

Commander's Call Topics



February 7, 2013

“A prime function of a leader is to keep hope alive”

-- John W. Gardner, American statesman, 1912-2002

*Also in this issue...
A Special on Valentine's
Day Gift-Giving.
Please see page 2.*

Resolutions Are A Renewable Resource

February is American Heart Health Month. People are encouraged to use Valentine's Day as the reminder to take care of their hearts. By the mid-February date, our New Year's resolutions to exercise more and eat right have receded faster than Super Bowl hype. Now there's even more reason to renew our pledge of less pudge.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website (www.cdc.gov), nearly one in four people—about 600,000—die of heart disease annually. Coronary heart disease, which is the most common type of heart disease, kills more than 385,000 people annually, costing the country \$108.9 billion annually in health care services, medications, and lost productivity.

Now results of a study were recently published stating that more fatal heart attacks occur during the winter than at other times of the year, even in warm climates. Cardiologists Bryan Schwartz of the University of New Mexico and Robert A. Kloner of the Heart Institute at the Good Samaritan Hospital in Los Angeles found a 26 to 36 percent greater death rate for heart attacks in winter—December, January, February and the beginning of March—than summer. As if to emphasize the fatal effects of winter, Murray Mittleman, director of the Cardiovascular Epidemiology Research Unit at Harvard Medical School, is quoted as saying that although there are more cardiac deaths in the Northern Hemisphere in December, January and February, the Southern Hemisphere experiences more cardiac deaths in June and July—their winter.

The triggers—individually and in concert—increase the odds of a heart attack or stroke: environmental pollution, weight gain, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, the misuse of drugs, tobacco or alcohol, the disruption of the bodies circadian rhythms that come with decreased daylight hours, cold-constricted blood

Continued on page 3

OF NOTE...

“As we execute this year's voluntary force management strategy, the Air Force will continue to assess the need for additional voluntary and involuntary force management measures in order to meet authorized end strength levels in current and future fiscal years.” -- Lt. Col. Letitia Marsh, Headquarters Air Force Separation and Retirement Policy Branch chief speaking about voluntary [officer and enlisted force](#) management programs for fiscal year 2013.

► CURRENT ISSUES

[AF Chief of Staff releases 2013 reading list](#)

In a message on www.af.mil, Gen. Mark A. Welsh III said, “We are the world's greatest air force because of our Airmen...and we must continue to strengthen that team.”

Continued on page 3

► 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://militaryonesource.af.mil>

Military HOMEFRONT

<http://www.militaryhomefront.dod>

Air Force Personnel Center

<https://mypers.af.mil>

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

Air Reserve Personnel Center

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

Department of Defense News

<http://www.defense.gov>

Department of Veteran 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>

Air Force Safety Center

www.afsec.af.mil

VALENTINE'S DAY, NOW AND AGAIN

Looking for the perfect Valentine gift? Chances are you won't get points for originality; candy, flowers and jewelry are the best bets. And they're pretty easy to come by. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, County Business Patterns for 2009, the most recent year for which numbers are available, there are 3,386 confectionery and nut stores in the United States. Florists number 17,124, according to the U.S. Census. More obvious, if only for their sheer numbers if not all their glitz and glitter, are jewelry stores. There were 24,973, according to the 2009 study.

Valentine's Day takes on a life of its own, with traditions and expectations that have developed over time. Unlike some of the days that seem to be invented by the greeting card industry, Valentine's Day is dated to third century Rome when a clergyman named Valentine risked death by performing marriage ceremonies without government sanction. Whether a "martyr" or "traitor," the outcome is the same. And it probably had more to do with taxes than with the celebration of love. Nonetheless, love lives on.

In the 14th century, Chaucer mentions "Volantynys day" in his *Parlement of Foules*. Even the cliché "Roses are red. Violets are blue," is traced to Edmund Spenser's sixteenth century epic, *The Faerie Queene*.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the greeting card industry was beginning to embrace the Valentine tradition. Mass-produced paper Valentine's and handmade ribbon-and-lace greetings were being sent through the mail to the object of one's affection.

In the second half of the twentieth century, Valentine's Day became a day to give chocolates, often in a satin-covered, heart-shaped box in addition to a special and elaborate card. Sometimes, a dozen or so long-stemmed roses were sent—either as a spectacular stand-alone statement or accompanying the candy and card. By the 1980's jewelers began promoting it as a gift-giving day.

In the United States, and in most of Canada, family members present cards, candy, flowers and other gifts to each other. Couples dine out as a special time together, and often sentimental gifts are exchanged. Throughout Europe, from Denmark to Slovenia, each country celebrates St. Valentine's Day according to its own custom. In some Latin American countries, the day is enlarged to be "Dia del Amor y Amistad" (Day of Love and Friendship) when people perform acts of appreciation for their friends. And in Brazil "Dia Dos Namorados" (Lovers' Day) is celebrated on June 12, the day before St. Anthony's Day. The February 14th date is too close to Brazilian Carnival, a week-long celebration prior to Lent.

And that may be the best Valentine gift of all: If you forget to give candy and flowers to the one you love on February 14th, you can always claim some Brazilian heritage (and hope for a second chance).

Martha J. Lockwood

Chief, Air Force Production Information Products

► THIS WEEK IN AIR FORCE HISTORY

Feb. 7, 1999 - From Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Fla., a Delta II rocket launched carrying the first spacecraft designed to intercept a comet and bring samples back to earth. The spacecraft was named Stardust.

Feb. 8, 1908 - The Secretary of War approved bids by the Wright brothers, Augustus M. Herring, and James F. Scott to build the U.S. Army's first plane.

Feb. 9, 1972 - The Boeing EC-137D test-bed aircraft for the Air Force's Airborne Warning and Control System made its first flight.

Feb. 10, 1939 - The North American NA-40 first flew. This was the prototype for the B-25 Mitchell bomber.

Feb. 11, 1944 - Eighth Air Force conducted a radar bombing attack on important German chemical plants.

Feb. 12, 1958 - The Department of Defense transferred the Jupiter Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missile program from the Army to the USAF.

Feb. 13, 2007 - Exercise Falcon Condor 07. Through 16 February, nearly 150 Airmen participated in a joint military exercise with the Peruvian Air Force. The exercise allowed the U.S. military to build relationships with Peru's military and civilian leaders.

OF NOTE, *Continued from page 1*

[Air Force Nuclear Force Anticipates Budget Constraints](#)

The Air Force Global Strike Command predicts that sequestration-triggered budget cuts will reduce B-52 flying hours by 10 percent and lead to a 20 percent reduction in overall flying hours on March 1, should the law kick in.

[Michigan base to test missile counter-measure prototype](#)

The Air National Guard has begun installing a new prototype missile counter-measure device on aircraft at Selfridge Air National Guard Base.

► PERSONNEL ISSUES

[Airmen eligible to retrain in March should submit package by Feb. 15](#)

Air Force officials are encouraging active duty Airmen who are eligible to retrain in March to submit their completed retraining packages through the myPers website by Feb. 15 to avoid processing delays.

[Retiree ID cards now have expiration dates](#)

Blue retiree identification cards issued prior to December 2012 had the word “indef” instead of an expiration date. Since December, retiree cards issued have an expiration date effective the day before the retiree’s 65th birthday. Although benefits will not automatically expire, some changes will take effect based on Medicare eligibility, Air Force Personnel Center officials said.

► FAMILY, HEALTH AND SAFETY

[VA issues new report on suicide data](#)

The Veterans Affairs Department today released a comprehensive report on veterans who die by suicide.

► ENVIRONMENT, SPACE AND TECHNOLOGY

[Top 10 facility energy accomplishments of 2012](#)

The fiscal year 2012 Annual Energy Management Report is making its way to Congress and lawmakers will likely be impressed by Air Force facility energy accomplishments.

Renewable Resource, Continued from page 1

vessels, and all the other stressors of winter living or inherited tendencies. The good news is that we can each mitigate the problems caused by both nature and nurture.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s website offers ideas for prevention, control and reversing heart disease. It’s not just the “what to do,” it’s the “how to do it.” For example, under CDC’s section on [healthy weight](#), lifestyle changes are addressed, and so are subjects like assessing one’s weight, balancing calories, physical activity, and calculating one’s Body Mass Index (BMI). What makes this website just a step better than most is that there is ample explanation as to how these lifestyle choices relate.

In addition to the Healthy Weight pages on the CDC site, there are sections about [Nutrition](#), [Physical Activity](#), and on [Overweight and Obesity](#). There is also simple, straightforward information about preventing and treating medical conditions that often result in cardiac problem.

The exceptionally good news is that, according to an article in the [New York Times](#) reporting on results of a study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, the rate of American service members with signs of coronary artery disease has declined since the Korean War. Today, roughly one in 10 military personnel shows signs of the disease. During the Korean War, about eight in 10 were so afflicted. Is it because of the all-volunteer military? Is it because fewer people are smoking today? Why are fewer military personnel affected by obesity and Type 2 diabetes?

Most likely it’s a combination of all of these, and then some: Willpower. Weight control. Physical Activity. Nutrition. Choices. It all comes down to lifestyle.