and scale. The sheer air fueling capabilities provided by the mobility air forces quickly overcome the tyranny of distance and the lack of basing problem sets that the Indo-Pacific presents, stated Parker.

Safety is paramount in everything the flying community does, Parker emphasized. "What we were doing in Mobility Guardian is we assess the risk ahead of time, and we put proper mechanisms in place to ensure that

we are buying down the risk ahead of time through different training criteria, or outfitting our crew force to ensure that they have the capabilities that they need to execute the mission prior to getting into the exercise scenario. And so, I think when we look at operating safely, it's kind of a different way of ensuring that you're buying down risk, is by assessing that risk ahead of time in a peacetime environment to ensure that you are able to execute in whatever the future may present," said Parker. 🇺🇸

### SHOWCASING SUCCESS: A CLOSER LOOK AT ONE OF THE MANY WINS OF MOBILITY GUARDIAN 2023

According to the 521st Air Mobility Operations Wing (AMOW), "Mobility Guardian 2023 was a huge success for the 521st Air Mobility Operations Wing and was a showcase for their forward-looking 'NextGen AMOW' contingency response options. Expanding upon the successes and lessons learned from the internal Nodal Lightning series of exercises, MG23 put the unit's rapid global mobility to the test. An Air Mobility Team [AMT] comprised of Airmen from across the wing was dispatched more than 8,000 miles to provide command and control, aerial port, and aircraft maintenance capabilities to U.S. and mission partner forces in a completely separate theater of operations. The exercise sharpened 521 AMOW Airmen, helped codify AMT procedures, and provided AMC with additional information on the employment capabilities of AMTs to be utilized for future contingencies."



BY MS. LAUREN SCHATZ, STAFF WRITER

In his best-selling book, *Outliers: The Story of Success*, Malcolm Gladwell presents a theory of the underlying reason Korean Air had more plane crashes than nearly any other airline in the world during the end of the 1990s—hierarchical culture. The author explains that because Korean culture has “high power distance,” meaning that authority is typically granted more respect and power than in other cultures, the copilots did not assert themselves in precarious flying situations. Had equal levels of authority been felt, more effective communication may have helped prevent some of the crashes.

This example serves as a reminder of the importance of effective communication. Lack of or unclear communication has led to numerous mishaps in the U.S. Air Force. In fact, according to the Air Force Safety Center, it was found that “communication is one of the most common factors present in aviation accidents.”

It is not always poor communication in and of itself that causes accidents, but it is often a significant factor.

One incident involving a young Airman and an instructor resulted in lives lost after a fuel imbalance became so severe that full flight control inputs were needed to maintain flight. The student did not speak up about what was happening, and the instructor corrected the wrong problem, ultimately resulting in the crash.

Lack of communication is not the only way things can go wrong; you should also ensure that you are communicating clearly. Verbal messages can often be spoken poorly and misinterpreted. What you say is not always what people hear, and this disconnect could be detrimental.

During the first five years of reporting to NASA’s Aviation Safety Reporting System, researchers found “ambiguous phraseology

and misperceived messages were caused by phonetic similarities, untimely message transmission, garbled phraseology, and lack of monitoring by the intended recipient.” An example of misinterpretation is the communication of the number “two,” which could be interpreted as the word “to.” There are drastic differences between the orders “two four zero zero feet” and “to four-zero-zero feet.”

People are the bedrock of the Air Force, and without the ability to effectively communicate with one another, advanced technology and resources are futile. Communication not only improves tasks but also acts as a motivator. Communicating intent can unite people toward a central mission. When leaders communicate their expectations, Airmen can gauge if they are on the right track.

The following are a few ways that we can all improve our communication:



**Instead of shifting your focus to your mental to-do list, focus on the conversation and actively listen to the speaker to understand what they are saying. This approach can build a habit that will serve you well.**

› **Avoid lapses in understanding.** To ensure you are understood, it can be helpful to ask the person you are speaking with to repeat what you have asked. By reiterating it, you can see if you were clear and that they are on the same page. This habit can help you improve your clarity and improve their listening skills. Col. Randy Kaufman, 36th Operations Group Commander, explained that when orders are misunderstood, he likes to first ask himself if he


communicated effectively. He believes any lapse in performance is often a leader's failure to effectively communicate intent.

› **Repeat and summarize.** Did you go over a significant amount of important information with someone? Chances are they could have missed something. It can be helpful to reiterate or overview your main points to ensure that your key ideas were delivered.

› **Admit when you do not understand.** It can feel awkward to confess that you did not understand something. Will the speaker think less of you? No. Typically, it is the opposite. Admitting when you do not understand is the intelligent choice, and good leaders respect and recognize that.

› **Communication can increase innovation.** Have an idea? Share it! Whereas leaders unquestionably have earned their position, nobody has the same mind as you, and your ideas are valuable. New ways of thinking and doing things can always be implemented. In the Air Force's think tank, Spark Tank, Airmen have pitched valuable ideas that have led to improvements in safety and efficiency.

› **Be a good listener.** We often try to predict what the other person will say and tune them out. We are often wrong in our predictions, however, and miss valuable information. Instead of shifting your focus to your mental to-do list, focus on the conversation and actively listen to the speaker to understand what they are saying. This approach can build a habit that will serve you well.

These techniques are only a few ways we can be more mindful about our communication. Being aware that miscommunication can cause mishaps is the first step toward reducing human error. Verify information and instructions with others if you do not understand something. Together, we can create a more cohesive and safer Air Force. 





# 728 AMS Airmen Played Critical Role in Turkish Earthquake Relief Efforts

As part of humanitarian and disaster relief efforts in the aftermath of the 7.8-magnitude earthquake that hit central-southern Turkey and northern Syria on February 6, 2023, the 728th Air Mobility Squadron (AMS) offloaded an abundance of crucial equipment and supplies from aircraft.

Located at Incirlik Air Base (AB) in Adana, Turkey, 728 AMS is an enroute squadron that reports to Air Mobility Command's (AMC's) 521st

Air Mobility Operations Wing. The squadron consists of more than 200 permanent party Airmen, Turkish nationals, and Air Expeditionary Force augmentees who ensure safe and effective enroute support for missions transiting Europe, Africa, and Southwest Asia. The squadron supports five combatant commanders with aerial port operations, aircraft maintenance, and command and control. To support the Turkish earthquake relief efforts, the 728 AMS was in the right place at the right time.

Airmen assigned to the 728th Air Mobility Squadron assist humanitarian relief efforts by offloading equipment containing a 52-bed emergency field hospital tent from U.S. non-government organization, Samaritan's Purse, at Incirlik Air Base, Turkey, Feb. 10, 2023.

USAF photo by SSgt Gabrielle Winn

BY MS. CHRISTINE WALSH, STAFF WRITER

Lt Col Matthew Bryan was the 728 AMS Commander at Incirlik AB from June 2022 to June 2023. "At the time, the impact of the earthquake was not immediately known," Bryan said, adding that personnel came to work as usual that morning. "Only after we arrived at work did we start getting the news of how bad the damage was here in Turkey."

At about 10 a.m., the first aircraft arrived to start bringing relief to the civilians who were affected.

The squadron immediately went into action, the base went into crisis mode, and the Crisis Action Team and the wing's Operations Center were activated. Within about two hours of the squadron's arrival at the earthquake site, the team was already communicating with all the base agencies that needed to be involved. The first to arrive were search and rescue teams bringing gear such as chainsaws, jackhammers, and jaws of life, followed by medical supplies, baby formula, food, blankets, clothes, tents, and generators. Two mobile hospitals also arrived to help the injured. "It was incredible," Bryan said.

While Turkish officials determined distribution areas, the 728 AMS began downloading cargo and getting it loaded onto helicopters as quickly as possible. In the first 72 hours, they downloaded more cargo than in all of calendar year 2022; in total, they downloaded six times their annual workload in a one-month period. They also offloaded more than a million pounds of fuel. "So, it was a huge, heavy lift for us," Bryan said.

The 728 AMS also coordinated all the aircraft maintenance. A Turkish 777, an Azerbaijani 747, and an Italian aircraft were among those that broke and needed maintenance on the taxiway. The maintenance team was able to leverage their mechanics' skillset to fix the aircraft and open the spot back up for other aircraft waiting to pull up.

Thousands of HH-60 Black Hawk and CH-47 Chinook helicopters participated in relief efforts, which presented a need for hot pit refueling, a task not normally within the 728 AMS's scope of responsibility. A hot pit refueling site survey was needed on the airport's echo apron, the most geographically safe area, because aircraft were taxiing everywhere. Their joint force partners, the Army Archangels, were thankful and clearly impressed by the effort. "Within the



TSgt Phillipp Andes, 728th Air Mobility Squadron Transient Aircraft Maintenance Noncommissioned Officer in Charge, drives a forklift to move humanitarian aid supplies in the cargo staging area at Incirlik Air Base, Turkey, Feb. 16, 2023.

USAF photo by MSgt Jonathan Lovelady

first few days, we added about 2,200 helicopter sorties that we [normally] would not have been able to capitalize on because we had the ability to rapidly refuel running helicopters, taxi them in, and taxi them out," said MSgt Caleb Simpson, the production superintendent for the 728 AMS. "The whole idea that 'It's not my job,' that doesn't live in any of the people that we work with in this unit."

Simpson recalled once seeing a Turkish C-130 land and 91 coal miners exit the back with gear, including pickaxes, hats with lamps, and bags of clothes. The miners turned out to be volunteers to help dig for survivors. "There was an absolute language barrier, but there was no communication barrier when it came to the need and how urgent the actions were for this unit," Simpson said.

To overcome a bottleneck and pileup from the massive amounts of airplanes and supplies coming in, the 728 AMS senior non-commissioned officers met with the Turkish Air Force's 10th Tanker Base Command squadron commanders to devise a flow plan, which effectively doubled the size of the cargo yard, separated the truck loading and helicopter loading areas, and used the fire department training area, which became known as the "Ring of Fire." "That was something that I think in the long run will help

continue to build our relationship with our Turkish partners," Bryan said.

Bryan recalled meeting with a Turkish lieutenant colonel at that time. "He looked at me, and I saw pain in his eyes, and he just said, 'My country is hurting right now,'" Bryan said. "And when you hear those words from someone who is experiencing that level of pain, it just makes you want to help them even more."

The 728 AMS worked closely with Turkish allies and Spanish and Polish partners who came to help with the relief effort. Even administrative and maintenance personnel helped load boxes on trucks. "It was really an all-hands-on-deck operation," Bryan said. "It was one of those things where everybody involved in the operation at the time knew how important what they were doing was and the impact that they were having. And it was something I was extremely proud to be a part of because you can see the impact of what we're doing.

"We are a responsive force," Bryan said. "We're agile, and we're able to flex our operations in a very short



“Every single local national in our squadron was affected by either knowing someone or having a close family member that died in the earthquake. And so, while we were doing these operations, it was very apparent to us the gravity of the situation.”

A1C Kaylan Bartlett, left, an Aircraft Services Technician, and SSgt Jason Dumag, a Ramp Controller, both assigned to the 728th Air Mobility Squadron, wait to unload medical shelters and equipment at Incirlik Air Base, Turkey, Feb. 18, 2023. The medical shelters and equipment provided aid to those in need following the earthquakes that struck Turkey on Feb. 6.  
USAF photo by SrA Joshua T. Crossman

period of time; that’s what we trained for. We knew how to do it, and we knew what we needed to do.”

That mindset required going from their normal 8-hour days to 12-hour days and performing tasks not defined by their Air Force specialty codes. “We really leaned into our MCA (Multi-Capable Airmen) capabilities,” Simpson said of the initiative that challenges Airmen to step out of their comfort zones. “We quickly briefed our individuals; we said, ‘Hey, we’re not just going to be asking you to do your normal duties. We’re going to be asking you to go a little bit above and beyond and load pallets, move cargo, load trucks, drive forklifts.’”

The supply chain logistics involved in those efforts were “undoubtedly challenging,” Simpson said. “In the wake of such a large-scale disaster, the necessity for immediate and

substantial response demanded that we increase our workflow operations.”

A couple of maintenance non-commissioned officers (NCOs) were appointed to direct aerial port operations on the ground, MSgt Roscoe Tamondong, the 728 AMS’s lead production superintendent, explained. “No one was above anything,” Tamondong said. “We definitely had to tap into readiness, that mental piece.”

Tamondong said the successful effort was “a very big testament to” the NCO corps, particularly because they are young and Incirlik AB is their first installation, so this mission was their first time helping a nation in need.

Although Turkey’s Disaster Management Authority provided many of the supplies, cargo also came in from other nations, including Japan, Germany, and the United States. More than 27 nations sent cargo, all via civilian aircraft. The U.S. Agency for International Development sent personnel as well as supplies. The 728 AMS was responsible for organizing the chaos. That is where MSgt Ahmad Butler, the 728 AMS section chief for the Air Operations Center, and his team came in to orchestrate the ground operations.

“We didn’t know what they were carrying, how much they had, and when it was going to stop,” Butler said.

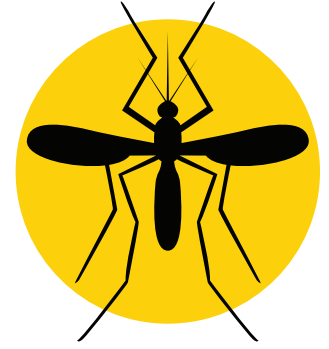
Controllers gathered and disseminated information from the aircraft to get as accurate a count as possible. Local nationals translated to help with the language barrier. “They were awesome,” Butler said.

Airmen assigned to the 728 AMS offloaded a 52-bed emergency field hospital tent from a chartered 747-400F at Incirlik AB. “It was a great feat to have those guys and work with our Turkish partners, to be able to coordinate with them and get past that language barrier,” Butler said.

“There were so many people that were hurt or died during this disaster,” Bryan said. “Every single local national in our squadron was affected by either knowing someone or having a close family member that died in the earthquake. And so, while we were doing these operations, it was very apparent to us the gravity of the situation.”

Bryan is proud of how flexible, agile, and mobile his team is and how well they respond to different scenarios. “One of the things that we always talk about here at the squadron is that we’re going to stay ready so we don’t have to get ready,” Bryan said. “This team put together an incredible effort, and it’s something that I can say I have not witnessed before in my career.”

# A Look Into Air Mobility Command History: Operation Combat VEE



BY MS. TRENDELYN ROSS, STAFF WRITER

**M**osquitoes are universally disliked, but from 1967 to 1971, they were even more of a nuisance. During this time, mosquitoes were the main spreader of the dangerous Venezuelan Equine Encephalomyelitis (VEE), a nerve disease that causes swelling of the brain. The disease mainly affects horses but can also spread to humans and is known to be fatal. This outbreak originated in Colombia, South America, around December 1967. The warm, humid climate associated with the continent, along with flooding, allowed the mosquito population to thrive and spread the disease quickly. Over three years, VEE spread through Central America and Mexico until it finally reached the United States.

On July 3, 1971, the first case of VEE was confirmed in the United States, more specifically, in Brownsville, TX, a small town along the border of Mexico. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) had been tracking the disease and contacted the U.S. Air Force (USAF) for assistance. The Air Force jumped quickly into action and by July 6, 1971, operations against VEE began. Dubbed “Operation Combat VEE,” the 4500th Air Base Wing, based out of Langley Air Force Base (AFB), VA, deployed two C-123 spray aircraft to Texas. This organization was a

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**By mid-August, the quick actions of the Air Force helped to halt the spread of the epidemic and kept the disease contained to a small area of Texas.**

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special unit dedicated to aerial spray operations and had been running anti-mosquito operations since 1948. Within a few days, the aircraft had sprayed 2,400 gallons of insecticides over 120,000 acres around the Brownsville area.

Even with the fast response of the Air Force, the disease continued to spread, leading USDA to ask the USAF for a larger operation. Hence, additional C-123s, sent from the 319th Special Operations Squadron at Hurlburt Field at Eglin AFB, FL, arrived to assist the 4500th Aerial Spray Flight.

On July 17, Col Edward F. Borsare of the Tactical Air Command’s 1st Special Operations Wing took command of the Combat VEE task force. On July 20, Borsare requested the eight C-123s report to Ellington AFB near Houston to reorganize the operation. The 548th

Special Operations Training Squadron also deployed nine C-47s to Ellington to support the operation. The next day, Operation Combat VEE was relaunched under new guidance.

An aggressive effort was underway to prevent any more mosquitoes from spreading the infection. Over the course of a month, 63,391 gallons of insecticide were sprayed over 3.5 million acres, spanning from Texas to Louisiana. A total of 597 flying hours were flown during this time. Aerial spraying took place primarily in the morning because the insecticide used needed a mild temperature. During this time, another C-123 spray aircraft was sent to aid Combat VEE from the 24th Special Operations Squadron based at Howard Air Force Base in Panama, Central America. This addition brought a total of 18 aircraft to the mission: nine C-123s and nine C-47s.

By mid-August, the quick actions of the Air Force helped to halt the spread of the epidemic and kept the disease contained to a small area of Texas. Reports of the outbreak highlighted that 2,000 horses and 110 humans were infected with the disease, with 1,426 horse deaths confirmed. The assistance USAF employed proved invaluable; without it, VEE may have spread through the United States and infected many more horses and humans alike. 

# CELEBRATING 15 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE: THE 521 AMOW

BY MRS. LAUREN FOSNOT, STAFF WRITER

Few phrases capture the essence of the 521st Air Mobility Operations Wing (AMOW) better than its motto, “DEPEND ON US.” The statement rings true as Air Mobility Command (AMC) has officially been able to count on the 521 AMOW for 15 years as of 2023. Since its activation in 2008, the AMOW has been at the forefront of AMC’s global mobility mission and has hit the ground running as the enroute support system for Europe, Africa, and Southwest Asia.

To effectively cover this expansive area, the wing’s nearly 2,000 personnel are divided into two Air Mobility Operations Groups (AMOGs) and nine squadrons in 19 locations in 14 countries. This structural arrangement enables the unit to provide command and control, enroute aircraft maintenance, air transportation services, expeditionary aircrew support, and intra-theater aeromedical evacuation—all to ultimately keep the global mobility mission moving.

To commemorate the wing’s 15th anniversary, 1st Lt Cameron Silver, the public affairs advisor for the 521 AMOW, presented an overview of the various wins of the AMOW, delved into its core values, and shed light on the wing’s unwavering commitment



Airmen assigned to the 521st Air Mobility Operations Wing pose for a unit photo, Sept. 12, 2022, at Ramstein Air Base, Germany.

USAF photo by A1C Edgar Grimaldo

to avoid complacency in the face of its victories.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE 521 AMOW

This dependable unit serves as the linchpin of enroute support. Among its many achievements, some key ones include:

### Overseas Operations

The wing has been an integral part of overseas operations. The AMOW supported Operation Enduring Freedom, in which the United States—following the terrorist attacks of 9/11—launched military operations in Afghanistan and sustained operations for more than a decade to fight widespread insurgency and establish a viable government. In addition, the AMOW is involved in ongoing overseas efforts, such as Operation Inherent Resolve, in which the United States and regional partners aim to militarily defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) to increase regional security and stability.

### Humanitarian Relief

The 521 AMOW has not only excelled in military operations but also in humanitarian efforts. The wing frequently provides rapid and effective aid during natural disasters. Two notable examples are the volcanic

eruption in Iceland in 2010 and the earthquake in Turkey in early 2023. The wing also played a vital role in responding to global health crises, including the Ebola epidemic and the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Operation Allies Refuge

During Operation Allies Refuge (OAR), the United States supported the movement of more than 124,000 people, making this mission the largest noncombatant evacuation in U.S. history. During OAR, the 521 AMOW was also tasked with the tremendous effort of providing critical enroute support for forces and evacuees. Nearly 85 percent of all Department of Defense aircraft departing from Kabul passed through a 521 AMOW station, according to Silver. The AMOW provided safe passage as well as logistical and maintenance support—meaning the mission had all hands on deck. The wing’s pivotal role in this operation demonstrated its unmatched capabilities in times of crisis.

### Support for Ukraine

The 521 AMOW has been instrumental in providing material support to Ukraine by processing and enabling the transport of various security assistance cargo. By bolstering

AMC and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) efforts, the wing has contributed to Ukraine's defense against Russia. This commitment underscores the AMOW's long dedication to offering the support and hope needed in times of suffering and when rapid action is needed.

### Additional Achievements

- Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (September 2008 – September 2010)
- Operation NEW DAWN (September 2010 – December 2011)
- Operation FREEDOM SENTINEL (1 January 2015 – August 2021)
- Operation ATLANTIC RESOLVE (April 2014 – 24 February 2022)
- Incirlik Air Base Evacuation (March 2016)
- Cyclone Idai Response (March – April 2019)
- Operation FLY FORMULA (May 2022)
- Meritorious Unit Award recipients from 2010-2021
- Air and Space Outstanding Unit Award recipient in 2022

### CORE VALUES GUIDING SUCCESS

According to Silver, the AMOW has several foundational components, in addition to its motto, that have guided its success during the past 15 years, including families, a Warrior Heart culture, mission partners, innovation, and safety. These components create a web that enables the AMOW to achieve success in every mission.

Silver explained that families form an integral support network, nurturing the well-being and triumph of every Airman. With a strong foundation, Airmen embrace readiness, both physically and mentally, to excel in their roles and "win now." This Warrior Heart culture is fostered by AMOW leadership.

The mission partners "fuel this joint force lethality in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East," according to Silver. The AMOW is thankful for its partnerships, even having Airmen stationed at joint and international host installations.

The wing's leadership has a legacy of fostering an environment conducive to experimentation and innovative problem-solving. Silver explained that the AMOW has always prided itself on "empowering untethered problem solvers" and that "leadership creates an environment that provides resources to experiment with new ideas and then to distribute successful ideas as far and wide as possible."

Finally, the "5-2-1" places a huge emphasis on safety. "Because we're entrusted with the well-being of countless passengers and crews and work with heavy equipment, [and] cargo, our Airmen's adherence to safety standards could be the difference between a successful mission and a failed mission," Silver commented. "If the 521 fails, AMC fails. If AMC fails, everybody fails. The stakes could not be higher when it comes to safety."

### THE FUTURE OF THE AMOW

Although Silver gave an overarching view of the history of the AMOW and its many achievements, he also stated that "the 521st AMOW is not content resting on past success." Further, the lieutenant explained that "even though we have had lots of past successes, and we're very proud of that, we are committed to accelerating transformation and executing our missions both faster and more agile than ever before. As future challenges await, and they surely do, we have no doubt that the 521st AMOW will meet them head-on and uphold our 'DEPEND ON US' legacy."

The future starts now with the AMOW. In an ever-evolving global security landscape, the 521 AMOW has adapted

its strategies and capabilities to remain effective in its mission. The wing recognizes that logistics will be a target in future conflicts and has positioned itself to excel in this environment. Through initiatives such as Mobility Guardian 23 (MG23), which is AMC's largest full-spectrum exercise built to test the limits of their capabilities and build stronger joint and international relationships, the wing has demonstrated its ability to operate rapidly and flexibly across different theaters, showcasing its commitment to readiness and adaptability.


One remarkable innovation highlighted during MG23 is the Halolens, a virtual reality headset that enables real-time audio and visual technical assistance worldwide. This device enhances operational expeditionary capabilities and exemplifies the wing's dedication to innovation for the future fight.

Looking ahead, the 521 AMOW has set ambitious goals and priorities to meet the challenges of an ever-changing world. Those priorities include war-ready Airmen, deliberate transformation, and rapid global mobility.

"This [emphasis] is what will help us bridge the gap between the AMOW as it is now and the next-gen AMOW that we want and need to be," Silver stated.

As global access becomes increasingly contested, the wing seeks to excel in providing rapid global mobility, ensuring it can deliver combat power wherever and whenever needed.

### CONCLUSION

As it aspires to be the next-generation AMOW, its enduring legacy of excellence and the resounding motto "DEPEND ON US" leave no doubt that the wing will remain an indispensable force in AMC's global mobility reach for years to come. A look at its history and its goals for the future for the wing's 15-year anniversary suggests that the 521 AMOW is clearly primed to confront future challenges. 



# Why Reinvent the Wheel? How Institutional Memory Can Benefit AMC

BY MRS. LAUREN FOSNOT, STAFF WRITER

**A**gile Combat Employment (ACE) remains an evolving focus for Air Mobility Command (AMC) as Airmen on all levels work toward conceptualizing the strategy of spreading out and moving quickly to combat near-peer adversaries.

To define and refine ACE, anticipating the nature of the future fight is a must. However, looking to the past may be equally, if not more, beneficial. By understanding a unit's past experiences of similar events, leaders can better shape ACE for the future.

Dr. Andrew Wackerfuss, historian at AMC's 521st Air Mobility Operations Wing (AMOW) at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, says there are historical precedents of ACE within the AMOW. The erudite historian recalled an incident in 2010 that showcased the tremendous agility and flexibility of AMC Airmen. When a volcano

eruption in Iceland produced an ash cloud that shut down air spaces across Northern Europe, the AMOW, along with the support of the 618th Air Operations Center, was able to quickly divert missions from Germany to Spain, drastically reducing strain on AMC's global mobility capabilities.

Analyzing the lessons learned and successes of that mission can benefit the AMOW's current initiatives, but after more than a decade of personnel changes and new faces at the AMOW, few or none remain who experienced the event themselves. Thankfully, there is a job for that. Historians, as noted by Dr. Wackerfuss, "serve as the institutional memory of our organizations."

AMOW leaders meet with Dr. Wackerfuss regularly. During these interactions, he makes a point not to merely recite historical trivia (although he would certainly win in this category on *Jeopardy!*); he synthesizes data that pertains to current events.

The 728th Air Mobility Squadron (AMS) enhances ACE/MCA capabilities with C-5, C-130 aircraft. Airmen assigned to the 728 AMS and 37th Airlift Squadron transfer cargo to a C-130J Super Hercules at Incirlik Air Base, Turkey, March 2, 2022. The 728 AMS is a 521st Air Mobility Operations Wing enroute node that advances effective and flexible global mobility operations for Air Mobility Command with aircraft maintenance and aerial port capabilities.

USAF photo by SSgt Jacob Derry

"If you understand the past, you can better understand why we are doing what we are doing now," Dr. Wackerfuss said. "This understanding will help [leadership] make better decisions and be more effective in shaping the mission."

Dr. Wackerfuss said bridging the past and present early on is important to optimally inform decisions. This is exactly how the AMOW utilized him during the rise of the COVID-19 pandemic, as Dr. Wackerfuss referred



to how the AMOW handled Ebola to prepare for contingent operations.

“When COVID was on the horizon, a commander asked me to create a report on what we had done during Ebola in 2014,” the historian said. “The report highlighted certain issues we would have to be aware of going into COVID, or indeed any kind of disease crisis—such as protective equipment, supplies for our personnel, and diplomatic elements because host countries have their own policies toward health crises. All of these did come into play when COVID struck.”

Dr. Wackerfuss explained that, while no two events will be the same, themes and processes of thinking through problems can be shared.

This rang true in the successful evacuation of the U.S. Embassy in Sudan in April 2023, which Dr. Wackerfuss said was “very driven by lessons learned from the documentation and analysis of Operation Allies Refuge (OAR).” The historian recognized that, although the Sudan evacuation was less challenging than OAR, success can be credited to studying the codified written outcomes from that mission.

“We knew exactly what potential problems would be,” Dr. Wackerfuss said. “And even if the similarities are not exact, the act of performing the historical comparison prepares you for the challenges that are waiting.”

While the documentation of OAR exemplified the importance of a historian’s duties, it also highlighted the challenges that come along with documentation. Dr. Wackerfuss’s role involves not only the curation of past data but also the recording of present-day events. This ensures that the AMOW continues its informed growth.

## Learning what constitutes good reporting and documentation is crucial as AMC develops for the future fight and adopts concepts like ACE.

During OAR, operations were fast-moving. Information was dispersed in many group chats and amongst many people. To streamline data collection, Dr. Wackerfuss helped formalize the reporting system to generate better documentation that could report up the chain on the daily, or even hourly, history of the chaotic event.

Drawing analytical conclusions from such documentation helped not only with the U.S. Embassy in Sudan mission but also with recent events in Ukraine. “We went into that with a lot of confidence because we felt like we had concrete conclusions that we had drawn,” the historian shared.

That is why it is important to recognize the need for documentation—especially in modern times.

“This is a paradox of our age, that we are generating more written material every day than people of past generations would’ve seen in their entire lifetime, and all of us read and write more every day than past people would’ve their whole lives,” Dr. Wackerfuss said. “But we’re using systems that can so easily be lost and deleted. And whether by accident or on purpose, if a computer crashes and that’s the only place you had it, that’s gone.”


Clearly data collection and analysis are essential components of strategizing, but can collecting too much data be a problem?

Yes and no, according to Dr. Wackerfuss. On the flip side to not having enough data is that “we are generating so much that what we have is too big to be useful,” Dr. Wackerfuss said. “That is where the historian can really come in and provide a selective approach to retaining information that will be important to the future.”

While he is extremely capable in his role, Dr. Wackerfuss firmly believes in not being a gatekeeper of information. People need both access to and awareness of historical context. Thankfully, recent technological advancements have made this sort of information more accessible. The Air Force history program now has a digital historian—a dedicated position to think about these issues and create improved technology.

Air Force historians are needed now more than ever in this impermanent age of the internet. Learning what constitutes good reporting and documentation is crucial as AMC develops for the future fight and adopts concepts like ACE. Dr. Wackerfuss said that, although reporting is often considered a chore, in reality, proper reporting can reach progressively higher levels and be an asset to leadership in the decision-making process.

“The more you can educate Airmen about the significant impact of documentation, the more effective they are at producing quality reports,” the historian shared.

As Multi-Capable Airmen, always remember that we are living, writing, and saving history every day! 

Civilian aircraft are parked on the tarmac at Travis Air Force Base (AFB), CA. Local pilots were invited to attend a Mid-Air Collision Avoidance (MACA) fly-in event on the base in August, 2023.

USAF photo by SrA Lauren Jacoby



# Prepare, Practice, and Partner: How Travis Operationalizes Mid-Air Collision Avoidance

BY LT COL KEITH B. NORDQUIST, 60TH AIR MOBILITY WING CHIEF OF SAFETY

It can be hard to anticipate the things you cannot imagine. When the Wright Brothers invented powered flight in 1903, they were likely oblivious to mid-air collisions. However, aviation recorded its first fatal inflight impact between two powered aircraft by 1912. Perhaps unexpectedly, the pilots involved were not civilians; they were military officers training for conflict before World War I.

More than a century later, the New York Times recently investigated a concerning uptick in similar “close calls” for commercial aviation. In the military, the number and frequency of unprofessional intercepts from China and Russia are also on the rise. As Air Mobility Command (AMC) trains for the joint logistics demands of strategic competition, it is clear the threat of mid-air collision remains

an enduring hazard. At Travis Air Force Base (AFB) in California, the installation is strengthening its mid-air collision avoidance (MACA) program by imagining possibilities through preparation, practice, and partnership.

Most recently, preparation included Travis AFB pursuing the installation’s first MACA civilian fly-in and safety seminar in more than five years. Eighty-two whole-of-installation personnel vetted more than 250 aviators to sequence, park, and process up to 50 general aviation aircraft. It was not unlike preparing for a mobility mission. Planning identifies potential areas of congestion or abnormal activity so crews can understand and apply a location’s standard operating procedures and rules of engagement. Training highlights the limits of one’s vision when task-saturated and responding to dynamic airborne threats.

Whether getting ready for a fly-in or a mission, preparation creates more time to be “heads up” and engaged, not “heads down” and distracted.

Last August, fly-in preparation led to real-world MACA practice when Travis AFB opened the gates to general aviation traffic. Although Bay Area fog limited full participation, the installation still successfully welcomed 37 civilian aircraft—the most in base history. Practice went beyond participation as operators saw first-hand the value of various traffic alerting, tracking, avoidance, and deconfliction systems. More importantly, Airmen internalized the importance of connectivity, survivability, and agility as they helped local aviators exercise perishable filing, scanning, and communication skills. Surprisingly, nearly all mid-air collisions occur



60 AMW Deputy Commander, Col Steven Byrum, thanks fly-in participants for partnering with Travis AFB to achieve safer skies.

USAF photo by SrA Lauren Jacoby



Local aviators receive a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to practice de-confliction onboard AMC aircraft, like the C-5M shown here.

USAF photo by SrA Lauren Jacoby



Pilots were able to land, taxi, and sequence with military aircraft, assuring Rapid Global Mobility as a whole-of-aviation activity.

USAF photo by SrA Lauren Jacoby


during daylight hours and in visual conditions when complacency is more likely. Practicing MACA builds operator awareness for all conditions and phases of flight, galvanizing the sustained vigilance needed to execute in fluid operating environments.

Critically, preparation and practice are incomplete without meaningful partnerships. At Travis AFB, partnership meant extending a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to the local community: a military airfield landing, a tower and radar approach control facility tour, an airfield fire department demonstration, and four major weapon system walk-throughs. For AMC, the partnership also extends

to America's allies and partners. It takes trusting each other through the fog and friction of potential conflict to realize shared goals in shared skies. Other nations know they can trust the United States for safe and rapid global mobility, just like Californian aviators knew they could trust Travis AFB to safeguard \$51 million worth of their assets. Together, partners better understand their common hazards to better mitigate their potential mishaps.

Through preparation, practice, and partnership, Travis AFB took a calculated risk to host a MACA fly-in while six real-world mobility operations proceeded. It demonstrated the power projection capabilities of Travis AFB

and made clear that MACA is more than just "see and avoid." It is also a thorough understanding of an operating environment and its operators, from filing through flight. Mid-air collisions remain a top cause of fatal general aviation accidents, and data shows they are equally likely across experience levels—from the initial solo student to the 15,000-hour instructor. As aircraft closing speeds and air traffic density increase—especially with unmanned systems proliferating global airspace—taking time to prepare, practice, and partner has never been more critical to mission success.

Of course, successful aviation in California is usually an aviator's dream—clear skies, warm days, and great destinations. However, as history reveals, even less congested skies must contend with potential mid-air collisions. Travis AFB remains focused on MACA as a mission assurance activity through preparation, practice, and partnership—at home and on the road. It is why the local Flight Standards District Office endorsed the fly-in as a certified continuation training event. It is also why AMC knows it can move at tempo with crews who train to imagine the risks they may encounter. By imagining together today, we can anticipate the challenges of tomorrow ... *so there are no bounds.* 

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- "Airline Close Calls Happen Far More Often Than Previously Known," by Sydney Ember and Emily Steel, 21 Aug 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/21/business/airline-safety-close-calls.html>
- "Pilot's Role in Collision Avoidance," Advisory Circular by the Federal Aviation Administration, 20 Oct 2022, [https://www.faa.gov/documentLibrary/media/Advisory\\_Circular/AC\\_90-48E.pdf](https://www.faa.gov/documentLibrary/media/Advisory_Circular/AC_90-48E.pdf)
- "Prevent Midair Collisions: Don't Depend on Vision Alone," Safety Alert by the National Transportation Safety Board, Revised April 2021, <https://www.ntsb.gov/advocacy/safety-alerts/Documents/SA-058.pdf>
- "See and Be Seen: Your Life Depends on It," Safety Alert by the National Transportation Safety Board, Revised April 2021, <https://www.ntsb.gov/Advocacy/safety-alerts/Documents/SA-045.pdf>
- "How to Avoid a Mid Air Collision," Online Resource by the Federal Aviation Administration Safety Team, [https://www.faasafety.gov/gslac/ALC/libview\\_normal.aspx?id=6851](https://www.faasafety.gov/gslac/ALC/libview_normal.aspx?id=6851)
- "Fly-In for Safety," PA Article by 60th Air Mobility Wing Public Affairs, 29 Aug 2023, <https://www.travis.af.mil/News/Article/3509762/fly-in-for-safety/>



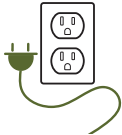






# Fire Safety During the Winter Holidays

BY MS. CHRISTINE WALSH, STAFF WRITER

The holidays make us think of loved ones, feasts, sparkling lights, and aromatic evergreens. It is when families get together to celebrate and enjoy traditions.

Although the holidays can be magical, celebrations can become disasters if you are not mindful of fire safety.

- Use flame-resistant artificial trees and decorations such as paper, flowers, tinsel, streamers, and scenery. 
- If you are not harvesting your live tree, only purchase live Christmas trees that are fresh and green with needles that are hard to pull from the branches. Bend the needles to check for freshness. You can also gently tap the end of the tree trunk on the ground to check whether too many needles fall. The tree should be placed in a sturdy stand and securely anchored. Check and refill the water level daily.
- Inspect strings of lights, electric candles, and similar holiday lighting equipment. Also, examine your extension cords and check for worn wiring, loose connections, and broken sockets. Only use lighting with a safety label from Underwriters Laboratories (UL). 
- Unplug all decorative lights before leaving the house or going to bed. 
- Keep lights at least six inches from all flammable materials, and never let light bulbs touch flammable materials.

- Do not burn trees, wreaths, or wrapping paper in the fireplace. 
- Inspect and clean your chimney and fireplace annually.
- Test your smoke alarms. 
- Do not link more than three strands of holiday lights.
- Keep trees and decorations away from windows, doors, high-traffic areas, fireplaces, furnace radiators, and other heat sources.
- Remember that some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both. Do not mix the two types when linking together.
- Make sure candles are on stable surfaces; do not burn them on or near trees or other decorations, and never leave them unattended. Keep candles, matches, and lighters out of children's reach. 
- Never use electric lights on metallic trees.
- When using a ladder to hang electric decorations, always make sure the ladder is on even and solid ground, and always keep three body parts in contact with the ladder. 

## HEATING APPLIANCES

The expense of heating oil and natural gas, along with attempts to cut down on energy use, makes using nontraditional heating sources appealing in the winter.

Many may consider space heaters and other supplemental heating appliances a desirable choice. They can be useful with proper care and in a limited capacity but should never be considered a long-term solution. The devices are not very effective and have serious fire and other dangers associated with them, according to safety official warnings.

## FACTORS TO CONSIDER

Space heaters have significantly more potential to start a fire than central heating, including furnaces. There is more room for human error, such as placing them near flammable materials or neglecting to properly install, fuel, operate, and maintain them.

Safety needs to be a main priority when using space heaters. According to the National Fire Protection Association, heating equipment is the second most common cause of house fires, and nearly one-half of heater-caused fires happen in December, January, and February.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that more than 25,000 residential fires are connected to space heater use annually, contributing to more than 300 fatalities. In addition, approximately 6,000 people undergo emergency room treatment for burn injuries caused by touching hot surfaces of room heaters, mainly in circumstances that do not involve fires.

Space heaters should be equipped with devices that automatically turn them off if the heater falls over. They should also have an automatic thermostat control and a device that prevents them from overheating and should be unplugged

when not being used. Do not buy a heater larger than what is needed for the area to be heated.

## ADVICE FROM UNDERWRITERS LABORATORIES (UL)


- Place all space heaters at least 36 inches away from flammable materials or heat-producing appliances.
- Use space heaters only as a secondary heat source. These appliances are not meant to replace a home heating system.
- Plug space heaters directly into a wall outlet; do not use extension cords. Do not plug space heaters into multiple outlet strips or systems furniture.
- Check the heater's cord regularly for worn wire or damaged insulation. Do not use a space heater with a damaged cord.
- Inspect periodically to ensure the plug fits properly into the outlet. If the plug becomes overheated, the outlet may need to be replaced by a qualified electrician. This issue could indicate a possible house-wiring problem.
- Heaters should be kept on a flat, level surface away from foot traffic. Do not put heaters on furniture because they may fall and become damaged or broken.
- Unless the heater is made for outside or bathroom use, do not use in areas with water.
- Check for the UL label on your electric heater. This label indicates the device has met UL's strict safety standards.
- If you have a space heater that uses fuel, use only what the manufacturer recommends. Improper fuel might burn too hot for the device and lead to a fire.
- When refueling, turn off the heater and allow it to cool completely before adding fuel. Immediately clear away any spills.
- Prior to purchasing a kerosene heater, consult your local fire department to ensure it is legal.

- Never run electrical cords under rugs or carpeting; tape down cords to avoid trip hazards.
- If using a spray can substance, such as spray can snow, angel hair, or Styrofoam, carefully follow label directions because they can produce dangerous chemical reactions.
- In case of a fire, stay calm, call the fire department, and answer all the dispatcher's questions. Move to a safe area away from the fire and make sure others do the same. Provide relevant information to the first firefighters on



the scene. If at the workplace, inform your supervisor of your status and account for your coworkers. If at home, account for all family members and guests. Only try to put out the fire yourself after taking all the other steps and if you have been trained in the use of portable fire extinguishers. Fires that have spread cannot be extinguished with hand-held extinguishers; you need properly trained firefighters to control the fire.



With the right precautions against fire, your home can be a joyous and secure refuge during the holidays. 



# Stay Safe When Traveling Abroad

BY MS. CHRISTINE WALSH, STAFF WRITER

The holidays are coming, and many will travel abroad either officially or on leave. Traveling to a foreign country can be an enjoyable and satisfying experience for Airmen and their families.

Whether you are a seasoned traveler or a novice, you should know what to do before making a trip, measures that can protect you and give you peace of mind.

As part of your research on the country you are visiting, visit the U.S. Department of State website, which includes profiles of foreign countries and important information such as travel advisories. The site also has information on embassies and consulates; entry requirements; currency regulations; health conditions; local laws and matters of crime and security; driving conditions; unstable areas; and health and medical facilities. Also consider enrolling in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program before leaving—you will receive information from the embassy and be contacted in case of a natural disaster, civil disorder, or family emergency. Enrollment can also help others reach you in an emergency. Information about travel and consular services can be found at <http://travel.state.gov>.

In addition to completing required briefings, debriefings, and trainings and adhering to the Department of Defense Foreign Clearance Guide, the following are some beneficial foreign travel safety tips.

## WHAT TO BRING

- Write down or save in your cell phone the numbers for the police, the fire department, your hotel, and the U.S. embassy or consulate, and familiarize yourself with your destination before you arrive. Have a practical emergency response plan. The emergency phone number for all of Europe is 112.
- Try not to attract attention to yourself. Do not dress in a way that makes you appear to be a wealthy tourist (e.g., expensive-looking watches or accessories).
- Travel light so you always have a free hand and do not have to put down your luggage.
- Be extremely cautious where you place your passport, cash, and credit cards. Some opt to keep them locked in the hotel safe; otherwise, put them in an inside pocket or a sturdy shoulder bag with the strap across your chest.
- In a carry-on bag, pack an extra pair of eyeglasses and any medications you need in their original container with the prescriptions.

- Bring photocopies of your identification and credit card information.
- Label your luggage with your name, address, and telephone number inside and out, using covered luggage tags.
- Get a telephone calling card and find access numbers to U.S. operators.

## WHAT TO LEAVE AT HOME

- Do not bring large amounts of cash; instead use travelers checks and one or two major credit cards.
- Do not take valuables or items of sentimental value in case of lost luggage.
- Do not take your Social Security card, extra credit cards, your birth certificate, or marriage certificate (unless your name is different from what is on your passport).
- Give someone at home a list of the places you are going, and when you plan to leave, get there, and come back, and any relevant contact information.
- Leave photocopies of your identification documents, credit cards, airline tickets, and your travelers checks' serial numbers with someone.

## SAFETY IN PUBLIC PLACES

- Always be mindful of your surroundings and do not use narrow alleys or dark streets.

- Stay alert and avoid conflicts in places like bars, night clubs, and other meeting spaces.
- Behave professionally and respect the host nation's laws, customs, and etiquette.
- Stay away from impromptu crowds and protests.
- If you encounter a protest, stay calm and remove yourself from the situation. Do not talk loudly or be conspicuous; avoid other probable locations for protests or disorder.
- Always travel with others—especially at night—and use different routes.
- Avoid dangerous locations and places with a lot of criminal activity.
- In case of an emergency where you are going or at any place you plan to go, let your chain of command know about your situation as quickly as possible.
- Keep an eye on local television, radio stations, news, and government and social media websites for current conditions.
- Do not tell people you do not know about your travel plans or personal information.
- Be careful when anyone offers to be your tour guide or tries to sell you something.
- Be on the lookout for pickpockets, who frequently work in pairs, with one creating a diversion of some sort.
- If you are lost, do not be obvious about it and only ask a person in a position of authority for directions.
- Familiarize yourself with how to use a pay telephone and have the required change, card, or token available.
- Memorize or write down a few phrases in the local language so that you can communicate with police or medical personnel.

- If you are robbed, do not fight back: give them what they want.

#### HOTEL SAFETY

- Always lock your door and meet any visitors in the lobby.
- If alone, do not get in the elevator with a suspicious-looking person.
- Familiarize yourself with the nearest fire exits in case you have to inch your way through a smoky hallway.

#### USING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

- Use only clearly marked taxis and ride-share services that include GPS tracking.
- On trains or buses, do not let strangers give you food or drinks, which could be drugged.
- On trains, if possible, lock your compartment, and if it cannot be locked, sleep in shifts with your fellow travelers.

#### DRIVING SAFETY

- Make sure your vehicle is functioning properly and that the gas tank is full. If possible, do not allow your tank to be less than one-half full.
- Always use local maps or navigation apps, if available.
- Consider getting an auto safety club membership in case of a vehicle mishap or car crash.
- If using a rental car, ask that any markings that identify it as a rental car be removed. If possible, select a car with universal door locks and power windows, which allows the driver more control of access. An air conditioner, when possible, can also enhance safety, letting you drive with windows closed so that thieves cannot snatch purses through open windows.
- Always lock vehicle doors.
- Use safety belts.
- Try not to drive at night.



- If you have to carry valuables, keep them in the trunk and carry them with you if you get out of the car.
- If a parking garage or other secure area is not available, only park on a well-lighted street.
- Never give a ride to a hitchhiker.
- Do not get out of your car if you see suspicious-looking people.
- Watch for possibly criminal pedestrians, cyclists, and scooter riders, who may try to flag you down, offer help for supposed car problems, smash windows, or try to run you off the road or rear-end you. 🚔

# Staying Warm in Winter Cold

BY MS. CHRISTINE WALSH, STAFF WRITER



**H**ypothermia is a dangerous condition that can happen after exposure to extremely cold temperatures. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), from 1999 to 2011, a total of 16,911 deaths in the United States, an average of 1,301 per year, were associated with hypothermia.

Hypothermia is defined as abnormally low body temperature. When exposed to cold temperatures, the body begins to lose heat faster than it can produce it. Lengthy exposures will gradually deplete the body's stored energy, which results in lower body temperature.

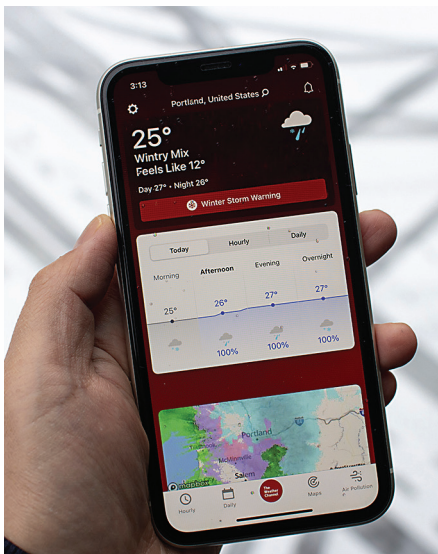
A too-low body temperature affects the nervous system, heart, and other organs, making the person unable to think clearly or move well. Hypothermia is particularly dangerous because symptoms often start gradually, so a person may not realize what is happening and do anything about it. If left untreated, hypothermia

can cause complete cardiac and respiratory failure and eventually death.

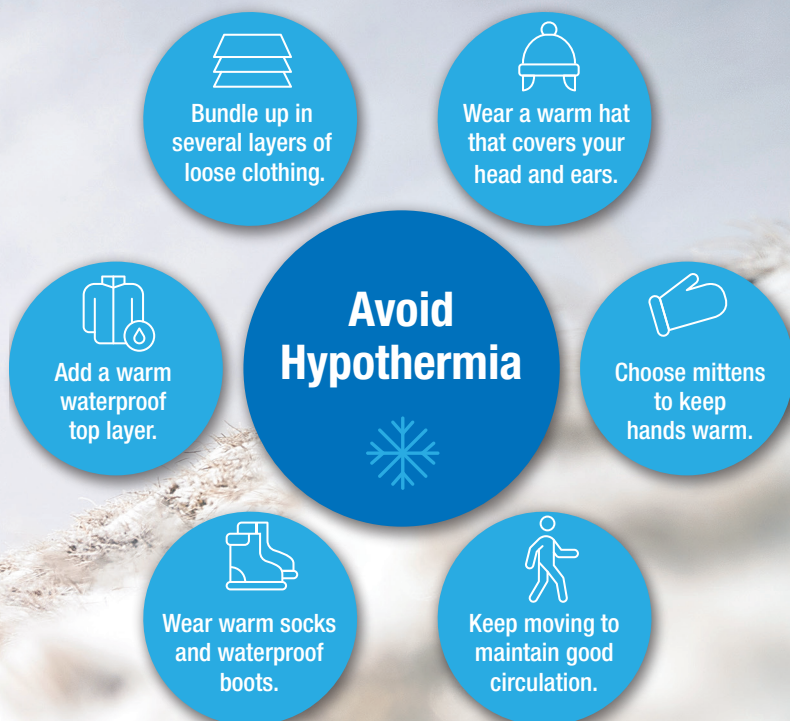
Although hypothermia is more common at cold temperatures, it can happen even above 40 degrees if a person becomes chilled from rain, sweat, or immersion in cold water.

Remaining outdoors for long times doing activities like hunting or hiking can be risk factors, as can alcohol or drug use. Other conditions that can lead to hypothermia include not dressing warmly enough for weather conditions, being unable to get out of wet clothes, falling into water, or living in a house that is too cold. In addition, medical conditions such as hypothyroidism, inadequate nutrition, diabetes, stroke, severe arthritis, Parkinson's disease, trauma, and spinal cord injuries can affect the body's temperature regulation.

Most heat loss is due to heat radiated from unprotected body surfaces, direct







contact with cold water or the cold ground, or wind that carries away the thin layer of warm air at the skin's surface. Because water is very good at transferring heat from the body, body heat is lost much faster in cold water than in cold air.

Hypothermia warning signs include shivering, exhaustion or fatigue, confusion or memory loss, clumsiness or lack of coordination, slurred speech or mumbling, slow or shallow breathing, a weak pulse, and drowsiness or very low energy. In rare cases, people undress because they may feel like they are overheating due to a rush of warm blood to the extremities.

Normal body temperature is approximately 98.6 degrees. If you observe someone experiencing symptoms, take the person's temperature, and if it is below 95 degrees, seek medical attention immediately. If you are unable to get medical help, try to warm up the person by moving them to a warm location, removing any wet clothing that the person is wearing, using an

electric blanket or warm clothing to warm the center of the person's body, providing warm nonalcoholic and noncaffeinated drinks, and keeping the person dry. Avoid any jarring movements, which can trigger irregular heartbeats. Do not rub or massage the person's skin.


If the person is unconscious, does not seem to have a pulse, or does not appear to be breathing, handle the person gently and get emergency assistance immediately. Continue to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation even if the person appears dead until the person responds or medical help becomes available. According to the CDC, in some cases, victims who appear to be dead can be successfully resuscitated.

To prevent hypothermia, monitor weather conditions. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio will give information when wind chills reach critical thresholds. A wind chill warning is issued when wind chill temperatures are life-threatening. A wind chill

advisory is issued when wind chill temperatures are potentially dangerous.

When in cold temperatures, wear a hat or other protective covering to prevent body heat from escaping your head, face, and neck. Wear mittens instead of gloves. Avoid activities that would cause you to sweat excessively because the combination of wet clothing and cold weather can make you lose body heat faster. Wear loose-fitting, layered, lightweight wool, silk, or polypropylene clothing with outer clothing made of tightly woven, water-repellent material for wind protection. Stay as dry as possible, and be especially careful to keep your hands and feet dry, as snow can get in mittens and boots.

When you travel during cold weather, make sure someone knows your destination and expected arrival time; if you have problems along the way, emergency responders will know where to look for your vehicle. You should also carry a cell phone and emergency supplies such as blankets, matches, candles, a clean can for melting snow into drinking water, a first-aid kit, dry or canned food, a can opener, tow rope, booster cables, compass, and a bag of sand or kitty litter to spread for traction.

If you plan to ride in a watercraft, wear a life jacket, which can enable you to float without using energy and provide some insulation; keep a whistle attached to signal for help. If you fall into the water, climb onto the capsized boat or grab a floating object. Only try to swim if a boat, another person, or a life jacket is nearby because it will expend energy. Hold your knees to your chest to protect your body's trunk; if you are wearing a life jacket that turns you face down, bring your legs tightly together, your arms to your sides, and your head back. If you are with others, face each other in a tight circle. Do not remove clothing in the water because it helps to insulate you. 

# Snowmobile Safety Precautions for Winter Sport Enthusiasts

BY MS. KATHY ALWARD, STAFF WRITER

Winter sports enthusiasts are looking ahead to the snowy season with excitement in hopes of enjoying various activities, including snowmobiling. With approximately 230,000 miles of trails available throughout the United States and Canada, snowmobiling enthusiasts have a lot to be excited about. It is important to remember to practice safety, however, as actor Jeremy Renner can attest to after his recent snowplow accident in January 2023. When Renner was interviewed by *Variety* magazine, he emphasized the importance of safety after suffering 30 broken bones when he was run over by his 14,330-pound Sno-Cat snowplow. This accident was a life-changing event for Renner, as most accidents are, but he admits the accident was his mistake because he had one foot out of the snowplow as he was operating it. When Renner saw that the vehicle might trap his nephew, Alex, between the snowplow and a truck, Renner tried to hop back into the snowplow to disengage it but was run over instead. It is miraculous how Renner has recovered, inspiring us all to remember mind over matter, but even Renner stated it was his mistake, and he paid for it. However,

mistakes can be avoided by following safety procedures, so it is important to remember the following safety precautions when snowmobiling.

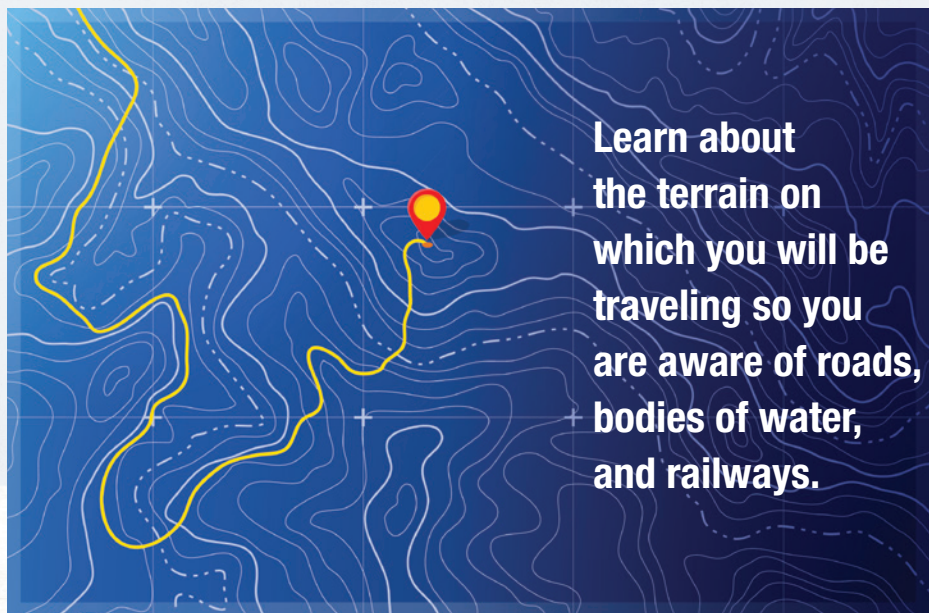
The first thing to do for safety is to follow the “pre-op” check outlined in your owner’s manual before each ride, while also keeping in mind that you must keep your snowmobile in good working condition to ensure safety. It also is important to learn about the terrain on which you will be traveling so you are aware of roads, bodies of water, and railways. Sometimes you can talk to the local community where you are snowmobiling or take a map to best understand the terrain.

Some of the safety equipment necessary to keep on your snowmobile

includes an extra ignition key, waterproof matches or a fire starter, a fire extinguisher, a flashlight, and spare batteries. If you build a fire, be sure to follow normal safety procedures by never leaving the fire unattended. When you leave the area, the best way to be sure the fire will not reignite is to smother the base of the fire with snow or dirt.

Other personal items that you should take with you when snowmobiling include any critical medications that you take, a cell phone, food that provides high energy and water, your driver’s license, your vehicle insurance and registration forms, and if required by your jurisdiction, your snowmobile safety certification card. Be sure to fully charge your phone before





**Learn about the terrain on which you will be traveling so you are aware of roads, bodies of water, and railways.**

you leave and turn it off to preserve battery life. Keep in mind that your phone can freeze, so keep it stored in a warm location, such as an inside coat pocket. Take a flare or radio in case there is no reception in the area for your cell phone.

The weather is always an important consideration, especially when traveling on snowy trails, so you do not get stranded in a storm. During bad weather the best thing to do is to wait and stay indoors until it has moved out of the area.

A route outlining where you plan to ride and return should be developed for all those riding on the snowmobiles and shared with others before you leave, so help can be sent if needed. Never travel alone when snowmobiling because personal injury is the result of most snowmobile accidents. Being injured and alone when snowmobiling would be extremely dangerous.

It is important to drive defensively at moderate speeds, especially after

sunset, so you are traveling at a pace that will allow you enough time to respond to any situation. Also, remember that traveling across bodies of water is dangerous because it is hard to determine ice thickness or water currents, and safe ice can be prevented from forming when snow cover serves as a blanket. Keep in mind that tree stumps, fences, and wire that is stretched may be hidden by the snow. It is best to stay on marked trails or the right shoulder of the road if possible.

Appropriate dress for snowmobiling includes wearing layers of water-repellent clothing with no loose ends to get tangled in the vehicle or equipment. Injuries from flying objects and twigs can be avoided by always wearing a helmet with goggles or a face shield.

You should always take a first aid kit stored in a waterproof container when you are snowmobiling. You can either buy a compact-size first aid kit that is easy to store while you ride, or you can make your own. Some items you may

want to include in your first aid kit are antibiotic ointment, burn gel, alcohol wipes, a roll of adhesive tape, a knife or scissors, a roll of gauze, two- and four-inch compresses, and a thermal/space blanket. No need to include liquids because most liquids will freeze.

Most fatal snowmobile accidents show that alcohol or drugs were contributing factors. After drinking alcohol, judgment is impaired, reaction time is slowed, and oftentimes, snowmobilers drive too fast. Body temperature drops faster, and the likelihood of hypothermia is greater if you have been drinking alcohol.

Snowmobiling can be a lot of fun, but as Jeremy Renner emphasized when he was interviewed, there is a price to pay for mistakes. Although Renner is proof of the healing power of mind over matter, we may not all be that lucky. Mistakes can be avoided, and an enjoyable time can be had by all, simply by taking the extra steps involved to follow snowmobile safety precautions. 🏠

# Think You Can Believe Your Eyes? Think Again.

BY MS. BETTY NYLUND BARR, STAFF WRITER

We live in an age when we are inundated with news from various media. Most of us likely are so busy with our own lives and responsibilities that we are lucky if we can keep up with what is going on in the world. Now, thanks to the rapidly growing field of artificial intelligence, or AI, we cannot even take the videos and photos we see at face value.

Enter deepfakes.

According to the Merriam Webster online dictionary, a *deepfake* is “an image or recording that has been convincingly altered and manipulated to misrepresent someone as doing or saying something that was not actually done or said.” Although you could use the technology to send a birthday greeting to your friend from “President Biden” or to try on clothes virtually before you buy them, bad actors are using deepfakes for fraud, blackmail, theft, and defamation.

Deepfakes appeared on the scene in 2017. Reputable news sources such as the BBC and *The New York Times* warned that such misinformation threatened to destabilize society. Although it did not happen immediately, the proliferation of deepfakes is taking place.

How are people making deepfake videos? According to Matt Groh

with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Media Lab, the creator uses a facial recognition algorithm and a variational autoencoder (VAE) to analyze the structure of someone’s face.<sup>1</sup> Using machine learning, the creator sets up two generative adversarial networks (GANs) to train in competition with each other. The first of the two networks, the generator, creates the counterfeit photo, video, or audio product. The second network, the discriminator, identifies the counterfeit data and adjusts the forgery. The possibly thousands or millions of iterations that result from the training become more and more refined until the original product and the forgery are virtually indistinguishable.<sup>2</sup>

The following are deepfakes that actually happened.

- Former President Barack Obama’s face was superimposed on a figure and his voice was forged to create a video of him using derogatory language to describe former President Donald Trump.

- A fake video showed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy ordering Ukrainian soldiers to surrender to Russian forces.
- The U.S. intelligence community determined that Russia engaged in extensive influence operations during the 2016 presidential election to “undermine public faith in the U.S. democratic process, denigrate Secretary Clinton, and harm her electability and potential presidency.”
- The CEO of a U.K.-based energy company followed the phone instructions from someone he was convinced was his boss to transfer a large sum of money to a foreign supplier.

“Like many other cyberattack methods, we predict that threat actors will look to monetize the use of deepfakes by starting to offer deep-fake-as-a-service, providing less skilled or knowledgeable hackers with the tools to leverage these attacks through just the click of a button and a small payment,” warns Alon Arvatz, Senior Director of Product Management at IntSights.

Think of the implications and complications this technology presents to the Air Mobility Command and the rest of the armed forces.

<sup>1</sup> Meredith Somers, “Deepfakes, Explained,” MIT Sloan School of Management, July 21, 2020. <https://mitsloan.mit.edu/ideas-made-to-matter/deepfakes-explained>.

<sup>2</sup> Kelley M. Sayler and Laurie A. Harris, “Deep Fakes and National Security,” *In Focus*, Congressional Research Service, April 17, 2023. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF11333>.



A research report by the Brookings Institution suggests, “Deepfakes can be leveraged for a wide range of purposes, including falsifying orders from military leaders, sowing confusion among the public and armed forces, and lending legitimacy to wars and uprisings.”<sup>3</sup> The technology could also be used to create inflammatory videos, such as American troops committing war crimes.

Because deepfakes can be used to discredit public figures, they can influence the outcome of elections. Forged videos may portray a candidate attesting to beliefs that he or she really does not hold or taking part in an activity that tarnishes his or her reputation.

“Deepfakes do pose a risk to politics in terms of fake media appearing to be real, but right now the more tangible threat is how the idea of deepfakes can

<sup>3</sup> Daniel L. Byman, Chongyang Gao, Chris Meserole, and V.S. Subrahmanian, “Deepfakes and International Conflict,” The Brookings Institution, January 2023. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/deepfakes-and-international-conflict/>.

be invoked to make the real appear fake,” says Henry Ajder, an expert on synthetic media and AI.<sup>4</sup> A 2020 article in *The Atlantic* reported, “Law professors Danielle Citron and Robert Chesney call this the ‘liar’s dividend’: Awareness of synthetic media breeds skepticism of all media, which benefits liars who can brush off accusations or disparage opponents with cries of ‘fake news.’”<sup>5</sup>

How can we feel confident that what we see is the real deal? MIT’s Groh says to pay attention to the following:

- Face—Is someone blinking too much or too little? Do their eyebrows fit their face? Is someone’s hair in the wrong spot? Does their skin look

<sup>4</sup> Karen Hao, “The Biggest Threat of Deepfakes Isn’t the Deepfakes Themselves,” *MIT Technology Review*, October 10, 2019. <https://www.technologyreview.com/2019/10/10/132667/the-biggest-threat-of-deepfakes-isnt-the-deepfakes-themselves/>.

<sup>5</sup> Matteo Wong, “We Haven’t Seen the Worst of Fake News,” *The Atlantic*, December 20, 2022. <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2022/12/deepfake-synthetic-media-technology-rise-disinformation/672519/>.

airbrushed or, conversely, are there too many wrinkles?

- Audio—Does someone’s voice not match their appearance (example: a heavysset man with a higher-pitched feminine voice).
- Lighting—What sort of reflection, if any, are a person’s glasses giving under a light? (Deepfakes often fail to fully represent the natural physics of lighting.)<sup>6</sup>

If you are faced with a situation in which you receive a phone call, text, or email instructing you to take unusual action, contact the supposed source to verify the instruction. 🛡️

*Airmen, to become more informed and aware of deepfakes, please check out the resources in the footnotes. They also contain links to deepfake examples and additional sources to access.*

<sup>6</sup> Somers, “Deepfakes, Explained.” Also see DHS, *Increasing Threats of Deepfake Identities*, pp. 33–34.



# MISHAP-FREE FLYING HOUR MILESTONES

## 7,500 HOURS

### 312 AS, Travis AFB, CA

Lt Col Jeffrey S. Teuscher  
CMSgt Patrick J. Tiaffay  
SMSgt William Copeland  
SMSgt Milan J. Gonos  
MSgt Gary B. Till

## 6,500 HOURS

### 312 AS, Travis AFB, CA

SMSgt Matthew J. Case

## 5,000 HOURS

### 312 AS, Travis AFB, CA

Lt Col Robert E. Dodson  
Lt Col Eric H. Dolan  
Lt Col Jeffery S. Herrmann  
Lt Col James R. Lacey  
Lt Col John T. Mallory  
Lt Col Scott P. Wolford  
Capt Adam D. Weiss  
CMSgt Justin J. Toomsen  
CMSgt Matthew J. Weghorst  
SMSgt Chad A. Eggen  
MSgt Jeffrey K. Gallagher  
MSgt Ryan C. Lavender  
MSgt Craig C. Thurman  
MSgt Erik J. Vrismo

### 166 AW, New Castle ANGB, DE

SMSgt Christopher Coarse



## 3,500 HOURS

### 312 AS, Travis AFB, CA

Col Bruce W. Bennett  
Lt Col Nicholas J. Amenta  
Lt Col David G. Cash  
Lt Col Scott E. Collins  
Lt Col Jason R. Hurt  
Lt Col Jason P. Malone  
Lt Col Thomas E. Parker  
Lt Col Patrick W. Pearce-Percy  
Lt Col Gabriel G. Salazar  
Lt Col Ryan D. Schaeffer  
Lt Col Daniel A. Stowell  
Lt Col Jeffrey M. Zang  
Maj Trent N. Colburn  
Maj Todd L. Cramer  
Maj Johnathan M. Flowers  
Maj Aaron R. Klang

Maj Thomas H. Neveu  
Maj Roger D. Rabe  
Capt Brian D. Beard  
Capt Andrew R. Dillon  
CMSgt Bethany J. Hackney  
CMSgt Scott A. Harris  
CMSgt Edward A. Ramirez  
SMSgt Ryan Chatterley  
SMSgt Timothy P. Lacey  
SMSgt Jason D. Matsuoka  
SMSgt Benjamin L. Swanson  
MSgt Richard M. Bline  
MSgt Christopher E. Cosse  
MSgt Justin F. Kass  
MSgt Nicholas R. Kenneally  
MSgt Kristen L. Lewis  
MSgt Bryan P. Nalette  
MSgt Jakob D. Pogeman

### 166 AW, New Castle ANGB, DE

Col James Chaikowsky  
Lt Col Christopher Esterline  
Lt Col Mark Linzmeier  
Lt Col Steven Sheldon  
Lt Col Jason Strickland  
Lt Col Jason Subach  
Maj Michael Minner  
Maj Maurice Scales  
MSgt Melissa Reimsnider

## 2,500 HOURS

### 182 AW, Peoria ANGB, Peoria, IL

Col Rusty L. Ballard  
Lt Col Randy D. Fasig  
Lt Col Brandon K. Retherford  
Lt Col Brian P. Rezac  
Maj Richard J. Johnson  
Maj Jeffrey S. Ryan  
Capt Brian T. Hibbert  
SMSgt Brian K. Blythe  
SMSgt Matthew D. Ericson  
MSgt Joshua C. Childers  
MSgt Lacey J. Dilbeck

### 166 AW, New Castle ANGB, DE

Lt Col Jeffrey Cretz  
Lt Col Timothy Kirch  
SMSgt Brian Hardy  
MSgt Michael Jefferson



## TO SUBMIT MISHAP-FREE FLYING HOUR MILESTONES:

Send your request to: [mobilityforum@us.af.mil](mailto: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).*



## Triumphant Tragedy

BY MR. KEVIN SLUSS,  
CSP, AMC FLIGHT SAFETY

If you have read this magazine for a while, you know I was in a crash landing event early in my career.\* This article is a footnote to the stories published in the Winter 2021-2022<sup>1</sup> and Winter 2015-2016<sup>2</sup> issues of *The Mobility Forum*.

The Air Mobility Command Safety Directorate received a phone call from Mr. Alan Taylor. At the time, he worked for a heating, ventilation, and air conditioning company in St. Louis, MO. He asked if I worked there and told his story. In 1989, he was a 20-year-old Security Forces member assigned to (then) Pope Air Force Base, NC. We discovered he was a first responder at the event and arrived shortly after the crash, helping provide security to the scene. As you can imagine, this was an intense event to experience. He recalled seeing the body of the deceased Loadmaster. Over the years, particularly after his Air Force days, he researched the history of the crew. He was surprised to find me in his local area and wanted to arrange a meeting, which we did a few weeks later. At that time, he presented me with a collage he made based on an old newspaper photo I had and his memory of the event, titled "Triumphant Tragedy." He was famous at Pope for making these art pieces and did it often for farewell events. It was a weird experience to meet a stranger, but it turns out we shared this event in history. We talked about our lives during lunch and the irony of crossing paths 34 years later. It is a small Air Force.



Alan Taylor (right) presents Kevin Sluss (left) with "Triumphant Tragedy." Fairview Heights, IL, March 31, 2023.

USAF photo

\*1989 C-130 crash landing at Pope AFB, NC, during airdrop operations.

<sup>1</sup> Alward, Kathy. "Crash Landing Contributes to Improvements in Procedures." *The Mobility Forum* 30, no. 4 (Winter 2021/2022): 10-11. [https://themobilityforum.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/TMF\\_3004\\_Winter2021-2022\\_120221\\_508.pdf](https://themobilityforum.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/TMF_3004_Winter2021-2022_120221_508.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Sluss, Kevin. "There I Was." *The Mobility Forum* 24, no. 4 (Winter 2015/2016): 10-11. [https://themobilityforum.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/tmf\\_2404\\_winter15-16\\_120215\\_final\\_508-1.pdf](https://themobilityforum.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/tmf_2404_winter15-16_120215_final_508-1.pdf)



## Correction

In the Fall 2023 issue of *The Mobility Forum*, page 26, Maj Daniel S. Jones was listed as a member of the 2d Air Refueling Squadron, 305th Operations Group, 305th Air Mobility Wing, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, NJ, which was incorrect. Jones is actually a member of the 6th Airlift Squadron, 305th Operations Group, 305th Air Mobility Wing, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, NJ.

# A DAY IN THE LIFE



SrA Caleb Hargrove, an Air Transportation Specialist assigned to the 728th Air Mobility Squadron, prepares to unload medical shelters and equipment at Incirlik Air Base, Turkey, Feb. 18, 2023. The medical shelters and equipment provided aid to those in need following the earthquakes that struck Turkey on Feb. 6. The U.S. military worked in support of the U.S. Agency for International Development, the government of Turkey, and our Allies and partners to provide relief to the people of Turkey.

**USAF photo by SrA Joshua T. Crossman**