THE MOBILITY FORUM

THE MAGAZINE OF AIR MOBILITY COMMAND | SPRING 2025

Proactive Safety: It Is a Marathon, Not a Sprint

2024 Air Mobility Command Annual Safety Award Winners

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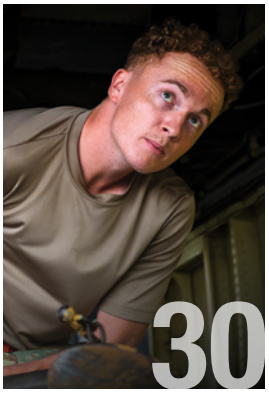

ON THE COVER

The crew of NATTY 46, 384th Air Refueling Squadron (384 ARS), Fairchild Air Force Base, WA, are winners of the 2024 Air Mobility Command Aircrew of Distinction Award. Left to right: Capt Andrew Strother, Mission Pilot; Capt Lauren Letarte, First Pilot; A1C Anthony Addington, Boom Operator; and Capt Jacob Redito, Instructor Pilot, all of 384 ARS.

USAF photo by A1Cs Matthew Arachikavitz

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Maj Edward Salazar, KC-135 Stratotanker Pilot with the 97th Air Refueling Squadron, Fairchild Air Force Base, WA, flies a KC-135 during an air refueling training mission over California, April 27, 2022.

USAF photo by A1C Jenna A. Bond

Full-Spectrum Risk Understanding

BY COL JOHN B. KELLEY, HQ AMC DIRECTOR OF SAFETY

"For Alert Force, For Alert Force: KLAXON—KLAXON—KLAXON!" Those of you with experience in the nuclear mission of the Air Force may be a little triggered by this phrase. Memories immediately spring to mind of jumping up from a cribbage game, sprinting from the alert facility to your Air Force-issue extended cab truck, and racing to the awaiting alert aircraft as fast as the "blue steel" would go. With the commander's guidance to respond to the aircraft as expeditiously as possible, young aircrew and flying crew chiefs are naturally competitive, hoping to push themselves and their equipment to achieve the fastest time. When I was on alert, squealing tires during responses were common, and I can neither confirm nor deny I was in a vehicle that was on two wheels briefly during a high-speed turn. I can confirm, however, that I was in the audience with other alert crews while receiving the business end of a fiery and not-safe-for-work lecture from our Group Commander on prudent driving during exercise responses!

Back then, as a young captain, I was very familiar with the risks associated with the KC-135's nuclear mission and the need to launch quickly. The concern by our Group Commander about our driving seemed secondary at best and pedantic at worst. After a few more years of experience and exposure to risk-based thinking, I am one hundred percent in the "drive prudently, even during a nuclear alert" camp. What changed my stance was a greater understanding of full-spectrum risk.

Full spectrum risk understanding, at its essence, means considering all the hazards and their likelihood of impacting mission success and Airmen's safety over a given time

Understanding full-spectrum risk is knowing how both categories relate to the success or failure of the mission at different phases.

span. It also means developing a diverse quiver of risk mitigations to be applied to the right risks at the right time. One way to think about full-spectrum risk is to break it down into *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* categories.

Intrinsic risk is the risk to the mission and Airmen that exists simply from taking all necessary actions for the mission to happen without outside interference. We are often not good at recognizing and dealing with the risks we take every day as part of the job. The early morning wake-up, the precheck of the lavatory service truck, the climb onto the aircraft wing to service hydraulic fluid, the build-up of pallets for the load plan, and the flying through congested airspace on departure—all these actions have inherent risk. This risk exists even when we accomplish each task correctly and according to the technical order. We often take these risks for granted because they are routine or mundane.

Extrinsic risk, on the other hand, is all the risk imposed by factors beyond the control of Airmen. These risks include such things as adversary actions (the enemy always gets a vote) or weather (we cannot really change this—I have tried). As Airmen, we tend to be goal-oriented and results-driven; we plan contingencies for things we cannot directly control. Mission planners and tacticians commonly start from a desired effect occurring in the objective area (OA) and work backward from that point. They will identify all necessary events, the challenges that need to be overcome, and the risks involved at each step due to the enemy and/or environment. Warfighting Airmen of all specialties develop a finely tuned ability to see the risks from outside forces and implement countertactics or mitigations. In short, Airmen get good at getting it done despite outside factors.

Both intrinsic and extrinsic risks can compromise the mission but vary in likelihood over the course of time. Understanding full-spectrum risk is knowing how both categories relate to the success or failure of the mission at different phases. I could write a cool math equation to describe this relationship, but you would immediately stop reading and make this issue into a coaster for your STANLEY© tumbler. Suffice it to say it takes a broad perspective, experience, and judgment to do so successfully.

It is also important to understand when a specific risk mitigation measure is helpful and when it becomes counterproductive. For example, aircrew may reduce, change, or extinguish external lighting when operating in a combat area or OA to reduce the aircraft's visual signature. This countermeasure, in turn, lowers the risk of being seen, tracked, and targeted by adversary weapons, thus decreasing the chance of being shot down. When the aircraft leaves the combat area, however, this same countermeasure makes the aircraft less visible to friendly forces or commercial traffic; it increases the risk of a midair collision with another aircraft. Good full-spectrum risk management takes time and location into consideration when applying risk mitigation measures.

If we go back to the scene of the responding nuclear crew, we can see the wisdom of my old Group Commander. He was right to be concerned with the driving habits of the crews and crew chiefs because they jeopardized the success of the mission and safety of the Airmen more than any adversary action at the time. He rightfully saw the outsized intrinsic risk we were creating and responded with the correct mitigation of his own (see the aforementioned butt-chewing).

We should all strive to develop a more holistic view of risk in our professional and personal lives. The mundane risks we take every day deserve our attention as much as our specific mission risks during deployment and employment. This broader understanding of the full spectrum of risk will help us all make better choices. And, if anyone runs into my old Group Commander, tell him sorry about the crew vehicle tires and skid marks on the parking ramp.

Aim High!

Brig Gen Snelson and the Next Chapter of the Expeditionary Center Strategy

BY MRS. LAUREN FOSNOT, STAFF WRITER

At a time when global threats are evolving at an unprecedented pace, the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center (USAFEC) stands as a critical pillar of rapid global mobility and operational readiness. Under the leadership of Brig Gen Stephen P. Snelson, the Expeditionary Center (EC) is entering a transformative era, redefining its mission to meet the challenges of Great Power Competition.

Having completed his first one hundred days as Commander, Snelson has set a bold course for the EC, emphasizing innovation, resilience, and leadership development. The EC's updated 2025 strategy positions it as a forward-thinking force, ensuring that Airmen are prepared for the complexities of 21st-century warfare.

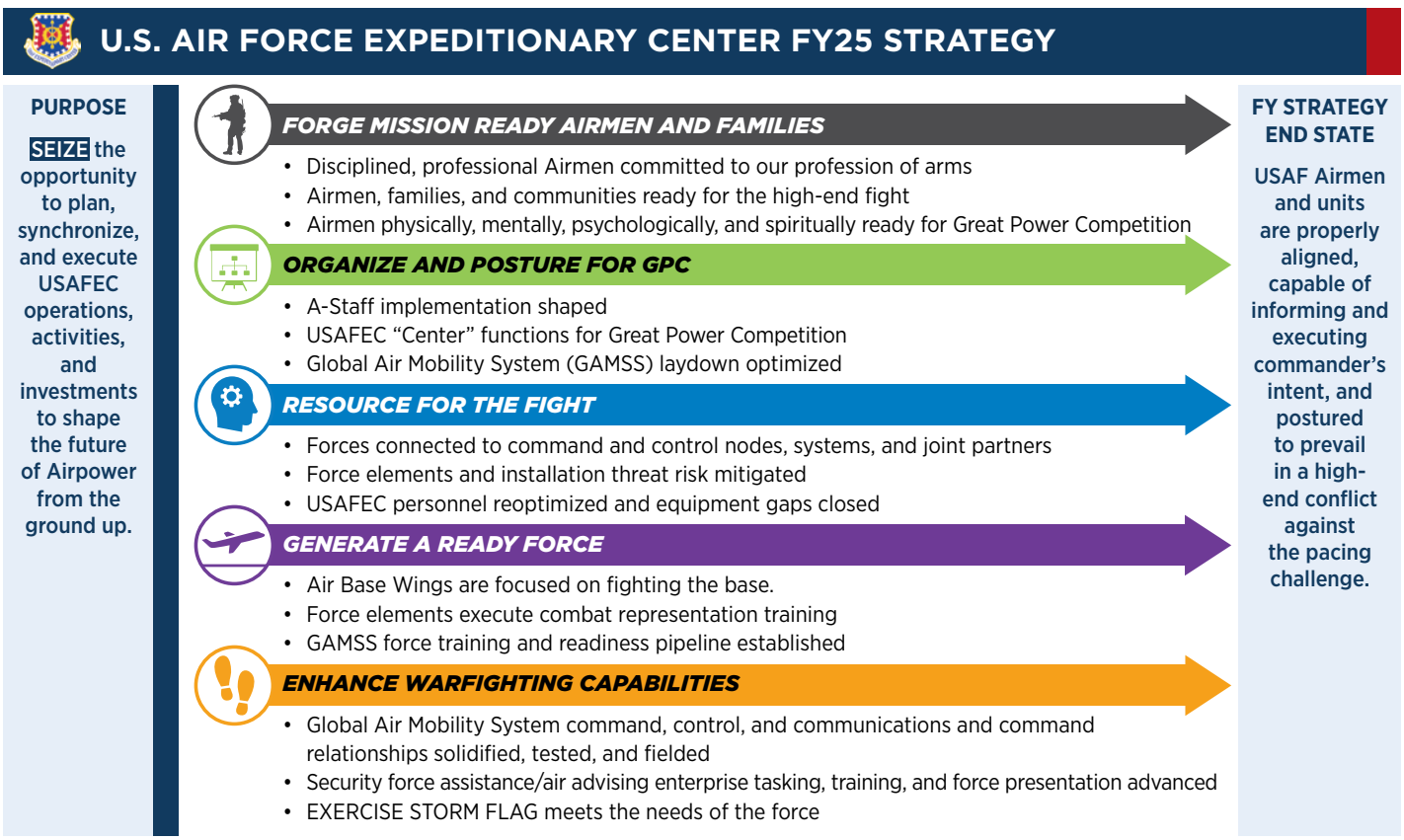
This article delves into the key components of the EC's strategy and highlights how Snelson's dynamic vision is empowering Airmen to thrive in rapidly changing environments.

A VISION FOR PROGRESS

During his first one hundred days as Commander of the EC, Snelson observed the incredible commitment to excellence of the EC's Airmen and their global impact. Supporting operations in twenty-four countries across six continents underscores the critical role the EC plays in ensuring readiness in an era of great power competition.

"I have been struck by the pride, resilience, and operational excellence demonstrated by our Airmen and their families," Snelson noted. "I am also blown away by the operational tempo and the insatiable demand for our Contingency Response and Air Mobility Operations Wing (AMOW) forces across the planet."

Snelson witnessed that the EC is incredibly high-performing and ready



Brig Gen Stephen Snelson, Expeditionary Center Commander, speaks to Airmen, community leaders, and industry partners during the 56th Annual Airlift/Tanker Association Symposium, Nov. 1, 2024, Grapevine, TX.

USAF photo by SSgt Dalton Williams

to "fight tonight," but he has also identified opportunities to better align forces, people, and resources to ensure they maintain their edge.

"By enhancing communication, fostering trust at every level, and emphasizing innovation, we are equipping our Airmen to think critically, take appropriate levels of risk, and succeed in complex, dynamic environments," Snelson shared. "These efforts ensure we remain ready not only to meet today's demands but to anticipate and overcome tomorrow's challenges."

The commander hopes that those efforts also instill confidence in the joint and coalition partners, knowing that AMC and the EC's Airmen will be ready to answer the call no matter when or where they are asked to go.

Under Snelson's leadership, the EC has embraced its 2025 strategy, focusing on organizing forces for great power competition, enhancing resiliency, and strengthening warfighting capabilities. By fostering collaboration and trust across the organization, Snelson is equipping Airmen with the tools and confidence needed to adapt to complex and dynamic operational environments.

EMPOWERED AIRMEN

One of Snelson's key strategies is empowering Airmen at every level to take initiative, make quick decisions, and adapt to their operational environment.

"We cannot drive progress from a headquarters building, so you have to trust and empower our Airmen," Snelson explained.

The EC recognizes that the battlefield of tomorrow will demand disaggregated operations, with Airmen working in smaller, agile teams across vast areas of operation. Snelson believes in equipping leaders and teams with the resources and the authority they need to make confident, high-stakes decisions. "We must empower our Airmen to innovate and adapt without waiting for permission," he said. "It's about taking calculated risks and giving our leaders the tools and authorities to reduce those risks." He encourages commanders to then circle back with him and the EC's Higher Headquarters process owners to identify any gaps that were revealed in guidance or resources.

A recent example of this mindset in action is the EC's Air Mobility Advisory Group innovating with Belize Defense Forces to conduct

> **“Working with our allies strengthens our collective agility and ensures we are prepared for strategic competitors and global threats.”**

reconnaissance with MX-15 and basic airdrop to replenish supplies to border forces near Guatemala. Such efforts highlight the potential of empowered Airmen to redefine operational success.

SHARPENING THE SWORD THROUGH TRAINING

The EC’s 2025 strategy places a premium on dynamic training that prepares Airmen for the complexities of modern warfare. These programs not only focus on technical specialization but also cultivate adaptability, leadership, and teamwork across multifunctional teams.

This “light, lean, lethal” approach is designed to prepare Airmen for environments with limited resources, hybrid operational roles, and ever-changing environments. For example, the 821st Contingency Response Squadron, a unit at Travis Air Force Base, CA, recently conducted a two-day Hub & Spoke operation to enhance their agility and readiness. Similarly, the 521st Contingency Response Element, based at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, NJ, demonstrated their ability to rapidly deploy and support missions through dynamic tasking of combat support elements. Such training is transforming Airmen into agile problem solvers capable of stepping into leadership or assistive roles as mission demands shift.

Technological innovation is also at the heart of the training evolution. The EC incorporates augmented reality tools, such as HoloLens, to provide immersive simulations that connect field operators with subject matter experts. “This capability could reduce the need for additional personnel on site and streamline operations,” Snelson noted.

EXERCISES AS FOUNDATIONS OF READINESS

To remain at the forefront of combat readiness, the EC actively participates in high-pressure exercises, such as AGILE FLAG, STORM FLAG, and Turbo Distribution. These exercises simulate high-end, multidomain combat scenarios, allowing Airmen to test and refine their skills in environments that mirror the complexities of real-world operations.

Flagship exercises are not only critical to individual readiness but also bring joint and coalition partners together, building interoperability and trust. Snelson emphasized the importance of these collaborative efforts. “Working with our allies strengthens our collective agility and ensures we are prepared for strategic competitors and global threats,” he explained.

Looking ahead to Mobility Guardian 2025, Snelson expressed excitement for the opportunity to showcase recent advancements. “This [exercise] will be a chance to demonstrate all that we’ve learned and developed as a force over the past few years,” he stated.

A CULTURE OF RESILIENCE

Recognizing that operational readiness begins with resilient Airmen and families, the EC’s “Forging Warrior Hearts” initiative plays a central role in the 2025 strategy. This initiative emphasizes holistic well-being, ensuring that Airmen and their families are equipped to handle the challenges of a fast-paced operational tempo.

Snelson has made advocating for resources that support military families a top priority, often including site visits to support agencies such as Child Development Centers and Military and Family Readiness Centers. “Our Airmen can’t focus on their training or mission ahead if they’re worried about their families being cared for,” he explained. “I know there are limits to what I can do to fix problems in that area, but I can at least advocate on their behalf. The great part is our Air Force senior leaders get it and are listening.”

REDEFINING THE FUTURE OF EXPEDITIONARY OPERATIONS

Under Snelson’s leadership, the EC is not only refining how it operates but is also defining what success looks like in a new era of global competition. With initiatives that empower Airmen, enhance training, foster resilience, and drive innovation, the EC is setting the standard for integrated, adaptable combat support.

When discussing how the EC is posturing for the future, Snelson summed it up: “These efforts ensure that we remain ready not only to meet today’s demands but to anticipate and overcome tomorrow’s challenges. Our adversaries should take note.”

With a forward-leaning strategy and emphasis on empowering its people, the EC is ready for the next chapter in its storied history.

What Every Aircraft Maintainer Needs to Know

BY MR. LALO MAYNES, AMC FLIGHT SAFETY

As safety professionals, we have two basic roles: first, to be proactive, and second, to be reactive. Our task in proactive safety is to take a forward-thinking approach to preventing workplace injuries and fatalities by identifying and mitigating potential hazards before they occur. Our reactive role calls us to investigate to determine the root causes of mishaps to prevent recurrences. After a maintenance-related mishap occurs, investigators determine factors and findings and then form recommendations so that maintenance personnel will have background information from that mishap in the future, so they can recognize and avoid committing the same errors or mistakes. Every aircraft maintainer should be armed with this information, and herein lies the problem. Factors, findings, and recommendations in most USAF mishap safety reports are identified as privileged safety information (PSI), and Department of Defense and Air Force regulations restrict access to PSI.

Quarterly privileged flight safety briefings presented throughout the aircrew community—including Safety Investigation Board factors, findings, and causes—are longstanding and proven mishap prevention tools that quickly instill mishap lessons learned throughout the crew force. This safety briefing requirement has been mandatory for aircrews for many years in accordance with publication DAFI 91-202, *The Department of the Air Force Mishap Prevention Program*. However, it was not required for aircraft maintenance personnel until recently. Due to its effectiveness in the flying world, along with a rise in maintenance-related mishaps, Maj Gen Sean Choquette, the Air Force Chief of Safety, issued a directive in August of 2024 to include aircraft maintainers in the briefing requirement. The directive, Aviation Maintenance Privileged Safety Briefing and Training, became effective immediately.

Why is this process important to aircraft mechanics, and why is it such a priority in Air Force Safety? For mechanics across the USAF, knowing the results of current and past mishaps arms them with key takeaways pertaining to tasks they perform on their assigned aircraft. The findings in any USAF mishap report are written as a chronological sequence of events identified during the mishap investigation. Supplied with this information, aircraft mechanics can see the path the person encountered that led them to the actions or conditions that caused the mishap. In addition to numerous injuries in the past two years, the Air Force suffered two fatalities from maintenance-related mishaps. This longstanding prevention tool currently used to brief aircrews about lessons learned is effective, and we expect it will be just as advantageous in reducing maintenance-related mishaps.

So how do we, as safety professionals in the USAF, share PSI with aircraft maintenance Airmen before they step in to perform the same tasks that have resulted in mishaps in the past? Since February 2004, my goal has been to ensure that flight safety information is available to all maintainers, including the most junior aircraft maintenance technicians within the Air Mobility Command, so they do not commit the same errors previously identified in mishap investigations. The last thing I want to do is tell an Airman who asked for mishap information that I cannot share PSI with them because they have not completed PSI training and signed a non-disclosure agreement (NDA). It is very important to ensure maintenance Airmen have access to PSI training and the NDA.

The last thing I want to do is tell an Airman who asked for mishap information that I cannot share PSI with them because they have not completed PSI training and signed a non-disclosure agreement (NDA). It is very important to ensure maintenance Airmen have access to PSI training and the NDA.

Some Airmen may be reluctant to sign an NDA if they are not sure of its intended use. I asked the Senior Attorney Advisor at the Air Force Safety Center, Mr. Daniel Vadnais, what the purpose of the NDA is. He

A1C Alexander Milicic, a 437th Maintenance Squadron Aircraft Maintainer, inspects maintenance equipment at Joint Base Charleston, SC, Dec. 18, 2024. Milicic is responsible for the repair and replacement of C-17 Globemaster III aircraft equipment.

USAF photo by A1C Katelyn Fankhauser

gave me this friendly answer: "The non-disclosure agreement describes PSI and its authorized use, and the person's signature acknowledges their understanding and agreement to use PSI only as authorized." Vadnais further explained:

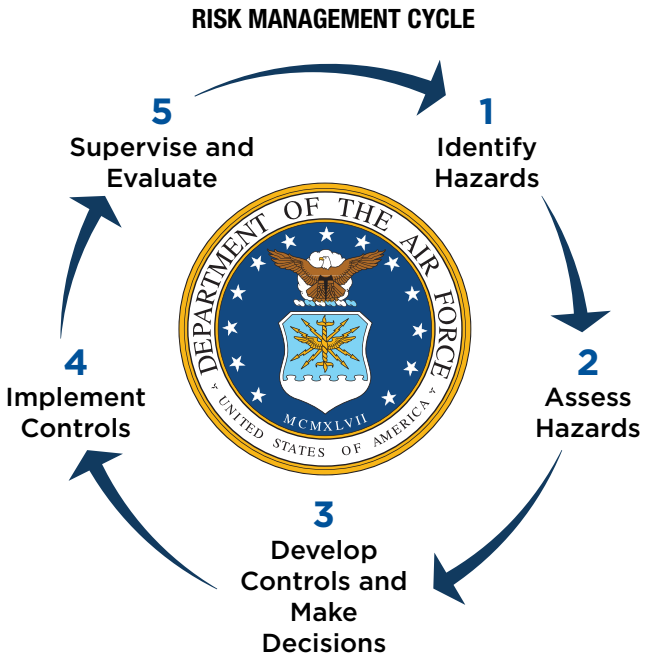
> PSI is a unique tool, and we want to share that tool with these maintainers. But, before we can give it to them, they need to understand what it is and how it works, and they must agree to the rules for its use. This understanding comes from the training, and the agreement is the NDA. Air Force maintainers are the best in the world, and they can still do their job without this special tool, as they always have. But this tool can help them understand why they're doing certain things, or why they're doing them a certain way.

When aircraft maintenance personnel are trained to properly handle PSI, they are also trained to protect it effectively. After a mishap occurs, the Investigating Officer (IO) will interview each individual involved in the mishap sequence, and the IO must inform them that the Air Force does not use PSI as evidence for punitive, disciplinary, or adverse administrative actions. This information allows the interviewee to tell the IO what happened confidentially, without fear of repercussions. The IO needs truthful information to determine factors and findings, and the persons interviewed need to know that their frank and open communication will be protected in accordance with DoDI 6055.07, *Mishap Notification, Investigation, Reporting, and Record Keeping*, and DAFI 91-204, *Safety Investigations and Reports*, used solely for mishap prevention.

In summary, it is vital for aircraft maintenance personnel to have access to valuable mishap prevention information previously unavailable to them. Choquette's directive to provide PSI training and recurring mishap safety briefings for all USAF aviation maintenance professionals immediately makes that access a reality. I want to extend a huge thank you to Maj Gen Choquette for issuing this directive and providing maintainers with this critical safety mishap information. Today, to those Airmen who now have the information every aircraft maintainer needs to know, I say sincerely and in a friendly gesture, welcome to Flight Safety!

Personal and Professional Risk Management

BY MS. MICHELLE PIEHL, STAFF WRITER



Risk management is the process of determining risk and the likelihood of negative consequences occurring. Military units often emphasize operational risk management, but personal accountability and risk mitigation are essential both in and out of the field.

Four principles inform risk management in the Air Force.

1. Accept no unnecessary risk.
2. Make risk decisions at the appropriate level.
3. Integrate risk management into operations, activities, and planning at all levels.
4. Apply the process cyclically and continually.

According to the Air Force Safety Center, "At work and home, smart Risk Management serves as the foundation of our Air Force safety program and personal choices while off duty." Cyclical risk-management planning ensures that no situation flies under the radar.

As a member of today's military, keeping the body and mind in the best shape possible is imperative.

The Air Force defines the Risk Management Cycle as follows:

1. Identify Hazards
2. Assess Hazards
3. Develop Controls and Make Decisions
4. Implement Controls
5. Supervise and Evaluate

Repeating these steps throughout any situation helps to ensure that no risk is taken without the proper precautionary steps to mitigate hazards.

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

When planning field exercises, recreational activities, or day-to-day tasks, remember that situational awareness is paramount. Although perfect plans do not exist, a well-thought-out, highly detailed analysis can help to avoid negative consequences. Understanding the situation, knowing the environment, and maintaining appropriate controls also help mitigate risk.

When events occur in real-time, planning time becomes severely limited. Implementing controls during planning provides resources during execution, according to the Air Force Safety Center. Controls may include, but are not limited to, safety measures, proper instruction, equipment maintenance, formal risk assessments, checklists, standard operations procedures, personal protective equipment, safety evaluations for personnel and equipment, emergency planning, personnel well-being, and environmental assessments.

PROPER MAINTENANCE

As a member of today's military, keeping the body and mind in the best shape possible is imperative. The Air Force Safety Center calls the human resource the "Human Weapon System," providing several ideas for maintaining the complex needs of this system.

"To maintain the Human Weapon System in peak condition, it must be fed, hydrated, and rested. It needs frequent breaks from intense concentration and work where the mind can be rested and rejuvenated. We know we need to put effort into maintaining balance physically, emotionally, and spiritually," says the Air Force Safety Center.

The Air Force Safety Center emphasizes the following traits, skills, and characteristics for optimizing the Human Weapons System:

- Core Values
- Nutritional Health
- Mental and Physical Adaptiveness
- Confidence and Innovation
- Mental Toughness
- Technical Expertise
- Risk Awareness
- Recovery
- Mindfulness and Spirituality
- Leadership and Mentorship
- Physical Fitness
- Restorative Sleep
- Balanced Work and Personal Life
- Family and Social Support
- Education and Experience

Maintaining personal wellness ensures force readiness for military units.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

A Risk Assessment Matrix determines the level of risk based on the probability of severe effects resulting from a given hazard. Risk assessments may vary by unit, activity, or event, but their purpose remains the same: assess hazards, mitigate hazards, and control hazards.

In a risk assessment matrix developed by the Air Force Safety Center, risk is measured at incremental levels based on the intersection of hazard severity and frequency of occurrence over time, with each increment ranked as low, medium, high, or extremely high risk.

WRAP UP

Creating plans, implementing safeguards, and deploying real-time mitigation strategies ensure that personal and professional activities can be safe, secure, and sound.

REFERENCE

U.S. Air Force Safety Center. "Risk Management." **https://www.safety.af.mil/Risk-Management/**.

Risk Assessment Matrix

SEVERITY / Effect of Hazard		PROBABILITY: Frequency of Occurrence Over Time				
		A Frequent (Continuously Experienced)	**B Likely** (Will Occur Frequently)	**C Occasional** (Will Occur Several Times)	**D Seldom** (Unlikely; Can be Expected to Occur)	**E Rarely** (Improbable but Possible to Occur)
Catastrophic (Death, Loss of Asset, Mission Capability, or Unit Readiness)	I	EH	EH	H	H	M
Critical (Severe Injury or Damage, Significantly Degraded Mission Capability or Unit Readiness)	II	EH	H	H	M	L
Moderate (Minor Injury or Damage, Degraded Mission Capability or Unit Readiness)	III	H	M	M	L	L
Negligible (Minimal Injury or Damage, Little or No Mission Capability or Unit Readiness)	IV	M	L	L	L	L

Risk Assessment Levels: EH=Extremely High; H=High; M=Medium; L=Low.

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Proactive Safety: It Is a Marathon, Not a Sprint

BY MR. JAMES BUSBEA,
AMC MFOQA PROGRAM MANAGER

Safety culture is naturally biased toward reactive processes because mishaps are confirmation of hazards. When a Class A or B aviation mishap involves an Air Mobility Command (AMC) aircraft, the safety investigation process is poised to marshal tremendous resources to determine the cause and implement changes to avoid a recurrence. There are mandatory reporting requirements, a carefully choreographed investigation process, and a highly structured timeline that demands a focused effort. According to DAFI 91-204, *Safety Investigations and Reports*, the final message timeline for Class A and B mishaps includes thirty days for the investigation, fifteen days to brief the Convening Authority, and three days to release the message after the brief. That is a fast turnaround! For a rough (not a perfect apples-to-apples) comparison, the National Transportation Safety Board generally tries to complete an investigation in twelve to twenty-four months. Following a Class A or B mishap, a semi-annual Hazard Review Board, chaired by the AMC Deputy Commander, closely manages recommendations provided by a Safety Investigation Board until the hazards are eliminated or mitigated to an acceptable level. Whether it is a publication change, an update to a training syllabus, or a fleet-wide aircraft modification, significant oversight and engagement are baked into the recommendation resolution process, and that is a good thing.

Proactive safety programs are more "grassroots" programs in that they are highly dependent on participation and buy-in from the rank and file to improve safety in their communities.

In contrast to the mishap investigation process, proactive safety programs—including Military Flight Operations Quality Assurance (MFOQA), Line Operations Safety Audit (LOSA), and Aviation Safety Action Program (ASAP)—provide a means to identify hazard trends and implement safety solutions ***without a mishap***. In other words, proactive safety shares the same goal as reactive safety—mishap prevention—but at a fraction of the cost. However, proactive safety programs also have their share of challenges. LOSA, MFOQA, and ASAP do not wield the concentrated effort and support inherent to mishap investigations. Proactive safety programs are more "grassroots" programs in that they are highly dependent on participation and buy-in from the rank and file to improve safety in their communities. Participation is voluntary and often falls outside what is explicitly expected of individuals. As with most grassroots efforts, results do not always come easy. Sometimes, proactive safety feels like a marathon, not a sprint. However, when we put in the work, the result is that hazards are mitigated or eliminated but with no mishaps. To illustrate this point, I will summarize three proactive safety success stories that resulted in tangible improvements to flight safety.

KC-135 ASAP + MFOQA = CHANGE

In 2013, a KC-135 crew conducted a full-stop taxi back (FSTB). When the crew performed the After Landing portion of their FSTB checklist, they missed the step to close the speed brakes. Resist the urge to apply your groundspeed-zero judgment here; we have all missed a checklist item. Also, do not get ahead of the timeline. In 2013, step three in the Before Takeoff portion of the FSTB checklist (Speed Brakes – zero degrees) did not exist. So, the speed brakes remained fully extended as the crew commenced their takeoff roll. Everything seemed normal until the pilot pulled back on the control column after the "Rotate" call. The airplane struggled into the air. Once airborne, the Ground Proximity Warning System immediately announced, "SPEED BRAKES, SPEED BRAKES." The pilot pushed the speed brake lever forward to zero degrees and safely recovered. Thankfully, the pilot submitted an ASAP describing the events.

During the analysis of this ASAP, two questions emerged. First, why did the warning horn not sound when the pilot advanced the throttles for takeoff with the speed brake lever pulled back more than two degrees? The short answer is that the flap and speed brake warning switch is not one hundred percent effective. The KC-135 Performance Manual states, "During some minimum N_1 takeoff settings, the flap/speed brake warning switch may not be actuated." Second, why is there

not another step in the FSTB checklist to ensure the pilot sets the speed brake lever to zero degrees before takeoff? The initial response from some of the more cynical members of the community went something like this: this item is covered in the After Landing portion of the checklist. Just be better at your job.

Fortunately, MFOQA analysis was available to add unemotional context to this ASAP. Seven other KC-135s took off with their speed brake lever greater than two degrees within twelve months of the ASAP. There were approximately 28,000 initial takeoffs in the same twelve-month period, including full-stop taxi backs. According to MFOQA analysis, approximately thirty-three percent of those takeoffs used a power setting at or below that of the ASAP event and may not have had the intended protection of the flap and speed brake warning system. So, one individual submitted an ASAP that identified the hazard, and MFOQA quantified the risk as far greater than an isolated case of poor checklist discipline.

The scope of this hazard provided solid justification for flight manual changes and plans to modify the fleet. The flight manual changes came "relatively" fast. The existing *Performance Manual* warning was essentially replicated in the Takeoff section of the *Flight Manual*, and step three (Speed Brakes – zero degrees) was added to the Before Takeoff portion of the FSTB checklist. An airplane modification takes much longer than a flight manual change, especially when it involves hardware versus software. It has been more than eleven years since that ASAP was submitted, and KC-135 Block 45.4 is finally visible on the horizon. It includes changes to the flap and speed brake warning system to protect every takeoff regardless of the power setting.

MFOQA—THAT IS NOT US…IS IT?

I briefed MFOQA trends for one AMC aircraft at the Realistic Training Review Board (RTRB) at Scott AFB, IL, a few years ago. For those unfamiliar with the RTRB, it is an event that senior instructors and training managers from every wing in the Mobility Air Force attend, along with a few evaluators who are also in town for the Stan/Eval Board (SEB). The RTRB and SEB are great opportunities to spread the word about the MFOQA program and showcase the power of trending more than a handful of training sorties or checkrides—MFOQA sees almost everything.

As I presented the analysis of a particular Flight Safety Alert (FSA) that highlighted noncompliance with a Flight Manual Safety Supplement, one of the evaluators became visibly annoyed and pulled me aside after my presentation to discuss. His base stood above the others in the count and rate of this FSA, and apparently, the data struck a nerve. It was not just an anonymous blob of fleet-wide data in a bar graph or pie chart; the analysis showed things that were happening

A KC-135 Stratotanker aircraft flies over Pittsburgh International Airport, Pittsburgh, PA, as part of a local training mission, Feb. 23, 2024.

USANG photo by MSgt Bryan Hoover

in his unit that he did not see when administering evaluations. I am not sure what bothered him more, the fact that I was contradicting his perception of reality or the realization that crews might operate differently when Stan/Eval was not on the jet. After our discussion, I assumed that, like so many others, he was processing the five stages of MFOQA grief and might never arrive at acceptance.

Fast forward a year later, and I am briefing the same FSA at the next RTRB. It dawned on me that this base no longer had the highest rate for that FSA but now had one of the lowest. I scanned the room for someone from that unit to find out what was up.

Unbeknownst to me, this evaluator returned what he had learned to his unit and instituted a Special Interest Item to address the trend, with dramatic results.

Despite having the highest probable exposure to the hazard because of their specific mission, this unit continues to have one of the lowest occurrence rates for this FSA.

ERRONEOUS ALTIMETER REPORTING—ASAP 28774

As a crew prepared to taxi for a night local training sortie, they checked the Automatic Terminal Information Service (ATIS) and dialed in their barometric altimeter correction. However, this altimeter setting resulted in a readout that was approximately four hundred feet above the airfield elevation. Something was wrong with the altimeter setting reported via ATIS. The crew queried ground control about the altimeter setting. Ground informed them that the local weather technician gave them the same altimeter setting and insisted that ATIS was correct. The crew checked the Terminal Aerodrome Forecast for a nearby airfield and discovered a significant difference in the altimeter setting between the two fields. Furthermore, when the crew set that altimeter from the nearby airfield, it matched their airfield elevation perfectly. The crew contacted the local weather flight directly and informed them of the apparent altimeter setting error. The on-duty weather technician dismissed the crew's concerns as the automated observation system reported no maintenance flags. Then, the crew escalated their assertiveness and contacted the tower to ensure that the arriving aircraft would not be issued the errant altimeter setting. The tower subsequently began using the altimeter for the adjacent airfield.

After flying a night local, we all just want to complete the necessary post-flight paperwork and go home. There was no obvious requirement to report this incident, and it would have been easy to assume that the appropriate authority probably already knew about it. However, this crew took the time to submit an ASAP, thinking it might make a difference, and it did!

This ASAP uncovered two issues. The first issue was a previously undetected design flaw in the automated weather observation system used across the Air Force and Army. In the simplest of terms, the triple redundant barometers in this equipment share a common ambient air tube that the manufacturer believed to be impervious to moisture. However, engineers determined this assumption was incorrect in a subsequent laboratory test. Under certain conditions, ice formation generated an equally erroneous altimeter setting from each of the system's three barometers such that the system reported no discrepancy. The second issue was the weather technician's assumption that the automation could always be trusted to accurately report its status despite being provided contradicting reports from the surrounding area.

When a crew takes the time to submit an ASAP like this one, they are not stuffing a complaint in a comment box. It is reasonable to expect that someone on the receiving end of that ASAP (usually the Major Command staff) will run the issue to ground, but in this case, they hit it out of the park. The weather personnel on the staff at AMC and Air Combat Command (the lead command for weather equipment) ensured that the appropriate agencies investigated the incident thoroughly, then devised and disseminated comprehensive mitigation for users of this system across the globe until the manufacturer designed a permanent fix. That happened in less than sixty days!

Proactive flight safety programs like MFOQA and ASAP may never wield the influence or focused attention inherent in reactive or mishap-based safety programs. Sure, proactive safety is sometimes a marathon, not a sprint. However, as these three vignettes illustrated, proactive safety can be incredibly effective when participation and buy-in are high. Submitting that ASAP after a long day could be the catalyst to uncovering something that affects the entire fleet. Using MFOQA to quantify hazards objectively provides insight beyond our personal experience and removes emotion from decision-making. The more we participate in and embrace these programs, the more momentum we create to improve flight safety without mishaps.

2024 AIR MOBILITY COMMAND

ANNUAL SAFETY AWARD WINNERS AND DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE NOMINEES

AMC Safety Outstanding Achievement Award, Category II
*60 AMW Safety Office, Travis AFB, CA

AMC Safety Outstanding Achievement Award, Category IV
*43 AMOG Safety Office, Pope Army Airfield, NC

AMC Safety Outstanding Achievement Award, Category V
*733 AMS, Kadena AB, Japan

AMC Safety Civilian Professional of the Year Award
*Ms. Petra J. Oliver
727 AMS, RAF Mildenhall, England

AMC Safety Noncommissioned Officer of the Year
*SSgt Heather M. Harris
6 ARW, MacDill AFB, FL

AMC Safety Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the Year
*MSgt Jessica M. Deal
19 AW, Little Rock AFB, AR

AMC Safety Officer of the Year Award
*Capt Lucas A. Lambrecht
22 ARW, McConnell AFB, KS

AMC Aircrew of Distinction Award
*Crew of NATTY 46
384 ARS, Fairchild AFB, WA

AMC Individual Aviation Maintenance Safety Award
*TSgt Steven M. Zomermaand, PLS
Joint Base Andrews, MD

AMC Team Aviation Maintenance Safety Award
*721 AMOG/MXQ, Ramstein AB, Germany

AMC Flight Safety NCO of the Year Award (AMC Level Award Only)
MSgt Melinda E. Scanlon
89 AW, Joint Base Andrews, MD

Aero Club Safety Certificate
*Dover Air Force Base Aero Club
Dover AFB, DE

AMC Occupational Safety Career Professional of the Year
*TSgt Luis E. Artigas
375 AMW, Scott AFB, IL

AMC Occupational Safety Civilian of the Year
*Mr Jonathan M. Murphy
22 ARW, McConnell AFB, KS

AMC Individual Weapons Safety Award
*MSgt Adam M. Willis
92 ARW, Fairchild AFB, WA

AMC Team Weapons Safety Award
*Weapons Safety Office
22 ARW, McConnell AFB, KS

AMC Risk Management Achievement Award (AMC Level Award Only)
22 ARW Safety Office
McConnell AFB, KS

AMC Safety Office of the Year (AMC Level Award Only)
6 ARW Safety Office
MacDill AFB, FL

AMC RiderCoach of the Year Award (AMC Level Award Only)
SSgt Rebekah A. Busch
436 AW, Dover AFB, DE

AMC Distinguished Motorcycle Safety Award (AMC Level Award Only)
87 ABW Motorcycle Safety Program Team
Joint Base MDL, NJ

**Department of the Air Force Nominees*

Left to right: Mr. David Oneil, MSgt Madison Leonard, Mr. Jason Jackson, Ms. Susan Turek, Lt Col Benjamin "GEM" Johnson, Maj Julian Spinoza, MSgt Garrett Craig, TSgt Adam Serydynski, and Mr. Jason McLeod.

Photo by SrA Derrick Bole

★ AMC SAFETY OFFICE OF THE YEAR ★

6th AIR REFUELING WING SAFETY OFFICE

MacDill Air Force Base, FL

THE 6TH AIR REFUELING WING SAFETY OFFICE (6 ARW/SE) at MacDill Air Force Base (AFB), FL, has been honored as the Air Mobility Command (AMC) 2024 Safety Office of the Year. Under the leadership of 6 ARW Commander Col Edward V. Szczepanik, the 6 ARW racked up a host of achievements in safety in the past year. The following are just a few examples.

The AMC Commander chose the 6 ARW/SE to support a $2.9 million Class A Safety Investigation Board (SIB) for a C-130J engine confined mishap. Not only did the team get the mishap downgraded to a Class D, saving twenty-seven thousand dollars in temporary duty funds, but they did it in five days—fifty-five days fewer than the average time to resolve an SIB.

During Hurricane Helene, the 6 ARW/SE provided key oversight of the emergency response. The team helped evacuate 21,000 people and assessed 113 critical facilities, restoring those facilities to mission-essential condition within two days after the hurricane had passed.

The 6 ARW Occupational Safety Office (SEG) led the 6th Communications Squadron in becoming knowledgeable about Air Force-level confined-space requirements. SEG helped them create their first unit extraction exercise, which took less than two weeks, and certified team member responsibilities for a zero-mishap exercise.

During the three days of AirFest 2024, the 6 ARW/SE identified and remediated eleven hazards. At MacDill AFB's largest air show to date, 175,000 observers and eighteen hundred military personnel viewed twelve hours of entertaining, collision-free aerobatics. The Weapons Safety Office (SEW) managed the planning for pyrotechnics at AirFest, including conducting a risk assessment and writing the resulting safety guidelines. With a twenty-three thousand dollar contract, SEW oversaw thirteen personnel members and ninety-four pounds of explosives. The contractor subsequently declared, "Best support in twenty-plus years!"

With the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the 6 ARW Flight Safety Office removed fifty-five thousand birds, three coyotes, two alligators, and one manatee from the airfield. Those actions cut the number of wildlife strikes in half and resulted in 2,200 mishap-free KC-135 sorties.

AMC RISK MANAGEMENT ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

22d Air Refueling Wing Safety Office

McConnell Air Force Base, KS

THE 22D AIR REFUELING WING SAFETY OFFICE (22 ARW/SE) at McConnell Air Force Base (AFB), KS, led by Lt Col Rey Heron, is the winner of the Air Mobility Command (AMC) Risk Management Achievement Award.

The team executed several comprehensive risk assessments for high-profile events, enhancing strategic decision-making for senior leaders. They secured approval for the Air Force's inaugural KC-46 Nuclear Operational Readiness Exercise and coordinated efforts to mitigate critical hazards during Project Magellan, benchmarking risk management for Maximum Endurance Operations. The team also synchronized efforts to cement 22 ARW as the first AMC wing certified for F-22 hot-pit refueling. They led a cross-functional team to expedite KC-46 801X alert sequences. Through cross-agency coordination, the team additionally guided risk management and enabled an innovation grant to test and implement an auxiliary-power unit remote-start system prototype.

By chairing several working groups and mitigating hazards with zero mishaps, the 22 ARW/SE propelled agile combat employment initiatives. The Safety Office Lead deployed in support of the Wing's EXPLODEO exercise. In addition, the team oversaw four two million dollar mass no-notice weather evacuations in a six-hour timeframe, directing safety oversight and minimizing hazards for five thousand Airmen and global operations. They also led two installation-wide projects, conducting comprehensive risk assessments and securing approval to enforce stringent explosive safety measures and bolster infrastructure resilience.

The Safety Office executed the Chief of Staff of the Air Force's Integrating Risk and Readiness Campaign by developing a curriculum, teaching facilitators, and educating Airmen about Risk Management and Operational Discipline. The team coordinated and wrote the base's first low-speed vehicle risk assessment and developed the Air Force's first three-dimensional-printed playground inspection kit. In addition, the team secured billboard safety advertisements and collaborated with local police to enhance motorcycle safety.

The 22 ARW/SE successfully managed explosive and non-explosive risk management for the 2024 Open House/Air Show. During the air show, a microburst damaged civilian aircraft and vendor property. The team implemented the installation emergency management plan to expedite recovery operations and prevent mishaps.

Left to right: Lt Col Paul Fowler, Mr. Jay Bugauisan, Mr. Billy Sewell, Capt Patrick Corona, Capt Jordan Boone, TSgt Deiadra Wallace, (T)Sgt Select Ingrid Ramirez, TSgt Kyle Cracolici, TSgt Patrick McElroy, and Mr. Gary Ash. Not pictured: Maj Marco Metzler and Capt Nathan Tomlin.

Left to right: MSgt David Lowe, (S)MSgt Christopher Doss, and Capt Jordan Rogers.

Photo by Mr. Gary Ash

AMC SAFETY OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD, CATEGORY II

60th Air Mobility Wing Safety Office

Travis Air Force Base, CA

THE 60TH AIR MOBILITY WING SAFETY OFFICE (60 AMW/SE) at Travis Air Force Base, CA, led by Lt Col G. Paul Fowler, is the winner of the Air Mobility Command (AMC) Outstanding Achievement Award, Category II.

The 60 AMW/SE safeguarded the largest AMC wing's collateral, movements, missions, airlifts, and personnel. Liaising with AMC, the office increased the installation's explosives surge capacity and boosted the Wing's explosives capability. They also wrote an explosive waiver to increase the authorized net explosive weight at two locations.

The team helped lead the installation's AMC Readiness Evaluation, mitigating mishaps and ensuring seamless reception, staging, and integration. They also organized moving fifty patients on a C-5. During their air show, they coordinated with the Federal Aviation Administration, performers, and wildlife teams to ensure attendee and aircraft performance safety with zero mishaps.

The 60 AMW/SE identified hazards and developed cross-contamination processes for personnel protection, resulting in one hundred percent mission capability. The team also supported several military construction projects by accelerating safety reviews and amplifying occupational health hazard abatement. Their Occupational Safety Health Administration and safety courses fortified base safety, resulting in zero on-duty Class A/B mishaps. In addition, the team implemented risk management improvements to installation and local school active shooter response plans.

With the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the 60 AMW/SE created and applied new bird and wildlife advisory strike hazard phases. As part of an Interim Safety Board, the team collected evidence, preserved facts, and organized data for another base's KC-46 Class A mishap. During the KC-10 divestment, the office employed risk management to ensure its successful retirement.

The team created, funded, and implemented a safe driving campaign. They also doubled training opportunities for a new motorcycle rider training curriculum. In addition, they integrated installation-wide risk management and readiness training to transform risk management for risk-informed decisions.

The team provided morale-enhancing support and supplies via Operation Care and Comfort to servicemembers and the Fisher House for families of veterans receiving life-altering medical procedures.

From left to right: MSgt Micheal Dyke, Flight Safety NCO; Mr. Ethan Cavenaugh, USDA Wildlife; MSgt Brandon Bowen, Flight Safety NCO; Mr. Richard Galley, Flight Safety Manager; Maj Kelli Gallagher, Chief of Safety; Mr. Ray Shupe, Occupational/ Weapons Safety Manager; TSgt Jacob Soukey, Occupational Safety NCO; and TSgt Kenneth Oliver, Occupational Safety NCO.

AMC SAFETY OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD, CATEGORY IV

43rd Air Mobility Operations Group Safety Office

Pope Army Airfield, NC

THE 43RD AIR MOBILITY OPERATIONS GROUP SAFETY OFFICE (43 AMOG/SE) at Pope Army Airfield, NC, with Col Allen C. Morris, Jr., at the helm, is this year's winner of the Air Mobility Command Safety Outstanding Achievement Award, Category IV. The group's commitment to safety has set the bar high for safety offices in the military.

Among its many accomplishments, the 43 AMOG licensed twelve weapons facilities, including accounts for warfighting partners, on Pope. The group managed ten explosives site plans, providing critical capability for the launch of the Immediate Response force. The result? No explosives mishaps in fifteen years! The group conducted ten annual unit inspections, forty-one no-notice spot inspections on seventy-four facilities, and twenty-four safety program management assessments. The twenty-three program deficiencies and six facility hazards that the group discovered led to the preservation of $3.9 million in critical assets.

The 43 AMOG supplied risk oversight for AMC's first multinational Battalion Mass Tactical Week, featuring two brigade combat teams, Canadian and United Arab Emirates Air Forces, and three major commands. The event built coalition partnerships and enhanced the participating forces' capabilities and lethality. The 43 AMOG also provided safety oversight for six no-notice presidential missions, loading and launching 163 real-world missions to four areas of responsibility and executing sixteen joint forcible entry readiness exercises, two Joint Readiness Training Center insertions, and two Wing certifications.

Task Force Gryphon safely deployed the 108 Air Defense Artillery Brigade in response to the Israel-Hamas crisis, launching seventy-eight aircraft, processing nine hundred joint forces, and loading six million pounds of cargo.

In managing the Bird/Wildlife Aviation Strike Hazard program, the 43 AMOG reduced strikes by twenty-six percent in fiscal year 2024 and seventy-two percent during the past five years. The group also oversaw safety integration into AMC's only joint-accredited exercise, STORM FLAG, integrating Air Force mobility, international partners, and joint forces to execute 259 airlift and airdrop missions and combat-certify 7,326 troops.

To increase safe motorcycling, the 43 AMOG conducted eight Motorcycle Safety Foundation-certified courses, training fifty-seven personnel. The group managed and provided follow-on ancillary training to seventy-three riders across four commands—with zero mishaps.

AMC SAFETY OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD, CATEGORY V

733d Air Mobility Squadron

Kadena Air Base, Japan

THE 733D AIR MOBILITY SQUADRON (733 AMS) has been presented with the Air Mobility Command (AMC) Outstanding Achievement Award, Category V. Among its many achievements, the team resolved four safety-of-flight impounds, coordinating with Boeing, Lockheed Martin, and three major commands to author six engineer dispositions.

The team also procured vehicles for a Class A Safety Investigation Board and oversaw C-17 flight line operations during an Interim Safety Board, augmenting the 18th Wing's flight safety duties to ensure mission generation, improving passenger terminal safety by fabricating "Do Not Enter" signs for condemned areas and facilities, and refurbishing tablets for the Air Transportation Quality Assurance department—saving the Air Force four thousand dollars and providing capabilities to conduct 150 digital proficiency assessments.

The team exposed an airfield limitation and initiated an engine run modification affecting twelve airframes, prompting a Kadena Air Base Instruction rewrite that prevented three thousand delay hours annually and bolstered the Air Force's premier combat wing. Elsewhere, the unit synced with the 18th Equipment Maintenance Squadron and the 18th Civil Engineer Squadron to overhaul flightline fire extinguishing capabilities, replacing current extinguishers with Novec fire bottles valued at $112,000 to ensure squadron compliance with Japan's ban on Halon emissions.

Other notable achievements include leading explosives handling area inspections and identifying four firefighting shortfalls at a joint cargo deployment center, overseeing the creation of an aerial port processing area's traffic flow plan, propelling AMC Headquarters' new evaluation program by conducting sixty performance evaluations and standardizing the wing's assessment process, and identifying and correcting twelve port discrepancies during an environmental program compliance inspection for Freight Operations.

In addition, the unit coordinated with Aerial Port leadership to remove inoperable baggage scales and install four brand-new systems. Their upgrade decreased passenger check-in time by sixty percent and enabled the safe movement of nine thousand personnel to three areas of responsibility.

These are only some of the notable tasks the very busy 733 AMS accomplished this year!

NATTY 46 crew members, left to right: Capt Andrew Strother, Mission Pilot; Capt Lauren Letarte, First Pilot; A1C Anthony Addington, Boom Operator; and Capt Jacob Redito, Instructor Pilot, all of 384 ARS. USAF photo by A1C Matthew Arachikavitz.

AMC AIRCREW OF DISTINCTION AWARD

Crew of NATTY 46

384th Air Refueling Squadron, Fairchild AFB WA

THE CREW OF NATTY 46, 384th Air Refueling Squadron, Fairchild Air Force Base, WA, was awarded the Air Mobility Command Aircrew of Distinction Award.

On Jan. 30, 2024, the crew of NATTY 46 took off from Prince Sultan Air Base in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on a U.S. Central Command-assigned combat mission. The mission involved two F-15E Strike Eagles conducting nighttime defensive counter-air exercises over the Red Sea in support of Operation PROSPERITY GUARDIAN. After completing routine night aerial refueling, the second F-15E reported a bleed air malfunction that ultimately caused a loss of thrust in their right engine. They requested an urgent rendezvous to conduct aerial refueling and returned to base immediately.

Capt Jacob Redito served as pilot monitoring, and Capt Andrew Strother coordinated a descent to affect the rendezvous. While in a nighttime, over-water, one thousand-feet-per-minute descent, the crew successfully offloaded seventeen thousand pounds of fuel to the emergency F-15E in a single contact, minimizing the amount of time the fighter aircraft had to remain connected to the tanker.

Additional aerial refueling was conducted, with 54,300 pounds of fuel transferred to the F-15Es that were then able to separate and safely recover to their primary airbase.

Throughout the sortie, mission requirements drove specific tactics to ensure air traffic avoidance, increasing the workload of the aircrew. The combination of ad hoc mission planning and deliberate crew resource management was essential in balancing tight operational security with flight safety through the highly congested international airspace over the Red Sea at night.

NATTY 46 eventually returned to Prince Sultan Air Base, concluding their eventful combat mission. Due to the safety-conscious and expert crew coordination, the crew helped preserve a $59.4 million F-15E Strike Eagle. Most importantly, they safely brought home two fellow American aviators who experienced a harrowing emergency over hostile territory.

AMC SAFETY CIVILIAN PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

Mrs. Petra J. Oliver

727th Air Mobility Squadron,
Royal Air Force Mildenhall, Suffolk, UK

Photo by 1st Lt Tanner Taskerud

MRS. PETRA J. OLIVER of the 727th Air Mobility Squadron, Royal Air Force Mildenhall, Suffolk, UK, is the Air Mobility Command Safety Civilian Professional of the Year.

As Occupational Health and Safety Manager, Oliver conducted occupational health training courses for sixty-eight personnel. Her efforts ignited a thirty-five-percent increase in HAZMAT handling and qualifications, supporting six installations, and led to the unit winning the group's Small Air Terminal of the Year for 2023.

Oliver coordinated with five base agencies to sustain a unit gym by obtaining approvals and leveraging equipment purchases to create ninety-two fitness sessions, with 24/7 fitness options for flightline shift workers. Recognizing spikes in stress during peak operations, she organized a "mental health at work" seminar to share factors that contribute to emotional well-being. Oliver also arranged for "first aid at work" training for first-line supervisors to enable them to treat injuries and mitigate occupational hazards.

★ ★ ★

AMC SAFETY OFFICER OF THE YEAR

Capt Lucas A. Lambrecht

22d Air Refueling Wing,
McConnell Air Force Base, KS

Photo by SrA Felicia Przydzial

CAPT LUCAS A. LAMBRECHT, Flight Safety Officer, 22d Air Refueling Wing, McConnell Air Force Base, KS, was named the 2024 Air Mobility Command Safety Officer of the Year. In paving the way, he supervised a thirteen-member team from six base agencies to resolve a critical non-standard aircraft parking oversight during the Air Force's first KC-46/KC-135 Nuclear Operations Readiness Exercise. He also led the effort to balance operational necessity and risk analysis, securing Air Mobility Command (AMC) Operations, Strategic Deterrence and Nuclear Integration Directorate recognition and benchmarking standards for U.S. Strategic Command validation.

In addition, Lambrecht guided seven agencies, executing the risk assessment for Project Magellan—AMC's longest combat sortie. During the historic flight, his leadership mitigated nine critical hazards across four combatant commands, safeguarded forty-five consecutive flight hours, and coordinated eight air refueling events—benchmarking risk management for Maximum Endurance Operations Major Command-wide. He also steered several teams and taught Risk Management courses, among other achievements.

AMC SAFETY NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER OF THE YEAR

SSgt Heather M. Harris

6th Air Refueling Wing, MacDill Air Force Base, FL

Photo by SSgt Lauren Cobin

SSGT HEATHER M. HARRIS, Occupational Safety Noncommissioned Officer in Charge of the 6th Air Refueling Wing (6 ARW) at MacDill Air Force Base, FL, authored nine publications and championed safety campaigns. She led four base-wide events with three wing support agencies and encouraged command involvement and the armed base population with key mishap prevention tactics.

A crucial member of a Headquarters Air Force (HAF) Tiger Team in charge of reformatting and developing the new Department of the Air Force Form 978, *Supervisor's Mishap Report*, Harris provided twelve recommendations, seven of which were implemented throughout the Air Force.

The Air Force Safety Center selected Harris to conduct an in-depth review of DAFMAN 91-203, Chapter 12. She identified five Material Handling Equipment requirement discrepancies within the chapter and coordinated with HAF to align regulations with Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards.

Harris conducted the Newcomer's Orientation briefing for 214 personnel and Supervisor Safety Training for eighty personnel in 2024 alone. Her keen efficiency led to no overdue training statuses for 294 base personnel!

★ ★ ★

AMC SAFETY SENIOR NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER OF THE YEAR

MSgt Jessica M. Deal

19th Airlift Wing, Little Rock Air Force Base, AR

Photo by Mr. W.B. Burrell

MSGT JESSICA M. DEAL, Occupational Safety Superintendent, 19th Airlift Wing, Little Rock Air Force Base, AR, distinguished herself as a leader in occupational safety while serving as Superintendent and Acting Occupational Safety Manager. She expertly managed 112 unit representatives and programs and ensured compliance across 518 structures and forty-six aircraft.

Her leadership extended to the oversight of two hundred motorcycle riders and she served as a safety subject matter expert for five working groups.

Among her accomplishments, Deal averted a soldering lab health risk, ultimately driving a ventilation system renovation that supports eighty-seven Airmen annually. She also intervened in a three-year lighting compliance backlog for multiple hangars, leading to a 757 percent increase in job site visibility within five months.

Her influence extended Air Force-wide when selected by Headquarters Air Force Safety for a mishap reporting tiger team.

AMC OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY CAREER PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

TSgt Luis E. Artigas

375th Air Mobility Wing, Scott Air Force Base, IL

Photo by Mr. Jose Ramirez

TSGT LUIS E. ARTIGAS, Noncommissioned Officer in Charge of the 375th Air Mobility Wing (375 AMW), Scott Air Force Base, IL, exemplified safety professionalism as the lead of the largest Expeditionary Air Base Occupational Safety Team in the Air Force. He addressed critical turnover issues by developing Standard Operating Procedures and launching Air Force Central Command's first Safety Management System.

During a manning gap, Artigas investigated a $165,000 Class-C aviation powerplant mishap and coordinated with a contract maintenance team for investigative analysis to author four C-21A fleet-wide recommendations. He also developed an innovative Career Field Education Training Plan tracking system, which accelerated upgrade training by three months.

375 AMW's Commander lauded and coined Artigas during Exercise Combat Cardinal, 375 AMW's largest exercise to date. In this exercise, he prevented nine real-world hazards in seventy-two-hour simulated contingency operations and provided daily briefs to leaders.

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AMC OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY CIVILIAN OF THE YEAR

Jonathan M. Murphy

22d Air Refueling Wing, McConnell Air Force Base, KS

Photo by SrA Felicia Przydzial

JONATHAN M. MURPHY, Occupational Safety Manager of the 22d Air Refueling Wing, McConnell Air Force Base, KS, innovated risk mitigation practices, ensured zero mishaps, and accelerated Agile Combat Employment initiatives supporting the Air Mobility Command Commander's top priority as the risk manager for the Wing's EXPLODEO exercise.

Murphy enhanced strategic decision-making for senior leaders and secured approval for the Air Force's (AF) KC-46 Nuclear Operational Readiness Exercise by executing comprehensive risk assessments for thirty-four events.

While overseeing KC-46 alert takeoff times, Murphy guided the development team that manufactured and tested a remote start system expected to reduce alert response times by up to twenty-five percent.

Murphy supervised the creation of the AF's first 3D-printed playground inspection kit, earning accolades from the Air Force Safety Center as an innovation that will conserve $88.5 thousand and six hundred work hours annually. He directed inspections of nine playgrounds, identifying and correcting three previously unknown entrapment hazards to safeguard over five hundred children.

AMC INDIVIDUAL AVIATION MAINTENANCE SAFETY AWARD

TSgt Steven M. Zomermaand

89th Airlift Wing, Joint Base Andrews, MD

TSGT STEVEN M. ZOMERMAAND of the 89th Airlift Wing, Joint Base Andrews, MD, demonstrated exceptional expertise in aviation maintenance safety, ensuring the readiness of the $3.2 billion Air Force One fleet across ninety-two presidential missions. He performed 172 evaluations, identifying twenty-eight standards-of-maintenance improvements for 248 Mission Ready Airmen across nine career fields.

As the Dropped Object Prevention Program and foreign object damage (FOD) manager, Zomermaand developed a robust program for the Next-Generation facility, removing thirty-seven pounds of FOD and enhancing safety. He resolved ten safety equipment deficiencies, safeguarding 395 personnel and 354,000 square feet of workspace. By leading Occupational Safety and Health Administration investigations and revising emergency protocols, he reduced response times and prevented thirteen thousand dollars in damages.

Zomermaand streamlined training, reducing quality assurance findings by thirty-six percent, and designed innovative programs boosting safety awareness. His technical expertise, leadership, and innovative problem-solving directly advanced flight safety and demonstrated his operational excellence.

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AMC TEAM AVIATION MAINTENANCE SAFETY

721st Air Mobility Operations Group Quality Assurance

Ramstein Air Base, Germany

THE 721ST AIR MOBILITY OPERATIONS GROUP QUALITY ASSURANCE TEAM, Ramstein Air Base, Germany, excelled in advancing aviation maintenance safety and efficiency.

The team established the Wing's Hot Pit Program, creating a local checklist to streamline future certifications and ensure safe operations for personnel while allowing safe and rapid sixty-minute turnaround capability for C-17s. Collaborating with Air Force Materiel Command engineers, they developed an innovative jack design model, cutting fuselage jack time by fifty percent and improving safety.

Addressing a trend of misidentified bird strikes at Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany, the Quality Assurance team collaborated with the wing safety office to create a training course, reducing misidentification incidents to zero. Their efforts also led to a ninety-two thousand dollar bird strike system upgrade, reducing annual costs by thirty percent.

Their expertise, innovation, and dedication embody AMC's mission of excellence in safety.

AMC INDIVIDUAL WEAPONS SAFETY AWARD

MSgt Adam M. Willis

92d Air Refueling Wing

Fairchild Air Force Base, WA

USAF photo by A1C Matthew Arachikavitz

MSGT ADAM M. WILLIS of the 92d Air Refueling Wing (92 ARW), Fairchild Air Force Base, WA, was awarded this year's Air Mobility Command (AMC) Individual Weapons Safety Award.

Willis's roles at 92 ARW include inspector, trainer, mentor, and reviewer. The following are just a few of his many achievements.

As a mentor for twenty-nine weapons safety representatives, Willis guided the development of six explosive facility licenses, launched a new weapons safety program for the 92d Logistics Readiness Squadron, Fairchild Air Force Base, WA, and reviewed five explosives operating instruction rewrites.

Willis conducted thirty-two inspections in ten units, identifying thirteen deficiencies in the process. He was also specifically chosen to assist AMC in evaluating the safety program at Joint Base Charleston, SC, where he discovered training deficiencies.

Willis meticulously revised Fairchild's explosives map, wrote an Event Waiver for a Rapid Airfield Damage Repair exercise—a first for AMC, and penned two winning quarterly award packages for Weapons and Occupational Safety disciplines.

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AMC TEAM WEAPONS SAFETY AWARD

22d Air Refueling Wing Weapons Safety Office

McConnell Air Force Base (AFB), KS

THE 22D AIR REFUELING WING (22 ARW) WEAPONS SAFETY OFFICE, McConnell Air Force Base (AFB), KS, has been presented with this year's Air Mobility Command Team Weapons Safety Award.

The team led multiple working groups, ensured one hundred percent compliance, and boasted zero mishaps during critical operations, including mass weather evacuations. The team secured approval for the inaugural KC-46 Nuclear Operational Readiness Exercise and helped certify the 22 ARW for F-22 hot-pit refueling. The team conducted comprehensive risk assessments, mitigated explosive hazards for field training exercises, planned and executed explosive and non-explosive risk management for the 2024 Open House/Air Show, drafted an Explosives Site Plan, received approval for a Canine Explosive Training Aid Storage Magazine, and spearheaded the 43d Air Mobility Operations Group Continuing Evaluation at Pope Army Airfield, NC. The team supported initiatives, developed curriculum, and taught facilitator Airmen on risk management and operational discipline.

AMC FLIGHT SAFETY NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER OF THE YEAR

MSgt Melinda E. Scanlon

89th Airlift Wing, Joint Base Andrews, MD

Photo by Capt Amelia Chromy

MSGT MELINDA E. SCANLON, Safety Superintendent, 89th Airlift Wing (89 AW), Joint Base Andrews, MD, is the 2024 Air Mobility Command (AMC) Flight Safety Noncommissioned Officer of the Year. As Safety Superintendent, she ensured the success of the 89 AW Commander's safety program, synchronized efforts across four AMC wings, four major commands, and four federal agencies; completed four Aviation Safety Masters classes; and oversaw the safety of twenty-seven aircraft.

Scanlon also led five noncommissioned officers; oversaw nearly 560 airfield safety inspections; identified and resolved eleven hazards; and facilitated the accident-free execution of more than seven thousand wing sorties, 2,300 distinguished visitor missions, and sixty-thousand transient aircraft movements. She executed a high-priority Chief of Staff of the Air Force tasker, swiftly developing and delivering Risk Management and Readiness training, achieving one hundred percent contact with sixteen hundred 89 AW Airmen in seven days, and enhancing wing-wide preparedness—among other noteworthy accomplishments.

★ ★ ★

AIR FORCE AERO CLUBS

AERO CLUB SAFETY CERTIFICATE

Dover Air Force Base, DE

DOVER AIR FORCE BASE (AFB), DE, AERO CLUB won the 2024 Aero Club Safety Certificate. With more than two thousand hours of mishap-free flying in fiscal year 2024, Dover Aero Club includes 185 members, ten flight instructors, one ground instructor, and 102 student pilots. Twelve students obtained new pilot certification, and twelve gained certification above private pilot.

The 436th Airlift Wing, Dover AFB, DE, and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) conducted multiple inspections; the annual ground safety inspection resulted in zero findings. The club recently recertified as an FAA Part 141 Flight Training Center. Dover Aero Club uses safe flight parameters with a simulator to provide students with safe but effective training. The club also upgraded aircraft instruments to increase pilot situational awareness.

Club leadership promotes community involvement and engagement. The club worked with Delaware State University to improve its safety program, emphasizing the importance of reporting unsafe or suspicious activity when operating Aero Club aircraft off-station.

AMC RIDERCOACH OF THE YEAR

SSgt Rebekah A. Busch

436th Airlift Wing, Dover Air Force Base, DE

Photo by Theron Godbold

SSGT REBEKAH A. BUSCH, Occupational Safety Journeyman, 436th Airlift Wing, Dover Air Force Base, DE, is the Air Mobility Command RiderCoach (RC) of the Year.

Busch developed the wing's mentorship and training doctrine and worked with the state of Delaware and local businesses and organizations to prioritize and bolster military training needs and relationships. Busch is a multi-role Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) RC selected by the State of Delaware Department of Highway Safety team. Her work included safety discussions, advocacy, and mentorship efforts to increase training compliance by twenty percent. Since 2021, Busch has facilitated multiple MSF training events and credentialed over three hundred riders from multiple service branches. She has conducted multiple classes, a preseason safety brief, Motorcycle Safety Day, and a mentorship ride as a motorcycle safety instructor. In addition, Busch provided an online Motorcycle Safety Representative toolbox to aid with access to policies, regulations, and explanations.

★ ★ ★

AMC DISTINGUISHED MOTORCYCLE SAFETY AWARD

87th Air Base Wing Motorcycle Safety Program Team

Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, NJ

THE 87TH AIR BASE WING MOTORCYCLE SAFETY PROGRAM TEAM, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, NJ, led by Maj Frank A. Rodela, has been announced as the winner of the Air Mobility Command Distinguished Motorcycle Safety Award.

The team managed the largest joint base motorcycle safety program, boasting zero fatalities. They led the Joint Base Motorcycle Mentorship Ride Program, conducted preseason motorcycle safety briefings, maintained the joint base Facebook page and website, improved course registration, and taught industry-standard inspection procedures. Staff supervised coaches, facilitated classes, and trained students in advanced rider techniques, tracking riders and identifying and correcting discrepancies. Safety team staff managed a training motorcycle fleet worth $130 thousand, significantly reducing downtime and operational costs while maximizing effectiveness. The team worked with Motorcycle Safety Foundation coaches to save on training costs and improve the motorcycle training range. The team also maintains a state-certified motorcycle licensing facility.

Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month

BY MRS. SARAH PRUETT, STAFF WRITER

For specific protective equipment and training requirements for Air Force Riders, visit the Air Force Safety Center's DAFRider website at https://www.safety.af.mil/Divisions/Occupational-Safety-Division/Air-Force-Rider/

May is Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month and the unofficial start of the motorcycle riding season. As the weather warms and the sun comes out, bikers feel the call of the road. However, the majority of motorcycle accidents occur during the summer months. No matter what type of vehicle you drive, you can take steps to help keep motorcyclists safe. It starts with just being on the lookout for more motorcycles on the road in the summer months. Another important thing to remember is that motorcycles can slow down much faster than cars and trucks, so you should always increase your following distance if you are driving behind one.

In honor of Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month, I recently interviewed a motorcyclist who hits the open road frequently. He explained to me the important safety measures he takes as well as those that other drivers can take. He said he had a few years' experience riding and explained that one of the most important things he did to stay safe was to always wear a good quality helmet and be aware of those around him.

He said he makes sure to stay out of other vehicles' blind spots. He stressed the importance of a "triple check" that drivers should do before turning or switching lanes: Check in the rearview mirror and the side mirror and turn your head around to check blind spots. He added that motorcycle passengers must understand how to ride. The passenger or person on the back of the bike must trust the driver and not lean too much. Leaning can cause accidents and make the bike flip or fall over.

He added that he has had a few minor accidents that could have become major if he had not been wearing a helmet. However, sadly, a majority of U.S. states do not have laws requiring that motorcyclists wear helmets. Only eighteen states in the United States mandate helmets for motorcyclists—but the first thing a new rider should do is put on a helmet. Accidents often happen within the first few months that a person begins riding. New riders are still figuring everything out and learning how to ride a bike properly and handle their specific bike. For this reason, it is not a good idea to have a passenger until some time has passed and a driver is more comfortable operating the motorcycle.

Motorcyclists should stay informed of any equipment or bike recalls as a safety measure. Many counties offer motorcycle safety courses that one can attend; the courses may or may not be required to get a motorcycle license. According to the National Safety Council, only about three percent of registered vehicles in the United States are motorcycles, so it is imperative that other drivers remain vigilant in watching for riders and do not allow motorcyclists to become a forgotten minority.

We can all do our part as drivers and passengers to help keep motorcyclists safe on the roads. Encourage a motorcyclist on ways they can stay safe, and let them know how much you appreciate their safety in May!

Resiliency in Action:

The 6th Air Refueling Wing's Remarkable Mission Success

SrA Trevor Mower, 6th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron Crew Chief, stows a tail stand during preflight checks ahead of Tropical Storm Helene at MacDill Air Force Base, FL, Sept. 24, 2024.

USAF photo by SSgt Lauren Cobin

BY MRS. LAUREN FOSNOT, STAFF WRITER

In September 2024, Hurricane Helene rapidly intensified from a tropical storm to a powerful Category 4 hurricane, leaving widespread devastation in its path. Amid this chaos, the 6th Air Refueling Wing (6 ARW) at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, FL, proved once again why it is a powerhouse in accelerating global airpower and poised to win against any threat that comes its way.

The secret to its strength? Building resilient teams.

When Hurricane Helene struck, the 6 ARW's maintenance team, led by Maj Mitch Przybocki, exemplified tremendous resiliency as they navigated the storm's impact while maintaining mission readiness.

"We preach what we call a 'left pocket mindset,'" Przybocki shared. "It's about remembering the commitment we made to serve. This mindset became crucial as we prepared for the storm of the century."

This concept of service before self was demonstrated as many Airmen rapidly relocated aircraft, safeguarded resources, and ensured operational continuity during the threat of the storm.

"I was in the shoes of all my maintainers, worried about my family and my home, but knowing we had a mission to accomplish," he said.

With only twenty percent of their squadron's manpower—sixty-two personnel of a roughly three-hundred-member team—the 6 ARW maintenance crew's dedication did not waver as they relocated fourteen aircraft to McConnell Air Force Base in Wichita, KS.

In addition to this feat, the team ensured readiness of aircraft for a key mission for the 618th Air Operations later publicized as a B-2 strike against Houthi targets in Yemen, which marked the first time in the 2020s that the aircraft was used in a combat operation.

"We had to launch our refueling mission from McConnell the day after the storm to refill that B-2," Przybocki explained, highlighting the seamless execution of their mission-critical operations, even under extraordinary circumstances.

A1C Marcos Rivera, 927th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron Crew Chief, marshals a KC-135 Stratotanker ahead of Tropical Storm Helene at MacDill Air Force Base, FL, Sept. 24, 2024.

USAF photo by AMN Monique Stober

Despite numerous challenges, from the hurricanes to the missions at hand, the team achieved an impressive eighty-eight-percent mission-capable rate—the highest tanker mission-capable rate among the three Continental United States Air Mobility Command bases for October.

The director of operations shared that the concept of Agile Combat Employment played a critical role in the team's operations. With limited manpower, the team relied on cross-functional expertise to maintain readiness.

Part of this equation is Multi-Capable Airmen, Przybocki said. This was exemplified by a Senior Airman who stepped up to assist crew chiefs with pre-flight visual inspections, which was not part of her core job.

Przybocki shared that safety remained a top priority throughout the high operational tempo. The decentralized command structure empowered many Airmen to ensure tasks were completed safely and accurately.

Despite numerous challenges, from the hurricanes to the missions at hand, the team achieved an impressive eighty-eight percent mission-capable rate—the highest tanker mission-capable rate among the three Continental United States Air Mobility Command bases for October. Even more remarkable, this achievement represents a one-hundred-percent mission-capable rate for their available manpower, which was only twenty percent of their usual capacity.

"Within twenty-four hours of absorbing all fourteen aircraft, my team had them mission capable," said Przybocki. "We knew our mission: be ready."

This accomplishment was even more notable, considering it followed very soon after multiple relocations of their fleet due to hurricanes.

AIC Summer Ko-Szych, a Crew Chief assigned to the 6th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, conducts post-flight checks on a KC-135 Stratotanker at MacDill Air Force Base, FL, Oct. 13, 2024, following Hurricane Milton.

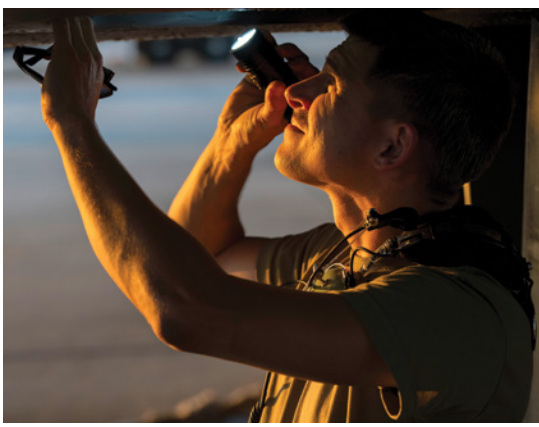
USAF photo by AMN Monique Stober

"What my sixty-two maintainers did was relocate the fleet three times this hurricane season, while also generating for our [Strategic Command] exercises in the summer. And we're talking about airplanes that date back to the Eisenhower Administration," Przybocki added.

The director of operations was also thankful for the McConnell team, whose support allowed the 6 ARW to hit the ground running when they returned to MacDill.

"It takes a village to project combat capability," said Przybocki. "Our maintainers were incredible."

Through dedication and collaboration, the 6 ARW maintenance team ensured mission continuity without degradation. Their efforts during Hurricane Helene exemplify resilience, adaptability, and the power of strong leadership to overcome adversity.



SSgt Christopher Cramer, a Crew Chief assigned to the 927th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, conducts post-flight checks on a KC-135 Stratotanker at MacDill Air Force Base, FL, Oct. 13, 2024, following Hurricane Milton.

USAF photo by AMN Monique Stober

"Maintainers can be incredible when you give them their purpose," Przybocki emphasized. "We knew our mission: preserve airpower. And we did that."

Keeping Families Safe in the Digital Age: Tips to Mitigate Online Risks

BY MRS. LAUREN FOSNOT, STAFF WRITER

The world is full of wonder for children, and the digital world is no different. Nevertheless, alongside its endless opportunities, it also holds hidden dangers that families must be prepared to navigate. With kids spending more time online—whether for gaming, social media, or school—parents need proactive strategies to protect against various threats. The following is a guide to understanding these risks and actionable steps parents can take for children to stay safe online.

RECOGNIZING THE RISKS

Predators in Online Games

Online gaming can be a fun activity for fast-learning youth. However, parents should keep a watchful eye on this hobby. Predators sometimes lurk in online games, using features like in-game chat to build trust with young players. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has noted numerous instances in which adults posing as fellow gamers manipulated minors into private conversations, eventually leading to coercive and exploitative interactions.

Sucked into Social Media

Social media, while offering connection and entertainment, can also exacerbate mental health issues among young users. The U.S. Surgeon General reports that adolescents spending more than three hours per day on social media face twice the risk of experiencing anxiety, depression, and self-image issues. Furthermore, nearly one-half of teens report feeling worse about their body image because of social media exposure.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is another serious concern because it often occurs on social media platforms and in online games. In the effort to keep kids safe

Teach children to recognize warning signs, such as unsolicited friend requests, strangers asking personal questions, or anyone who asks to connect on different platforms.

online, it is essential to understand that every post, comment, and photo they share adds to their "online reputation"—a digital footprint that strangers, friends, and even potential schools or employers can see. StopBullying.gov highlights the unique challenges of cyberbullying in this context: it is persistent, permanent, and hard to notice.

ACTIONABLE TIPS FOR PARENTS

Setting healthy time limits and discussing the potential mental health impacts of social media can help mitigate these risks.

Parents can limit these risks by supervising in-game interactions, encouraging open conversations about online safety, and using parental controls to restrict access to private messaging features.

Signs of cyberbullying include sudden mood shifts, withdrawal from family activities, and a reluctance to discuss online activities. Parents who remain alert to these changes can offer support early on, reminding children they are not alone and empowering them to take breaks or block users when necessary.

Federal agencies—including the FBI, Department of Homeland Security, and Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency—emphasize the importance of building online awareness within families. Here are effective strategies the experts recommend:

Recognize Red Flags

Teach children to recognize warning signs, such as unsolicited friend requests, strangers asking personal questions, or anyone who asks to connect on different platforms. Predators can often use these tactics to lure children into unsafe situations.

Have Open, Ongoing Conversations

Let your children know they can talk to you about their online experiences without fear of punishment. Help them understand that not everyone they meet online is who they claim to be, and encourage them to report any suspicious behavior.

Supervise and Use Parental Controls

Involve yourself in your child's online world by supervising their game and application downloads and setting parental controls. Keep devices in common areas, especially those used for gaming or social media, where interactions can be monitored more easily.

Limit Location and Privacy Settings

Adjust privacy settings to restrict access to personal information and location data. Many applications request permissions unnecessarily, so be vigilant in turning off these settings in your child's games and social media accounts.

Establish Device and Screen Time Boundaries

Set boundaries around where and when devices can be used and make device check-in times a regular habit. This course of action will help reduce unmonitored screen time and foster a balanced relationship with technology.

Save Evidence in the Event of an Incident

If a predator contacts your child or if they become a target of cyberbullying, preserve evidence, such as screenshots and chat logs, and contact law enforcement promptly.

Supporting Mental Health

It is crucial to be mindful of your child's mental health as they navigate the digital world. Monitor for signs of distress, such as withdrawal from real-life social activities, excessive focus on online interactions, or sudden changes in mood. Address these issues by offering a listening ear and providing them with tools to cope. Encourage breaks from screen time and prioritize offline activities that promote positive self-image and emotional resilience.

The digital world can be fun to explore and holds immense potential for education and connection. By understanding the threats and establishing an open, trust-based approach to online safety, families can empower their children to navigate the internet confidently and responsibly.

USAF photo by Kenneth Abbate

USAF photo by A1C Julian Atkins

Examples of Endurance: Lessons Learned from Athletes

BY MS. TIFFANY L. TOLBERT, STAFF WRITER

Airmen in the U.S. Air Force undergo a range of challenges that require resilience and endurance. For instance, Airmen sustain themselves, allies, and partners in competition and conflict; conduct logistics under attack; adopt innovative ways to use logistics; defend against all-domain effects; and recover quickly after braving difficult tasks and opposition. Airmen must be ready to endure adversity, manage fatigue, and persist under stress.

Endurance—also defined as pushing through hardship—is essential in both sports and military service. Athletes endure exhaustion, stress, competition, and other adverse conditions, pushing their bodies to the limit and exerting physical effort over long periods of time.

Athletes also display endurance in doing the work it takes to achieve feats deemed impossible. For example, Cal Ripken Jr., known as the "Iron Man" of baseball, notably demonstrated endurance by playing 2,632 consecutive games, for which he currently holds the record. On Sept. 6, 1995, Ripken played his 2,131st consecutive game, nearly seventy years after Lou Gehrig attained the then-longstanding Major League Baseball record of 2,130 consecutive games. Ripken's streak continued until he retired on Sept. 19, 1998. Ripken credits his endurance to play through minor injuries and other personal factors to a strong work ethic, being a team player, and not disappointing his father, who is also a baseball player and coach. As Ripken put it, "As long as I can compete, I won't quit."

Similarly, through endurance, swimmer Michael Phelps—known as the "Flying Fish"—has amassed twenty-eight Olympic medals, with twenty-three being gold, becoming the most decorated Olympian in history. Now retired, his rigorous training once included swimming six hours each day, equating to nearly fifty miles per week, and intensive weight training on weekends and special occasions like birthdays. His workout regimen also included taking ice baths, deep stretching, and getting enough sleep.

USAF photo by SrA Keegan Putman

USAF photo by MSgt Jeffrey Grossi

As he put it, "[I]t is never a failure to go after your goals with everything you've got."

Considered the greatest women's tennis player of all time, Serena Williams holds the record for twenty-three Grand Slam singles titles won by a man or woman in tennis's Open Era. She is one of the few players to achieve a Surface Slam by winning on all three court surfaces (grass, clay, and hard) in the same year. In addition, Williams has won four Olympic gold medals and is the only tennis player to achieve a career Golden Slam in both singles and doubles. In exhibiting endurance both on and off the field, Williams—the world's highest-paid female athlete in 2016 and 2017—publicly advocated for female tennis players and equitable prize money. Nonetheless, after all her wins, Williams holds self-belief in high esteem. As she put it, "I really think a champion is defined not by their wins but by how they can recover when they fall. You have to believe in yourself when no one else does."

Michael Jordan's journey to becoming one of the greatest basketball players in history underscores how endurance can change setbacks into success. After failing to make his high school varsity basketball team as a sophomore, he practiced basketball relentlessly until the next round of tryouts. "Whenever I was working out and got tired and figured I'd ought to stop, I'd close my eyes and see that list in the locker room without my name on it. That usually got me going again," Jordan said. Eventually, Jordan scored more than forty points for the junior varsity team. His ability to recover and improve also kickstarted his storied career in the National Basketball Association (NBA), as he became a Rookie of the Year; a five-time NBA Most Valuable Player (MVP); a six-time NBA champion; a six-time NBA Finals MVP; a Defensive Player of the Year; a fourteen-time NBA All-Star; and a three-time NBA All-Star MVP, scoring ten titles (an NBA record) and more. As shown, Jordan's key to enduring is turning rejection into motivation. As he put it, "Obstacles don't have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don't turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it."

In both sports and the military, the journey of becoming a champion begins with the decision to strive for greatness and continues through the power of endurance. Athletes like the most decorated gymnast in history, Simone Biles ("We can push ourselves further. We always have more to give."), tennis legend and once the number-one player in the world, Billie Jean King ("Champions keep playing until they get it right."), and "the Greatest" heavyweight boxer of all time, Muhammad Ali ("I hated every minute of training, but I said, 'Don't quit. Suffer now and live the rest of your life as a champion.'") have shown that victory often results from hard work, perseverance, and self-belief. Airmen mirror this mindset, undergoing rigorous training, exhibiting mental resilience, and exuding a commitment to push beyond their limits to fight and endure.

A1C Kalysa Brewer, 436th Maintenance Squadron Electrical and Environmental Systems Journeyman, wears proper personal protective gear while removing electrolyte from a C-17 Globemaster III battery at Dover Air Force Base, DE, Nov. 6, 2024.

USAF photo by Roland Balik

Chemical Hazards Abound—In the Air and On the Ground

BY BETTY NYLUND BARR, STAFF WRITER

Airmen work with numerous chemicals in their daily jobs. Various fluids necessary for the proper functioning of aircraft—jet fuel, deicing compounds, cleaning agents, fire extinguisher chemicals, lubricants, adhesives, liquid oxygen, and hydraulic fluid, for example—can be aerosolized and carried through the air as vapor. Those harmful substances can be released into the air in several ways, such as mechanical failure, seal leaks, and even during regular operational procedures, such as takeoff.[1]

Leaks may occur in engines, refueling equipment, hydraulic containers, and motors. When breathed in, they can cause serious symptoms, such as disorientation, blurred vision, impaired memory, and altered coordination.[2] Such afflictions can be disastrous for anyone working on complex machinery or piloting a plane, causing not only immediate danger but also possibly long-term health problems, including

[1] Balouet, Jean Christophe, Harry Hoffman, and Chris Winder. 1999. *Aviation and Exposure to Toxic Chemicals*. SAE Technical Papers. **https://doi.org/10.4271/1999-01-5603**.

[2] Balouet, Hoffman, and Winder. *Aviation and Exposure to Toxic Chemicals*.

> **"If you have any doubt on what the proper PPE is for a given job, just refer to the T.O. Don't take shortcuts."**

chronic neurological, cardiological, and respiratory problems from neurotoxicants, carcinogens, and other potentially toxic substances.

Beyond the harm incurred by breathing in hazardous materials, some chemicals can irritate or even burn the skin. From a rash to various degrees of burns—depending on the length of exposure—the consequences of not staying sharp and following safety protocols will make you regret not making the extra effort.

Safety is a huge concern in Air Mobility Command. Every issue of *The Mobility Forum* addresses some safety component pertaining to aspects of Airmen's lives, vocations, and free-time pursuits. No one has to question whether Airmen receive adequate training in rigorous safety protocols around the aircraft and other potentially hazardous equipment with which they interact in the course of their jobs. However, thoughts or concerns may intrude, taking our focus off the job at hand:

- Should I have kept Cici home from school today, although her temperature was only 99 degrees?
- Mom would be miserable if I put her into a nursing home, but after she fell on the stairs, I have worried about her living alone.
- If the problem with my car turns out to be the electrical system, do I have enough to cover it?

We all have lives away from work, and thinking about personal issues is normal. However, losing focus while working around aircraft can result in serious injury—no matter how well you are trained and how long you have been doing your job. When you find your thoughts being pulled away from the task at hand, you need to rein them back in. You cannot do anything about that problem *at this moment*; it is not the time to concentrate on anything but that equipment. Your loved ones need you to go home to them intact at the end of the job.

As A1C Bryan McMahon of the 49th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Holloman Air Force Base, NM, reminds us, "There is one underlying mindset that keeps the number of people going home at the end of the day the same as the number who came to work in the morning, the safety mindset."[3] McMahon says that the flightline may be one of the most dangerous places on base to work. In addition to your training, one of the most important safeguards against injury from chemicals on the job is wearing personal protective equipment (PPE).

"During fueling, wear goggles, gloves and have your T.O. [technical order] handy," says McMahon. "For wipe downs, you will need to have goggles, naphtha gloves, long-sleeve shirt, doors open at least ten feet, and your trusty T.O." He is pretty emphatic about that T.O.! "If you have any doubt on what the proper PPE is for a given job, just refer to the T.O. Don't take shortcuts," he says. "If you think you look silly wearing goggles, think how silly it would be to be blind in one eye when you could have avoided a hazard by simply wearing the correct PPE."

Another safety tool that McMahon recommends is wingmen. Always have wingmen follow behind you and check what you have done. Having a second set of eyes is helpful in any profession, but it is a necessity when working with aircraft.

To be prepared for injuries involving chemicals associated with military aircraft, know where to find the first aid kit and the automated external defibrillator (AED). Those items should be in every workplace, so locate the ones on the aircraft and in the buildings where you work. Then, learn how to use them. If it has been a while since you had first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training, take a refresher course. You may never need to use what you learn, but if you do, you will be grateful for the time you spent brushing up.

In the end, the best way to treat chemical injuries is to prevent them. You have the training; use it. As you work, remember what you have learned about safety measures around the equipment and chemicals you use in your daily job. Be present in the moment, and know that by doing so, you will not only do your job well but also do it safely. Take all necessary precautions to be ready for a worst-case scenario.

When it comes to ensuring your safety—and, in fact, your life—how much caution is too much?

[3] McMahon, Bryan. 2007. "Flightline Safety Important to Get Aircraft Flying." **https://www.holloman.af.mil/News/Commentaries/Display/Article/319035/flightline-safety-important-to-get-aircraft-flying/**.

MISHAP-FREE FLYING HOUR **MILESTONES**

7,500 HOURS

155 ARW, Lincoln, NE

Lt Col Randy Douglas

165 AW, Savannah, GA

CMSgt Francisco Marcos Ramirez, III

934 AW, Minneapolis, MN

SMSgt Thomas L. Kim

5,000 HOURS

109 AW, Stratton ANGB, NY

Maj Patrick Newton
SMSgt Timothy Macaulay

164 AW, Memphis, TN

Lt Col Samuel Bexten
SMSgt Paul Garner

165 AW, Savannah, GA

Col Jonathan Mitchell Drew
Lt Col John Andrew Mims
MSgt Christopher Levitt Zeigler

374 AW, Yokota AB, Japan

Maj Robert W. Hairston

3,500 HOURS

109 AW, Stratton ANGB, NY

Lt Col Joshua Ellithorpe
Capt Daniel James
SMSgt Andrew Ham

155 ARW, Lincoln, NE

Capt Shawn Gallager

164 AW, Memphis, TN

Lt Col Brad Lane
Maj Eric Baker
Maj Damian Franz
Maj John McCormick

165 AW, Savannah, GA

Col David Joseph Spisso, II
Col Sheldon Benard Wilson
Lt Col Michael Matthew Gesser
Lt Col Jack Wilson Groover, III
Lt Col John Russell Kenard
Lt Col David William White
SMSgt Guy Thomas Lupica
MSgt Kevin Hay

2,500 HOURS

109 AW, Stratton ANGB, NY

Lt Col Dia Ham
Maj Stephen Pineo
Capt Nicholas Oneil
MSgt Casey Preyer-Blakney
TSgt Scott Salisbury

155 ARW, Lincoln, NE

Maj Ross Barr
Maj Asher Brooks
Maj John Gallo
Maj Nate Witmeyer
TSgt Audrey Levey

164 AW, Memphis, TN

Maj Ryne Gaines
CMSgt Joseph Dischner

165 AW, Savannah, GA

Lt Col Jeffrey Murl Berry
Lt Col James Ryan Bradley
Lt Col Vincent Lee Davis
MSgt Juan Ramon Saltares
MSgt Mark Stephen Shaw
TSgt Johnathan Tyler Hasty

934 AW, Minneapolis, MN

Maj Daniel J. Tate

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

Maintainers: Helping Keep Us Safe on the Ground and In-Flight

BY MR. STEVE PANGER,
HQ AMC FLIGHT SAFETY

As a pilot, I certainly knew how to fly an airplane. However, I never really understood what went on behind the scenes—preparing the aircraft for flight. We cannot do it without our maintainers. Maintenance is an integral part of military operations, especially with regard to our aircraft—not only in Air Mobility Command (AMC) but also in the Air Force as a whole. Safety for maintainers must be a part of our safety program, but where does it exist? It is certainly present in the maintenance units that do a great job at supporting their folks, but how about outside the unit, at the wing or major command levels?

For a long time we have provided aircrew members with timely mishap information, but we have given short shrift to maintainers. Why is that? At our level in AMC Safety, we realize the importance of keeping maintainers in the loop on mishap prevention information since a tragic C-17 mishap occurred in 2004, in which a maintainer was fatally injured in a spoiler incident. At that time, we were severely lacking a maintenance presence in the AMC Flight Safety office. That incident is a large part of the reason AMC Safety hired a retired Flight Safety Noncommissioned Officer (FSNCO) who was a crew chief for much of his career. We realized we needed a maintainer's presence where we had none before. Enter Eulalio Maynes, known by many as Lalo. He has beaten the drum for maintainers for the past twenty years.

Lalo has tirelessly advocated for maintenance in many ways, including hosting FSNCO telecons, penning quarterly maintenance newsletters, meticulously reviewing mishap investigation reports, and prompting the Air Force Safety Center to make changes in policy and publications. He has faced an uphill battle at times, but as he leaves us for the next chapter of his life, we thank him for his efforts that indirectly led to the recent Air Force Safety directive he wrote about on page 8 of this *Mobility Forum* issue. Others may take credit for the directive, but I have worked with Lalo for the past twenty years and have witnessed his fight to be an advocate for the inclusion of aircraft maintenance in our flight safety programs. I believe the Air Force has seen it, too. Although it may have been challenging to implement, this effort will pay off in the long run as we continue to fold the maintenance community into the flight safety field. For all this, we thank you, Lalo, for your hard work and passion for maintenance safety. You have had a job and career worth celebrating! Maintain safety, my friend!

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A DAY IN THE LIFE

"I was a young kid before I joined the military... You know, I just worked at fast food. And now I have been given an aircraft to take care of that is seen worldwide and says 'United States of America' across it. It all started with me just saying, 'Hey, I need to do something different.' Now as a dedicated crew chief, I'm responsible for (this aircraft); it's a huge responsibility and an honor at the same time. By doing this, the unit is saying, 'We trust your capabilities to take care of the aircraft' ... it's a massive honor." MSgt Kenis Wallace, a dedicated crew chief with the 932nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Scott Air Force Base, IL, Nov 21, 2024.

The above photo illustration is a merger of 16-18 individual photos by A1C Clare Werner