

Commander's Call Topics



Oct. 18, 2012

"She's a reason for me to get out of bed in the morning. The walls don't get small when I'm with her. And because she's a working dog, there's a special bond. She's my battle buddy."

Staff Sgt. Andrew Goligowski, an Air Force wounded warrior talking about [the therapeutic effects of Mali, his canine wingman](#)

► CURRENT ISSUES

[Predators, Reapers break flying record](#)

The 29th Attack Squadron, 9th Attack Squadron, and the 6th Reconnaissance Squadron set a non-combat record October 2, by flying six MQ-9 Reapers and four MQ-1 Predators simultaneously during a training mission at Holloman Air Force Base, N.M.

[Intel experts converge for 2012 GEOINT Symposium](#)

In addition to the exhibitions, GEOINT, which is in its ninth year, hosted several keynote speakers, panel discussions and breakout sessions by government, military and private sector leaders.

[Academy cadets to conduct 'Flightline of the Future' research](#)

The U.S. Air Force Academy's Dean of the Faculty Brig. Gen. Dana H. Born signed a cooperative research and development agreement with officials from Lockheed Martin recently for a "Flightline of the Future" initiative and three other research-related projects.

[F-35: Newest fighter much more than just 'stealthy plane'](#)

The engines roared overhead as an F-35A fell into formation. Although this is a basic maneuver for the test pilots, the possibilities for combat environments created by these elite aircraft working together are anything but mundane.

► PERSONNEL ISSUES

[AF officials releasing enlisted quarterly assignment listing](#)

Air Force officials are releasing the enlisted quarterly assignment listing, or EQUAL, on Oct. 22 for the July to September 2013 overseas assignment cycle.

► FAMILY, HEALTH AND SAFETY

[Airmen Building culture to sustain resiliency](#)

"It's not a program," said Lt. Col. Gregory Laffitte, the Headquarters Air Force Comprehensive Airman Fitness Branch Chief. "We're creating a culture. We want to foster this Air Force community that's thriving."

► ENVIRONMENT, SPACE, TECHNOLOGY

[Gen. Shelton convenes accident investigation](#)

Air Force Space Command commander General William Shelton has ordered an Accident Investigation Board (AIB) to investigate why a Delta IV RL-10B-2 upper stage engine did not perform as expected during the Oct 4 launch of a GPS IIF satellite.

[AFSPC commander speaks at 11th Annual Air Force IT Day event](#)

Gen. William L. Shelton, commander of Air Force Space Command, was a featured speaker at the Northern Virginia Chapter of the Armed Forces Communication and Electronics Association's 11th Annual Air Force IT Day event at the Sheraton Premiere Hotel in Tysons Corner, Va., on Oct. 11.

► RESOURCES

AF.mil

<http://www.af.mil>

Airman magazine

<http://www.airmanonline.af.mil/>

Air Force Outreach

<http://www.afoutreach.af.mil/>

Military OneSource

<http://www.militaryonesource.com/>

Military HOMEFRONT

<http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.>

Air Force Personnel Center

<https://qum-crm.csd.disa.mil>

<http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/>

Air Reserve Personnel Center

<http://www.arpc.afrc.af.mil/>

Department of Defense News

<http://www.defense.gov>

Department of Veterans Affairs

<http://www.va.gov>

TRICARE

<http://www.tricare.mil>

U.S. Government Website

<http://www.firstgov.gov/>

Employment Opportunities

www.usajobs.com

www.nafjobs.org

Air Force Association Scholarships

<http://www.afa.org/aef/aid/scholars.asp>

Resiliency Can Be Learned. . .Over Time

The really good news about personal resiliency—the ability to bounce back from a devastating life event—is that it can be learned. And like any other attribute that strengthens us—mentally and physically—it takes time. Perhaps that’s the downside.

Recently, there’s been an [emphasis on cultivating resiliency](#) as a means for coping with the stresses of war, of reintegrating into the life left behind that will never be the same, and as a means of overcoming post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in its myriad forms from its countless sources.

The wounds of war are often invisible, but they need not be silent. Overcoming the silence is where the Wingman Culture, unique to the Air Force, is so very important. Fostering an environment of collaboration and accountability, the Wingman Culture optimizes resiliency. Originating with the first military pilots, a wingman’s strategic position in a second plane “just off the tail and a little bit to the side,” offered a unique vantage point to know what’s really going on. Today, that vantage point is no longer limited. On the ground, in everyday situations, the Wingman Culture calls on each Airman to evaluate the situation, stay focused, and speak up. In this way, the wounds of war are no longer silent, and the options for learning resiliency become obvious and acceptable.

The challenges of dealing with the world that was versus the world that is, often produce a hyper-sensitivity that makes reintegration next-to-impossible. Resiliency isn’t about getting things back to the way they were; it’s about finding ways to embrace the new normal. This is where a support system—family, friends and professional help—can enhance the reintegration process.

It’s true that none of us knows what goes on in anyone else’s life but our own, that we can’t truly feel another’s pain. However, recognizing a person for who they are or what they did helps to establish resiliency.

Being resilient does not mean that a person has never experienced difficulty or distress. In fact, the road to resilience is likely to involve considerable emotional distress.

Nor is resiliency a trait that people either have or they don’t. According to the American Psychological Association (APA), a person can learn the behaviors, thoughts and actions that promote the ability to recover from problems. In addition to fostering healthy, caring relationships both within and outside the family, the APA cites these learned traits ([and 10 more](#)) that foster resiliency:

- The capacity to make realistic plans and take steps to carry them out
- A positive view of oneself and confidence in one’s strengths and abilities
- Skills in communication and problem solving
- The capacity to manage strong feelings and impulses

Developing resilience—just like achieving the next level of endurance in PT—is a personal journey. It takes time and dedication, but then, so does anything worthwhile.

Know the Signs! Save a Life!

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL) has a special [website](#) for active duty service members, and members of the National Guard. But don't rely on a website. If you suspect—even slightly—that someone is thinking of suicide, there's support for you in taking that first step, and for finding out for sure what your next, most resilient step should be. The following is from the NSPL:

Know When to Call. These warning signs—in yourself or in others around you—are reason enough to call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) to find resources in your area:

- Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself.
- Looking for a way to kill oneself, such as searching online or buying a gun.
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live.
- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain.
- Talking about being a burden to others.
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs.
- Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly.
- Sleeping too little or too much.
- Withdrawing or feeling isolated.
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge.
- Displaying extreme mood swings.

Know How to Be Helpful

- Be direct. Talk openly and matter-of-factly about suicide.
- Be willing to listen. Allow expressions of feelings. Accept the feelings.
- Be non-judgmental. Don't debate whether suicide is right or wrong, or whether feelings are good or bad. Don't lecture on the value of life.
- Get involved. Become available. Show interest and support.
- Don't dare him or her to do it.
- Don't act shocked. This will put distance between you.
- Don't be sworn to secrecy. Seek support.
- Offer hope that alternatives are available but do not offer glib reassurance.
- Take action. Remove means, such as guns or stockpiled pills.
- Get help from persons or agencies specializing in crisis intervention and suicide prevention.

Be Aware of Feelings. People in crisis perceive their dilemma as inescapable and feel at a loss. Be aware of these feelings and thoughts:

- Can't stop the pain
- Can't think clearly
- Can't make decisions
- Can't see any way out
- Can't sleep, eat or work
- Can't get out of depression
- Can't make the sadness go away
- Can't see a future without pain
- Can't see themselves as worthwhile
- Can't get someone's attention
- Can't seem to get control

If you experience these feelings, *get help!* If someone you know exhibits these symptoms, *offer help!*

► THIS WEEK IN AIR FORCE HISTORY

Oct. 18, 1984 – First B-1B flight was completed at Palmdale, Calif.

Oct. 19, 1928 - A six-man machine gun team parachuted from a six-aircraft formation over Brooks Field, San Antonio, Texas, in a parachute demonstration.

October 20-23, 1950 – During the Korean War, the Far East Air Forces Combat Cargo Command dispatched more than 100 C-119s and C-47s to drop 4,000 troops and 60 tons of material for the Army's 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team at Sukchon and Sunchon, 30 miles north of Pyongyang. The command also began airlifting Eighth Army supplies to Pyongyang.

Oct. 21, 1981 – Airmen at Sheppard AFB, Texas, started training pilots from Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Turkey, and the UK.

Oct. 22, 1943 – Maj. R.C. Heffner earned a Distinguished Flying Cross for establishing air routes across Africa and the Middle East.

Oct 23, 1991 – Military Airlift Command units moved 146 tons of medical supplies and relief cargo to Kiev, Ukraine, after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Oct. 24, 2000 - The Space Shuttle *Discovery's* successful landing on the Edwards AFB, Calif., main runway, its 46th, ended the system's 100th mission. The 13-day mission prepared the International Space Station for its first full-time residents. Mission Commander Col. Brian Duffy and Pilot Lt. Col. Pamela Melroy both graduated from the Air Force Test Pilot School.

Oct. 25, 1973 – For the first time since the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, the DOD imposed DEFCON 3 worldwide in response to Soviet reaction to the Mideast War between Israel and Egypt. On Oct. 27, DOD resumed DEFCON 4, the peacetime condition.

For more information on Air Force heritage, visit <http://www.airforcehistory.af.mil>.

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