

THE **STINGER**

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ABOUT THE STINGER

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COMMANDER'S COMMENTS



Editorial by Chief Master Sgt. John Deraedt

My favorite quote by Tony Dungy sums up why the 180th is the best fighter wing on the planet.

"The secret to success is good leadership, and good leadership is all about making the lives of your team members or workers better."

To me that means success is serving. Leaders who lead well are servants to those they command. Airmen who are great wingmen serve each other.

According to the "Occupy" movement the most successful Americans are the 1% at the top of the economic ladder. In reality, the less than 1% (0.07%) who serve our nation in the military are the most successful. You are the most successful because the mission you fulfill everyday secures the personal and economic freedom that makes our country unique in the world.

The 180th is the vision our founding fathers had when they established that our nation would be protected by the service of its citizens. The first muster of the militia was December 13, 1636. At every drill and through every war waged over these last 379 years we, the citizens, have served. From the front gate to weapons release, when those who seek to harm our nation meet their end in the bottom of a rubble filled crater, each and every member of the 180th play a critical, no-fail role in making that happen.

According to Simon Sinek, "Working hard for something we don't care about is called stress. Working hard for something we love is called passion." There is no denying

that being a Guardsman requires hard work. Many times in my career I have been part of the effort on the flight line as our jets launched to do the lethal work of our nation's defense. In those times I am reminded how I truly love being part of this amazing team. Your love of our country, dedication to our mission and clear passion in service of our country and one another inspires me.

I believe Service Before Self is our most important and challenging Core Value. A few years ago I had the opportunity to meet with the 12th Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Eric Benken. In 1997, he was instrumental in codifying our Air Force Core Values and releasing the little blue book.

Chief master sgt. of the Air Force Benken and General Fogleman brought to the forefront the idea that, "the tools of our trade are lethal. We are not a private industry or corporation that can afford not to live by values—they must be part of our DNA—Americans expect a higher standard, and we must live up to that standard. Live your life with your core values as your guiding light, and you will always do the right thing—even when no one is looking." Chief master sgt. of the Air Force Benken talked about all the events and incidents that led to the need to make Integrity, Service and Excellence part of our culture and the forefront of how we approach the mission. In the end, Service rose as the core value driving the others. Service

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WATER SURVIVAL TRAINING

Story & Photo by
Airman Hope Geiger

Ejecting from an F-16 Fighting Falcon, descending towards the ocean, plunging hard under the water and coming up to find a parachute pushing them back below the water, battling the elements and surviving in the ocean; these life or death situations are risks pilots and aircrew face every time they fly over bodies of water.

Airmen assigned to the 180FW participated in water survival training Sat., May 6, at the Aqua Hut, located in Toledo, Ohio. Training, conducted in realistic environments and under realistic circumstances, ensures our Airmen maintain the highest levels of proficiency and readiness for worldwide deployment.

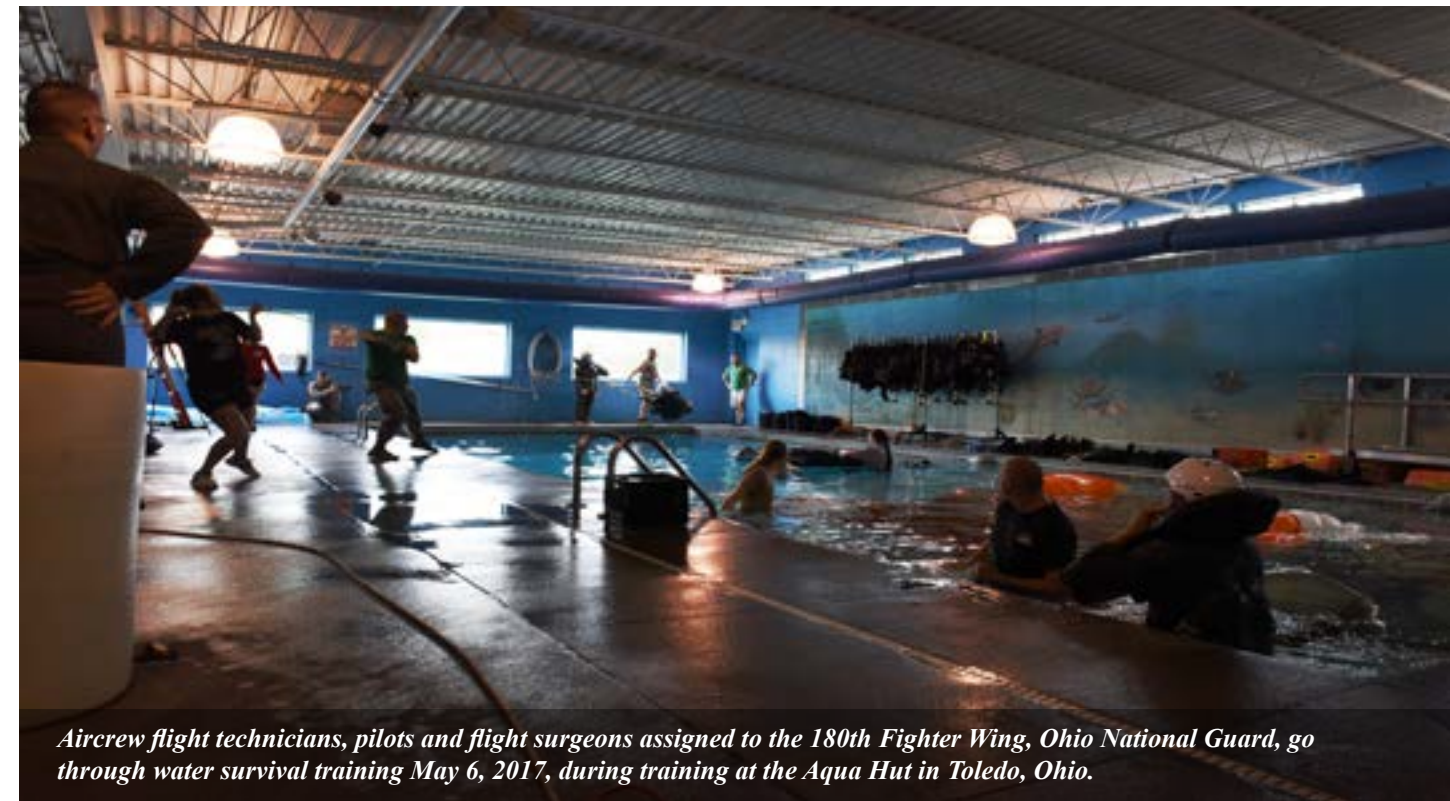
“We are a fighter squadron and occasionally our missions require us to fly over water so it is always imperative to know the hazards before we go into a region,” said Col. Joshua Wright, the chief of flight surgery at the 180th Fighter Wing. “We train for everything.”

Before the practical application, Master Sgt. Frank Skellie, an aircrew flight technician and water survival training instructor assigned to the 180FW, explained valuable information on what can and cannot be eaten, how to use the equipment to prevent hypothermia and sun exposure, and how to catch food if help was not going to rescue them soon.

This training teaches the pilots how to land in the water, properly get into their life raft, and get out of the parachute if it lands on top of them.



Lt. Col. Nicholas Zetocha, air sovereignty alert commander assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing, Ohio Air National Guard, crashes into the water after being dragged in to simulate an ejection landing May 6, 2017, during water survival training at the Aqua Hut in Toledo, Ohio.



Aircrew flight technicians, pilots and flight surgeons assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing, Ohio National Guard, go through water survival training May 6, 2017, during training at the Aqua Hut in Toledo, Ohio.



Col. Joshua Wright, chief of flight surgery assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing, Ohio Air National Guard, pulls a survival gear backpack into a life raft May 6, 2017, during water survival training at the Aqua Hut in Toledo, Ohio.

Due to the size of the pool they could not simulate everything in the exact order as it would happen in real life.

The instructors began the training with a simulated water landing. With their life preserver and harness on, aircrew members were connected to a rope by the harness, pulled hard into the pool and dragged through the water to simulate the real-life situation of a parachute, pulling them across the water.

To stop the dragging, the Airmen had to release the harness and navigate through the pool to climb into the safety of a life raft. There, they hauled in two little backpacks, which are connected to the life raft, containing the supplies needed for survival and tied them securely to the raft.


After demonstrating the proper techniques in the life raft, the Airmen moved onto the parachute portion of the training.

“In real-life if you ever have to eject out of an F-16, your mind would probably be pretty jumbled and crazy, but the idea is not

to panic,” said Lt. Col. Michael Holy, 108FW operations support squadron commander, who was participating in this training for the fifth time. “If we land in the water and the parachute lands on top of us, we just find a seam and slowly work our way out so we don’t end up in a worse situation with parachute cords tangled all around us. That’s one of the most valuable pieces of training that we do.”

Water survival training, conducted every three years, is a necessity to all of the aircrew, ensuring airmen return home safely from every mission and are prepared for any situation they are tasked with.

“This training is important because it is a life or death situation so the more we practice the more it gets ingrained into us and if it does happen we don’t have to think about it, we know what to do and it comes naturally,” said Wright.

Continuous training and stringent safety standards help ensure the well-being of our Airmen and guarantees they are ready for any situation. 

(Left) Senior Master Sgt. Shawn Lagrange and Staff Sgt. Alex Parton, aircrew flight technicians assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing, Ohio Air National Guard, prepare a life preserver for pilots and flight surgeons May 6, 2017, before water survival training at the Aqua Hut in Toledo, Ohio. (Center) Lt. Col. Ricardo Colon, director of operations of the 112th Fighter Squadron, Ohio National Guard, climbs out of the pool May 6, 2017, after water survival training at the Aqua Hut in Toledo, Ohio. (Right) Col. Joshua Wright, chief of flight surgery assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing, Ohio Air National Guard, pulls himself out from underneath a parachute May 6, 2017, during water survival training at the Aqua Hut in Toledo, Ohio.



SERVICE BEFORE SELF

AIRMAN VOLENTEERS IN GHANA



Alone, in a remote region of Africa, surrounded by strangers and living in a shack without running water, Senior Airman Courtney Iannucci made it her mission to adjust to a foreign culture while caring for orphans.

Iannucci, an intelligence specialist assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing, sacrificed modern comforts during a three week trip to Ghana on a volunteer mission in 2016.

She flew into Accra, the capital of Ghana alone, where she met a man standing with a sign that said “International Volunteer Headquarters,” the volunteer program she found online. She was one of two Americans who volunteered. The rest were from all over the world.

There were many volunteer programs she could have chosen, but she knew she wanted to travel to Africa to experience a new culture that was out of her comfort zone.

“I traveled alone to Africa where I lived in a shack and slept on a rectangle on the ground that wasn’t really foam, with a mosquito net around me to keep out the poisonous spiders,” said Iannucci. “I couldn’t wear my western clothes, I had to go pick out some fabric at a market where they made me dresses and pants. To shower, I had to walk a mile to a well to fill up a heavy bucket, and I would stand behind a brick wall and dump it on myself.”

Living in Ghana for three weeks, in her concrete shack she only had light from a single lightbulb to live by every day, she tried to blend into the culture as much as possible. Her attire was modest and culturally appropriate. Most of her meals were rice based, with minimal amounts of protein.

“It was very minimal and different, but I could adjust,” said Iannucci.

She wanted to live in the same conditions the orphans were living in. They were better able to bond and build trust with her.

“We had about 30 orphans,” Iannucci said. “The kids weren’t fully orphaned, they have parents, but their parents can’t take care of them. They either couldn’t afford to or they just didn’t care if they survived.”

There were more children who needed help, but the volunteer program could only afford to care for a limited number of kids.

“It’s heartbreaking because I couldn’t help everyone and that was the realization of being there,” said Iannucci. “When you volunteer there you want to save the world and help everybody but you realize you can’t actually do that. I had to understand, I was helping as many as I could and giving these kids a better life.”

Each day revolved around the kids.

Iannucci and the other volunteers would wake up early, dust off, clean their shacks, and start preparing food for the kids. She would then walk into the village to pick them up to bring them back to the food.

“Some of them refused to walk back, so we would have to carry them,” said Iannucci. “We would sit them down, pray, give them food, and walk them to class.”

When the kids were done with class she took them back to the shacks, fed them dinner, helped them with their homework and spent



“I wanted to experience a different culture and this was the best way to do it.”

U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Courtney Iannucci, an intelligence specialist assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing, holds a photo up from her volunteer mission to Ghana to care for orphans, March 12, 2017, at the 180FW. 180FW Airmen are dedicated to selfless sacrifice and embodies the core values of the U.S. Air Force.

time with them playing games.

Volleyball was a favorite. Iannucci brought a soccer ball with her, but the kids wanted to play volleyball with it. She used the single lightbulb’s hanging electric wire in her shack as the volleyball net.

“Other than that we had bubbles,” said Iannucci. “The kids loved bubbles. Just how excited they were over them, was great. They would be entertained for hours over just bubbles.”

She was shocked how happy the kids were.

“They had nothing, but they were so happy every day,” she said. “They were always excited to see the volunteers and the small little things we would bring them for the day, like bubbles.”

The days were exhausting, but having a good group of people around her made it better.

“Everyone was able to make it fun and make me smile every day,” said Iannucci. “Seeing the kids happy with everybody made it all worth it.”

“I went through all of those things because a lot of volunteer programs, you help kids but you stay in a place where you are comforted,” she said. “I wanted to experience a different culture and this was the best way to do it. I don’t think I would have the heart to take care of orphans while I’m staying in a really nice hotel.”

It was hard for Iannucci to leave the kids when her time there was over.

“Even when I was leaving, the second I left I knew other people were coming, so it made me feel better knowing the kids had new people to care for them,” she said.

The happiness of the kids, influenced some changes in her life.

When she went home she threw away a ton of her stuff, because she realized she had so many things she did not need.

She stopped using her phone for a little while because she was not use to having it. The experience made her appreciate things she never did before her trip, like showering and driving her car.

This experience was different for her. She stepped out of her comfort zone and was able to make a huge impact on not just her own life, but others.

“Every day I still kind of think about it,” said Iannucci. “It made me more conscious of everything I’m doing now. Like when I am taking a shower, I feel really lucky to have a shower and to be able to wash my hair.”

Iannucci plans on going on more volunteer trips in the future.

“I want to go to India or the Philippines next, because I want to go somewhere that has a totally different culture,” said Iannucci. “They’re not places I would normally travel or vacation to, but I know they have a lot of orphans.”

Despite the hardships she faced, Iannucci embodies the core value of service before self and is committed to serving others, both at home and abroad.

“I am not at all surprised by Airman Iannucci’s willingness, dedication and desire to help others,” said 1st Lt. Justin B. Tucholski, Intelligence Officer at the 180FW. “Every time she is serving at the base, her optimism and grateful attitude are contagious. In my opinion, one of the best things about being in the Ohio Air National Guard, is our connection and direct ties to the local community. Airman Iannucci embodies the “Citizen Airman” concept, maximizing on the skills and knowledge obtained in the military and paying it forward.”



MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD

Master Sgt. Catrina Odenweller Haas works in finance and Master Sgt. Matt Haas works in communications at the 180FW. They have two children and rely on the support of close family and friends to help care for their children during monthly unit training weekends and deployments. (Air National Guard Photo by Staff Sgt. Shane Hughes)

Story by
Staff Sgt. Shane Hughes

The men and women who serve in America's armed forces have often been called heroes for their courageous acts and warrior ethos.

These men and women in uniform know that our nation's biggest heroes can come in the smallest sizes and make the biggest sacrifices – our military children.

April is designated as the Month of the Military Child, underscoring the important role military children play in the armed forces community. The Month of the Military Child helps raise awareness about the unique struggles military children face, builds resiliency to help them cope with those challenges, and celebrates their sacrifices, which often go unrecognized.

These children face all the same challenges of other children growing up, but they also face the added struggle of parents who might

deploy to distant locations, even combat zones, for long periods of time, missing major milestones such as birthdays, school recitals and sporting events. These sudden changes can be times of great upheaval for military children and can have varying impacts on children, often depending on their age.

“April is a time to recognize the sacrifices they make, the resilience they display and the challenges they overcome.”

“The hardest age is probably elementary age,” said Alina Fuller, director of psychological health at the 180th Fighter Wing. “That’s when children really experience that sense of loss and fear because they can’t pinpoint their own coping skills. Their stability seems to be more fractured at that age.”

Fuller said older children are usually better equipped to cope with the impacts of deployments because they have established peer groups and are more independent.

“Each deployment is going to be different because children experience the deployment at different ages and different levels of maturity,” said Judy York, Airmen and Family Readiness Program

manager at the 180th Fighter Wing.

York and Fuller agreed that Airmen often underestimate the impact a deployment has on their children, especially when deployments are short.

“Any time airmen are gone for 30 days or more, they’re adapting to their environment,” York said. “At the same time, their family is adapting to them being gone.”

While the absence of a parent might seem like the most challenging part of a deployment for children, York said the sudden return of a parent can disrupt the routines a child has developed while their parent is deployed because children become accustomed to their living situations and need time to adapt to the changes a homecoming reunion can bring.

“That first two weeks back is going to be euphoric and exciting, but eventually you’re going to start feeling agitated and your kids are going to get annoyed with you,” Fuller said. “That’s normal. The family has to adjust to the new situation. You have to re-navigate the relationships when you return because the other parent has been the sole care-giver for so long and the sole source of authority.”

York suggested Airmen allow their children the time necessary for them to adjust to life before taking on a disciplinary role again. Strong communication skills between parents can also help military children cope with changing situations after a parent has returned.

“Children can sense tension and stress in their parents which can have a big impact on kids,” Fuller said. “It’s important to normalize the emotions associated with the adjustment period after returning home from a deployment. It’s just a part of military life. If you can laugh about it and take pride in getting through the ugly parts, it makes it easier.”

York recommended parents bring their children out to the base for the different AFRP programs because the programs are designed to help children and spouses cope with the impacts of deployments.

“Kids come out to the hangar and they say goodbye to their parent, so they associate the space with their parent leaving,” York said. “Whenever we can do something to help associate the space with fun we’re creating positive memories of the space and building resiliency.”

“Bringing them out to the wing where they can see other kids who are in the same boat as they are helps them feel a little more comfortable and not so alone,” said Master Sgt. Brittany Wolfrum, 180FW command support staff and a mother of three. “They’re able to relate to each other and support each other.”

A wide variety of programs are available to help military children cope with the unique challenges they face. These programs help military children

meet each other, allowing them to share their experiences and emotions with other children experiencing the same things. Family retreats sponsored through the chaplain corps and summer camp programs such as Camp Kelly’s Island sponsored by Ohio Military Kids are just a few examples of programs designed to build resiliency in military children.

“If military children aren’t celebrated with their peers, if they aren’t connected with other military children, then they don’t know how to identify each other,” Fuller said. “Camps for military kids and other programs help children connect with each other and help them build comradery.”

“They get to do fun things together and have that camp experience, but they’re having it with somebody else who has been in their shoes,” York said.

The push to build resiliency among military children and celebrate their sacrifices has not always been a part of life in the military. York began building the AFRP at the 180FW in 2001.

“When I came in after 9/11, our Security Forces Squadron was activated,” York said. “I was learning along with them because I had no previous experience. I spent a lot of time learning everything I could and experiencing the challenges they were facing.”

“There’s been a huge culture shift,” Fuller said. “When my husband was in the Navy, we didn’t have these programs. There’s a lot more awareness and recognition of what military families go through, especially the children. We’ve come a long way in a short amount of time.”

There are more than 1.7 million military children world-wide. Although young, these brave sons and daughters stand in steadfast support of their military parents. April is a time to recognize the sacrifices they make, the resilience they display and the challenges they overcome.

The latest recruit at the 180FW, Finley, came to work with her father, Master Sgt. Brad Haas, a recruiter assigned to the wing. (Air National Guard Photo by Airman Hope Geiger)



ADOPT-A-ROAD: AIRMEN KEEP OHIO BEAUTIFUL



More than 40 Airmen assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing, Ohio Air National Guard, collected 57 bags of trash during the wing's annual roadside clean-up efforts April 8, 2017, in Swanton, Ohio.

Story & Photos by
Tech Sgt. Nic Kuetemeyer

More than 40 Airmen assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing, Ohio Air National Guard, collected 57 bags of trash during the wing's annual roadside clean-up efforts April 8, 2017, in Swanton, Ohio.

The 180FW established a partnership with Keep Toledo/Lucas County Beautiful Adopt-A-Road program more than 20 years ago when the wing officially adopted the five mile stretch of road in March, 1997.

An affiliate of the national, Keep America Beautiful organization, the local KT/LCB Adopt-A-Road program was first established in 1993. Created with an emphasis on instilling community pride, the program raises awareness on the importance of litter prevention and improving the appearance of county roads and residential streets throughout Lucas County.

Introduced as a pilot program, KT/LCB joined forces with the Lucas County Solid Waste Management District and modeled the program after the Ohio Department of Transportation's Adopt-A-Highway program.

The first stretch of road, on Reynolds Road between Airport Highway and Elmer Drive, was adopted by the Reynolds Corner Rotary in hopes of setting the example for future participants.

By 1994, the program had grown to 50 adoption sites with half located within Toledo and the other half throughout the county.

"Our ultimate goal is to raise awareness of solid waste handling options for businesses, organizations and residents so that everyone takes personal responsibility to improve our environment," said Juliana Sample, executive director of Keep Toledo/Lucas County Beautiful, Inc. "We are dedicated to establishing greener communities through environmental education, litter prevention and voluntary



Airman First Class Dan Haviland, an avionics specialist assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing, Ohio Air National Guard, collects trash alongside more than 40 180FW Airmen during the wing's annual Adopt-A-Road clean-up day, April 8, 2017.



More than 40 Airmen assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing, Ohio Air National Guard, collected 57 bags of trash during the wing's annual roadside clean-up efforts April 8, 2017, in Swanton, Ohio.



Senior Master Sgt. Tim Golden, avionics element supervisor assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing, Ohio Air National Guard, hands out trash bags and safety equipment to more than 40 180FW Airmen during the wing's annual Adopt-A-Road clean-up day, April 8, 2017.

partnerships."

Boasting a long tradition of supporting our surrounding the Northwest Ohio region, 180FW Airmen are fully integrated into our local communities and are invested in the safety and quality of life within those areas. Our Stinger Airmen are dedicated to giving back to those communities who provide the foundational support to our missions, our Airmen and their families.

"As citizen soldiers, the 180FW and the surrounding community is not just where we work - it's our home," said Col. Scott Reed, 180FW vice wing commander. "I am proud of our member's commitment to making this area a better, more beautiful place to live."

"The program raises awareness on the importance of litter prevention and improving the appearance of county roads and residential streets throughout Lucas County"

As part of the Air Force Community Partnership program, the 180FW is dedicated to developing relationships with the community to enhance cooperation and build mutually beneficial relationships. By maximizing the intellectual capital and innovative spirit of Airmen and community leaders in Northwest Ohio and across the nation, the 180FW can develop creative ways to accomplish our mission and strengthen local communities.

"The 180FW is proud to partner with KT/LCB to establish greener communities through environmental education and litter prevention," said Senior Master Sgt. Timothy Golden, avionics

specialist and coordinator of this year's Adopt-A-Road clean-up efforts. "Our participation in the Adopt-a-Road program is just one way of showing that we are proud members of the local community and how much we appreciate the unwavering support that they have provided us."

Staff Sgt. Nora McDonald, vehicle operations specialist assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing, Ohio Air National Guard, collects trash alongside more than 40 180FW Airmen during the wing's annual Adopt-A-Road clean-up day, April 8, 2017.



INVISIBLE WOUNDS:

CGO COUNCIL PARTNERS WITH THE ARMS FORCES TO RAISE
AWARENESS FOR PTSD AND TBI



Runners take off from the start line at the I Believe I Can Fly 5k race at the Toledo Express Airport in Swanton, Ohio on April 9, 2017. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Nic Kuetemeyer)



(Photo by Airman Hope Geiger)



(Photo by Airman Hope Geiger)



(Photo by Tech. Sgt. Nic Kuetemeyer)



(Photo by Airman Hope Geiger)



The 180th Fighter Wing Honor Guard prepares to post the colors before the start of the I Believe I Can Fly 5k race at the Toledo Express Airport in Swanton, Ohio on April 9, 2017. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Nic Kuetemeyer)



“PROCEEDS FROM THE 5K WILL BE USED TO FULFILL THE ARMS FORCES MISSION, TO PROVIDE A CARING HEART AND A LISTENING EAR THAT HELPS EDUCATE, EMPOWER AND FACILITATE CHANGE FOR MILITARY MEMBERS AND VETERANS WHO HAVE A TBI OR PTSD, RESULTING IN BETTER OUTCOMES FOR THEIR LIVES.”

U.S. Air Force Col. Kevin Doyle, commander of the 180th Fighter Wing, Ohio Air National Guard and Chief Master Sgt. John Deraedt, command chief master sergeant assigned to the wing, cheer on runners as they finish the I Believe I Can Fly 5k race at the Toledo Express Airport in Swanton, Ohio on April 9, 2017. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Nic Kuetemeyer)

Story by
Tech. Sgt. Nic Kuetemeyer

The wing's company grade officer council assisted with The Arms Forces to host the I Believe I Can Fly 5k, April 9, 2017, at the Toledo Express Airport in Swanton, Ohio.

More than 250 runners participated in the race, focused on raising awareness for veterans and current military members with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injuries.

A survivor of a traumatic brain injury

herself, President of The Arms Forces, Pam Hays, founded the organization in 2009 with an emphasis on bridging the critical gap in services available for military veterans and hopes of fostering awareness and support for veterans with PTSD and TBI.

The race, now in its third year, provides runners of all ages, the rare opportunity to run a unique course, down the taxiways used by Northwest Ohio's very own 180FW, while also promoting awareness and raising funds to benefit our veterans who have given so much to our great nation.

"I think we inspire people to get to know

the military. They're people you sit down and have dinner with, they're people who you go to church with and the Guardsmen have jobs in your community," said Hays. "The race has been a great representation of how we can all come together and get to know each other, and be able to do something good with all of that."

"We are part of this community. We live here and we work here," said 180FW Security Forces Officer, Capt. Diana Sluhan, explaining why it is natural for the 180FW to support our community's events. "That's part of the beauty of being in the Guard."

Sluhan and the wing's Company Grade Officer Council took the lead on coordinating the wing's participation in the event, partnering with several local law enforcement agencies to ensure the race was safe and fun for participants.

"We've got local law enforcement and Air National Guard Security Forces working with the Toledo Lucas County Port Authority to secure the installation," said Sluhan. "The Arms Forces volunteers, Monclova paramedics and our firefighters are here providing medical

support."

The 180FW has a long history of community involvement and partnership. This morning's 5k race was another example of what can be accomplished when widely varied organizations from Northwest Ohio come together for the common good.

"I just want to thank all of our community partners, our volunteers, everyone who donated, there's so many. The police, the fire crews, the 180th and the Toledo Lucas County Port Authority," said Hays. "Without the community involvement, we wouldn't be able to put this on."

Proceeds from the 5k will be used to fulfill The Arms Forces mission, to provide a caring heart and a listening ear that helps educate, empower and facilitate change for

military members and veterans who have a TBI or PTSD, resulting in better outcomes for their lives.

The Arms Forces is committed to being a leader in serving veterans with TBI or PTSD by addressing their unique needs and providing programs and services that are customized to make the most of their deficits while highlighting their abilities.

"Many of our veterans now live with lifelong effects of PTSD and TBI as a result of their selfless service," said Col. Kevin Doyle, 180FW commander. "The men and women of the 180FW are proud and honored to assist with such a great organization focused on supporting those who have served and those currently serving, in defense of this great nation." 🇺🇸

The 180th Fighter Wing, Ohio Air National Guard, partnered with The Arms Forces to host the I Believe I Can Fly 5k, April 9, 2017, at the Toledo Express Airport in Swanton, Ohio. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Nic KuetemeyAer)



180FW HOSTS BASH TEAM VISIT

Story & Photos by
Senior Master Sgt. Beth Holliker

Wildlife-related incidents were documented as the leading cause of F-16 fighter jet mishaps in the first quarter of 2017.

In an effort to mitigate impact to the mission and maximize the safety of pilots, aircraft and the abundant local-area wildlife, the 180th Fighter Wing, Ohio Air National Guard, hosted a Bird Aircraft Strike Hazard team visit, April 13, 2017, to assess potential bird and other wildlife hazards located on and around the airfield at Toledo Express Airport in Swanton, Ohio.

The BASH team visiting the 180FW, made up of two environmental consultants and a local representative from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, met with members of the wing's safety, operations and airfield offices, and a representative from the Toledo Lucas County Port Authority, to discuss the unique challenges and concerns of having an airfield located near protected wetland and nature preserve areas.

The team provides multiple qualified airport wildlife biologists, commercial service and military wildlife hazard management experience, avian radar expertise and a National Transportation Safety Board, or NTSB, training accident investigator.

The goal of the ANG BASH teams are to preserve the war fighting capabilities through

the reduction of wildlife hazards to military aircraft operations, according to the Air Force Safety Center.

Throughout the visit, the team conducted in-depth ground and aerial surveys of the airfield to identify potential wildlife living within the airfield, habitats, migration patterns and attractants such as tall vegetation that offer shelter, water and food sources for wildlife. The team also surveyed a five mile radius surrounding the airfield, annotating any wildlife that could potentially impact aircraft approach and departure corridors.

"Our 'First Look' is to determine if the current BASH Plan reflects the roles, responsibilities and the procedures outlined in the plan," said Sarah Brammell, Southwest Florida regional director for Environmental Resource Solutions and BASH team leader. "We are interested in the current relationship between the ANG unit and the civilian airport, along with any other partnering entities such as the USDA Wildlife Services."

The Toledo Lucas County Port Authority currently partners with the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services, or APHIS, during peak migration seasons, which provides consultation and management assistance to assess wildlife conflicts at the airport to improve safety by reducing hazards and risks associated with wildlife to ensure protection of Northwest Ohio's wildlife populations and



valuable environmental resources.

Following an in-depth review of the wing's BASH plan and the roles assigned to each participating organization, the team conducted a detailed site observation of the airfield and the perimeter fence line. After surveying the airport property, the team evaluated potential off-site wildlife attractants surrounding the airfield before comparing notes with previous site visit findings.

The BASH team identified many avian species posing hazards including, Canada Geese, Great Blue Herons, Hawks, Blackbirds, Wild Turkey and several other species of lark and songbirds. The majority of bird strikes, 97 percent, occur below an altitude of 5,000 feet.

According to APHIS studies, Ohio has the highest breeding season population of blackbirds and starlings of any state or province, and marshes along Lake Erie are traditional late-summer congregating places for these birds. A major proportion of the continental population of ring-billed gulls, a species that along with herring gulls is often involved in safety hazards at airports, concentrates along the south shore of Lake Erie in spring and fall. Large concentrations of fish-eating birds such as double-crested cormorants also congregate on Lake Erie during migration.

"Some of the issues we deal with at

Toledo Express include coyotes regularly accessing the airfield," said Caleb Wellman, wildlife biologist assigned to the USDS APHIS program. "The local wetlands and extensive vegetated ditches on and adjacent to the airfield contribute to attracting various species of waterfowl and wetland birds that are posing significant hazards to aircraft and human safety."

The unique wetland environment on and surrounding the 180FW and Toledo Express Airport provide inviting habitats and feeding grounds for wildlife, highlighting several areas of concern that potentially increase bird and wildlife hazards such as standing water in and around the airfield, drainage ditch vegetation throughout the airport grounds and the abundance of farm fields surrounding the airfield.

"It is evident that there is a good working relationship between the Toledo Lucas County Port Authority and the 180FW," said Brammell. "They are working together to reduce or remove wetland areas on the airfield that pose significant wildlife hazard attractants. The 180FW is actively engaged in providing support to the Port Authority and is assisting in the risk reduction of wildlife strikes on the airfield."

While the risks remains significant due to the wetland environment around the airfield, maintaining good habitat management

practices can make an airport less attractive to birds. Eliminating standing water, removing or thinning trees, removing brush and managing grass height can reduce or eliminate roosting or nesting sites, in turn, lowering the risk of injury or death to area wildlife.

These simple recommendations were made by the BASH team in an effort to reduce the hazards presented by local wildlife. These recommendations include, maintaining manicured drainage ditches by keeping them free of vegetation and ensuring grass areas throughout

“The unique wetland environment on and surrounding the 180FW and Toledo Express Airport provide inviting habitats and feeding grounds for wildlife”

the airfield remain between seven and 14 inches in an effort to deter nesting and flocking of birds.

“The 180FW flies the F-16 and this single engine fighter has a long history of serious bird strike damage and loss due to bird and other wildlife strikes,” said Brammell. “Low-level flight operations place this aircraft at altitudes where many bird species move on a daily basis. When birds are struck at high aircraft speeds, even from a small mass, it can seriously damage an aircraft and destroy any



Director of Environmental Resource Solutions Southwest Florida Region and wildlife biologist, Sarah Brammell, assigned to the Air National Guard’s Bird Aircraft Strike Hazard team, and Lt. Col. Scott Schaupeter, 180th Fighter Wing’s director of ground and flying safety, evaluate the perimeter fencing around the 180FW airfield, April 13, 2017.



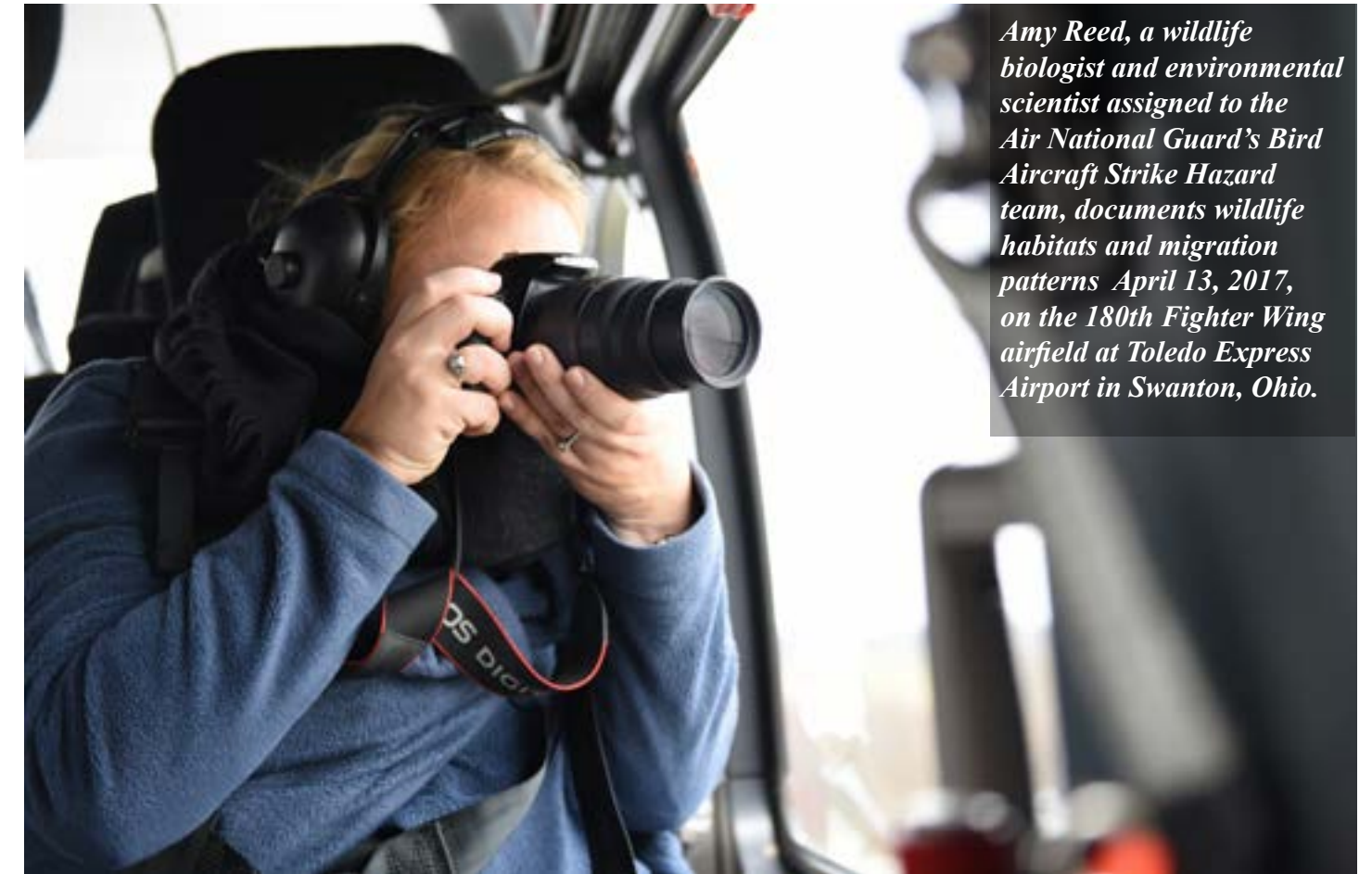
In an effort to mitigate impact to the mission and maximize the safety of pilots, aircraft and the abundant local-area wildlife, the 180FW, Ohio Air National Guard, hosted a Bird Aircraft Strike Hazard team visit, April 13, 2017, to assess potential bird and other wildlife hazards located on and around the airfield at Toledo Express Airport in Swanton, Ohio.

component that is struck.”

While only 30 percent of the ANG’s 46 first quarter mishaps were wildlife related, 50 percent of those mishaps directly impacted the fighter fleet and 80 percent of those were F-16 mishaps, claiming four out of the five documented mishaps in the first quarter.

“All wildlife hazards, or environments that promote wildlife hazards, are detrimental to flying missions, whether that is a military mission or normal commercial air traffic,” said Senior Master Sgt. Joe Carter, 180FW safety superintendent. “We must always remember what the dangers are and we must do what we can to reduce the chances of a wildlife strike.

“The integrated approach of the BASH program brings together all of the installation stakeholders who work together to reduce the strike potential while maintaining a mission-ready fleet,” said Brammell.



Amy Reed, a wildlife biologist and environmental scientist assigned to the Air National Guard’s Bird Aircraft Strike Hazard team, documents wildlife habitats and migration patterns April 13, 2017, on the 180th Fighter Wing airfield at Toledo Express Airport in Swanton, Ohio.



180FW HOSTS PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT SIGNING



Peter Holbrook, provost for Tiffin University, signs the Higher Degree Attainment Initiative March 22, 2017, at the 180FW in Swanton, Ohio.

Story & Photos by Staff Sgt. Shane Hughes

The 180th Fighter Wing, Ohio Air National Guard, signed two community partnership agreements on March 22, as part of the Air Force Community Partnership program, creating mutually beneficial relationships between the 180FW and our local communities.

The two agreements included the Higher Degree Attainment Initiative with five local-area universities and a Memorandum of Understanding with the Boy Scouts of America's Erie Shores Council.

The Higher Degree Attainment Initiative provides additional education opportunities for 180FW Airmen while providing participating colleges with recruitment opportunities. The universities signing agreements include Bowling Green State University, the University of Toledo, Owens Community College, Lourdes University and Tiffin University.

"These partnerships are critical because we need to work together at shaping our

community now and into the future," said Peter Holbrook, provost for Tiffin University.

Holbrook said it's important for the universities to provide educational resources to the 180FW Airmen to allow them to achieve more in their military and civilian careers, which contributes to economic growth for the community by providing a workforce with skills in high-demand jobs.

"The 180th Fighter Wing considers education to be a critical part of the professional development of our Airmen," said Col. Scott Reed, vice wing commander of the 180FW. "We recognize the skillsets and knowledge our Airmen gain from higher education directly translate to a more efficient, more capable mission ready force. Our Airmen never stop learning, and never stop reaching for excellence. Higher education is an integral part of that journey,

and we are humbled and grateful to have such incredible support from local colleges and universities as highlighted by this partnership agreement."

"These partnerships are critical because we need to work together at shaping our community now and into the future"

The Memorandum of Understanding with the Erie Shores Council provides a diverse leadership model to local Boy Scouts through exposure to 180FW Airmen and leaders, fostering a spirit of citizenship and civic responsibility while increasing event support, enhancing training opportunities and building stronger community relationships. Some of the events hosted by the 180FW include merit badge clinics, camporees and the annual Construction City event.

"The purpose of our partnership is to teach skills," said Ed Frey, president of the Erie Shores Council. "Our scouts see the 180th as role models. You can't teach character by talking about it. You teach character through

folks who demonstrate it, and that's what we get from the Airmen here. This is a huge opportunity for us."

The AFCP program has inspired 61 installations nationwide to partner with their local communities across a wide range of initiatives, tapping into the intellectual capital and innovative spirit of Airmen and community leaders across the nation to develop creative ways to accomplish the U.S. Air Force mission and strengthen local communities. More than 1,000 initiatives and 250 agreements have generated \$32 million in benefits for the Air Force and \$24 million in benefits for participating communities, resulting in deeper and more meaningful relationships between the Air Force and the communities we serve.

"This was the culmination of a lot of effort from 180th Fighter Wing and community leaders," said Brad Mcree, a lead facilitator for the AFCP program. "It solidifies a relationship between all the parties involved and marks an accomplishment of understanding and teamwork to share resources and help each other's missions."


While today's event marked two major milestones for the 180FW, the leaders of the AFCP plan to continue developing relationships



U.S. Air Force Col. Scott Reed, vice wing commander of the 180th Fighter Wing, Ohio Air National Guard, reviews a Memorandum of Understanding between the 180FW and the Boy Scouts of America's Erie Shores Council.

with the community to enhance cooperation and build mutually beneficial relationships.

The National Guard is fully integrated into over 3,000 communities across the country

and embedded into the fabric of America, adding value beyond the budget ledger by investing in the safety and quality of life of our communities. 

U.S. Air Force Airmen assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing, Ohio Air National Guard attend an Air Force Community Partnership meeting March 22, 2017, with local community leaders from five local-area universities and the Boy Scouts of America's Erie Shores council to sign partnership agreements.





180FW HOSTS ANG BOWLING TOURNAMENT

*Story & Photos by
Staff Sgt. Shane Hughes*

Bowling balls rumbled down lacquered wood lanes, spinning on their axes like planets, curving inward and crashing into pins with a thunderous roar as men and women from across the country cried out in exhilarated cheers and disappointed sighs.

More than 160 people, representing 13 different Air National Guard wings from ten different states, competed in the 54th annual ANG bowling tournament Saturday, May 13 at Southwyck Lanes in Toledo Ohio.

"This is a great event," said Wendy Gramza, president of the Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce, who kicked off the day's events by bowling the first frame. "It gets people from all over the country together for some friendly competition."

The two-day tournament changes locations every year and the 180th Fighter Wing served as the host unit for the event this year. The tournament provides an opportunity for Airmen to come together outside of work, building teamwork and comradery.

"The mission is first at work," said Master Sgt. Nick Whiteman, material management superintendent assigned to the 180FW. "But this allows us to network and build relationships outside of work and with other units as well. Sometimes, if we're not in the same

mission or flying the same airframe, we don't get to talk to our counterparts at other bases, but here there's no weapons system, there's no job titles, it's just the love for the sport."

"It's not the competition, it's who you're competing with," said Master Sgt. Kenneth Feltner, transportation assistant assigned to the 180FW. "It's about teambuilding in our unit. When you do things together outside of work, you're able to bond in a way you can't do at work."

Larry Chandler, a retired Chief Master Sgt. from the 122nd Fighter Wing who competed in his first tournament in 1986, said the numbers have fluctuated over the years, going as low as 100 and as high as 1,500. Over the years, the numbers have decreased. As a response to the dropping participation, the tournament board opened to retired members, spouses and dependents.

Once all the scores were tallied, the winners were announced. The 122FW took first place followed closely by the 180FW, but win or lose everyone left with new friends and new memories.



A bowling ball crashes into pins Saturday, May 13, 2017, during the 54th annual Air National Guard bowling tournament at Southwyck Lanes in Toledo, Ohio.

"Part of what makes the Air National Guard unique is the comradery," Chandler said. "Folks like coming back every year because they know the people and they might not get a chance to see them anywhere else throughout the year." 🏹

U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Terry Copic, a crew chief assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing, Ohio Air National Guard, bowls Saturday, May 13, 2017, during the 54th annual Air National Guard bowling tournament at Southwyck Lanes in Toledo, Ohio.



PeggySue Slocum, a member of the 148th Fighter Wing team, bowls Saturday, May 13, 2017, during the 54th annual Air National Guard bowling tournament at Southwyck Lanes in Toledo, Ohio.



U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Kyle Martinez, a crew chief assigned to the 127th Fighter Wing, Michigan Air National Guard, bowls Saturday, May 13, 2017, during the 54th annual Air National Guard bowling tournament at Southwyck Lanes in Toledo, Ohio.



TRAINING DAY: BATTLE CREEK

*Photos by
Staff Sgt. Shane Hughes*



U.S. Air Force Capt. Diana Sluhan, a security forces officer assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing, Ohio Air National Guard, fires a crew-served weapon mounted atop a humvee.



U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Benton Pohlman, a security forces specialist assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing, Ohio Air National Guard, waits for his turn to fire a crew-served weapon April 12, 2017, at the Fort Custer Training Center in Battle Creek, Michigan.

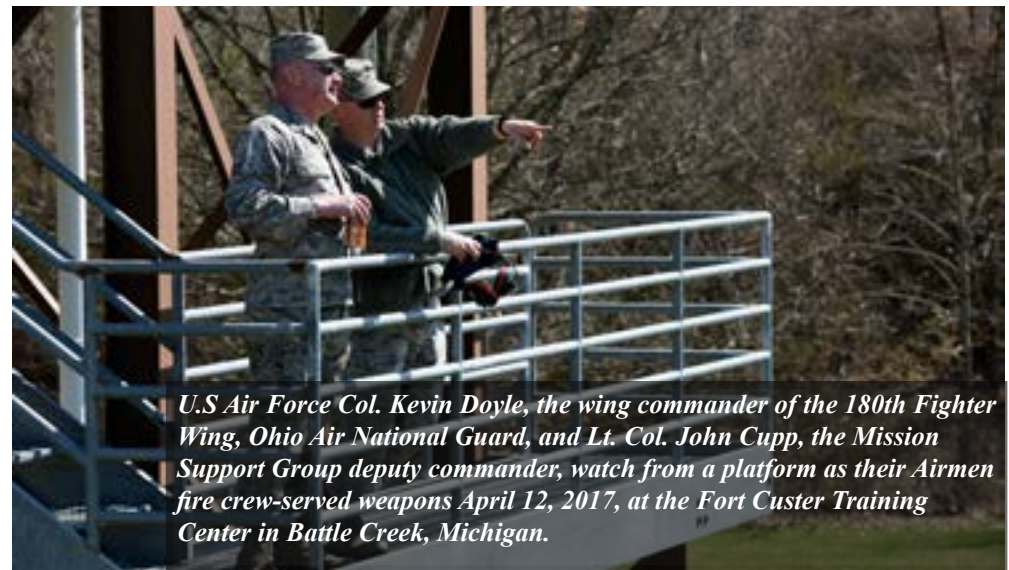


U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Benton Pohlman, a security forces specialist assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing, Ohio Air National Guard, fires an M4 carbine rifle during target practice April 12, 2017, at the Fort Custer Training Center in Battle Creek, Michigan.





U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Nick Ort, Staff Sgt. Jolan Hardiman and Senior Airman Benton Pohlman, security forces personnel assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing, Ohio Air National Guard, wait for their turn to fire a crew-served weapon April 12, 2017, during training at the Fort Custer Training Center in Battle Creek, Michigan.



U.S. Air Force Col. Kevin Doyle, the wing commander of the 180th Fighter Wing, Ohio Air National Guard, and Lt. Col. John Cupp, the Mission Support Group deputy commander, watch from a platform as their Airmen fire crew-served weapons April 12, 2017, at the Fort Custer Training Center in Battle Creek, Michigan.



THE CALL OF COMMITMENT

Essay by Arthur J. Schwartz, Oskin Leadership Institute

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Commitment is ubiquitous. Yet what do we know about commitment? Are there different types of commitment? What are the building blocks of commitment? How do commitments shape our habits and behaviors? Our identity? What are the antecedents of commitment? How does commitment develop? Finally, and perhaps most critically for any profession, can we intentionally train for commitment, like we train to become pilots or athletes? Viktor Frankl suggests we can because we're hard-wired to strive and struggle for goals worthy of us.

The first section of this chapter examines how scholars have defined commitment across a variety of disciplines. Next, I explore six different types of commitments. The third section focuses on the structure of commitment, including seven features that seem to be present for a commitment to fully develop and mature. Finally, I posit that we can train for commitment and I offer nine different exercises to strengthen our commitment muscle.

Defining Commitment

In the United States, some of us are committed to serving our Nation. Others are committed to losing weight or being an accountant or abolishing slave trafficking in Africa. These are all examples of commitment. Yet not everything we do can be woven into a story about commitment. While some people may enjoy word puzzles, it sounds a bit strange to hear someone say she is committed to solving the daily Sudoku puzzle. It makes perfect sense, however, to hear this same person say she is committed to her family or to protecting the environment. So what's the difference?

scholar who studies relationships defines commitment as "the tendency to maintain a relationship and to feel psychologically attached to it" (Rusbult & Buunk, 1993). One sociologist defines commitment as "the attachment of the self to the requirements of social relations that are seen as self-expressive" (Kanter, 1972). Finally, one of the most common definitions suggests that commitment is the "pledging or binding of an individual to behavioral acts" (Keisler, 1971).

Yet to me each of these definitions somehow misses the mark. In many ways, commitment is one of those concepts—like creativity or spirituality—that defies an easy-to-operationalize definition. This is especially so within a military context, where the idea of commitment is woven so deeply into our enduring pledges and daily duties. In other words, these definitions, steeped as they are in the social sciences, don't quite capture the call of commitment, and how this call has tangible implications for the direction, intensity and duration of our leader behaviors and actions.

Types of Commitment

The term commitment conjures an entire family of mental images. Some of us have made a commitment to a particular career field, while others have made a marriage commitment. Some of us make personal commitments ("I am committed to my Lord") and dare I say that we make various behavioral commitments on a daily basis ("Sorry I can't go for a beer tonight... I made a commitment to go shopping with my wife"). These are all expressions of commitment.

My research on the various academic and popular literatures on commitment suggests that our commitments can be placed in one of six categories:

- Commitments to people (family, friends, marriage)
- Commitments to personal achievements (career, leadership aspirations, influence)
- Commitments to personal growth (self-understanding, faith,

physical fitness)

- Commitments to values and principles (honesty, social justice, defending our Nation)
- Commitments to groups (the football team, Wings of Blue, Sierra Club)
- Commitments to ultimate concerns (God, Deity)

Commitment has been studied across various scholarship domains, including psychology, sociology, organizational behavior, religion, relationship studies, and philosophy. For example, researchers within the field of organizational behavior have defined commitment as a "force that binds an individual to a course of action that is of relevance to a particular target" (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). A prominent

Of course, these categories overlap. For example, while a husband might be faithful to his wife because he loves her, another husband is faithful because he's committed to the principle of marital fidelity. In addition, some of us keep our jobs because of our commitment to feeding and sheltering our family while others keep our jobs because we love what we do.

Furthermore, some of us make a significant commitment to a singular goal, often to a challenging career or a noble purpose (see Colby and Damon, 1992). Others of us seem to have difficulty making a commitment to anything; indeed, these individuals often perceive commitment as an infringement on their freedom (Kenniston, 1965).

Balancing our various commitments is a perennial challenge for most of us. The ongoing effort to integrate or harmonize our commitments is certainly more complicated and challenging than the life of a person who is committed to one goal only. Indeed, some of us strive to establish a *hierarchy of commitments* (for example, family comes before fitness) while others have identified an *ultimate commitment* (to God? Nation?).

There are also people who too easily break their commitments, almost habitually so. These individuals can establish a commitment (e.g., to learn a language or to call friends on a regular basis) but their day-to-day motivation makes their commitment less salient. And finally, there are those who can only be described as commitment prodigies. These individuals seem to effortlessly make and keep their commitments with exceptional resoluteness.

In sum, the reality is that the objects of our commitments is almost limitless. Moreover, the wonderful thing about the nature of commitment is that we can be committed to something and yet fully understand and accept that not everyone should have to make the same commitment. Clearly, while some philosophers, such as Immanuel Kant, posit that there are numerous universal commitments that all of us should make (to justice and fairness, for example), our commitments are mostly understood as examples of self-expression.

How Commitment Shapes Our Lives

Commitment seems important. But do our commitments make a difference? While there is relatively little empirical research on this question, here's what we know. Researchers have examined the relationship between goal commitment and performance and found strong evidence that the level of our commitment to a goal is a significant variable in predicting goal success or failure (Locke and Latham, 1990). More particularly, there is compelling evidence that commitment is a strong mediating variable in smoking cessation and weight loss interventions (Oettingen, 2010). And researchers who study organizational behavior have clearly documented that a worker's level of commitment (to his or her job, organization or career) correlates with employee turnover, absenteeism, performance and job satisfaction (Meyer, 2001).

Yet the empirical study of commitment does not quite seem to fully capture the "call" of commitment as a source of power in our lives. Scientific studies often do not have the power of stories. Thus, the humanities can also help us glean and grasp the ways in which our lives are shaped by this mysterious yet powerful call. We have all been moved by stories of commitment found in history, biographies, and the sacred scriptures across religious traditions. Woven together, these various sources tell us that our commitments:

- Give us direction
- Shape our behavior and conduct

- Change us
- Place demands on us
- Help us know when to take a stand or to show resolve
- Shape our notions of accomplishment and achievement
- Motivate and energize us
- Offer us meaning and purpose
- Form and shape our identity
- Reveal our character

The Structure of Commitment

There seem to be seven discrete features that form the structure of commitment. That is, for any object of commitment (X), these seven features appear to be essential for that particular commitment to fully develop and mature. These features are:

1. Belief (I believe in X)

Beliefs come in all sizes and shapes. The seven Army Core Values are beliefs. Freedom is a belief. The expression "blood is thicker than water" is another belief. Beliefs are the seeds of our commitments. No one can form a commitment before they form a belief. Typically, children and adolescents "try on" and test out different beliefs, ranging from the prescriptive ("treat others as you would like to be treated") to the proscriptive ("don't drink and drive"). But at some point in time, we begin to establish for ourselves the beliefs we want to live by.

2. Care (I care about X)

Beliefs are a necessary but insufficient condition for developing a commitment. Too many people "believe" in this or that idea—but never act on those beliefs. Thus, we also need to care—and care deeply—about the beliefs that underpin our commitments. Our caring for X is the motivational force that connects us to our commitments. What we care about generates the emotional fuel and energy necessary to act on our beliefs. When we care deeply about a belief we literally "feel" its importance and seriousness; we begin to aspire to live in fidelity—often passionately and intensely—to these beliefs.

3. Declaration (I make an intentional commitment to X)

The stage is set: the marriage between our cognitive beliefs and our passionate cares. We are prepared, metaphorically, to adopt our commitment. We are ready to invest significant time and resources toward this commitment. We are also ready to make "visible" our commitment. Sometimes this "declaration" occurs through a public pledge, a shared oath or a sacred vow. Other times, we make visible our commitment to ourselves only. Whatever form or shape this declaration takes, we usually strive to find ways to valorize this commitment. We begin to invest in this commitment, endowing it with significant meaning, for this commitment now expresses and signifies a noble purpose, one of our life goals.

4. Practice (I practice the habits and virtues of X)

The field of character education suggests that character consists of the head, heart and hands. Thus, in the model of commitment presented here our beliefs ("head") and our caring ("heart") motivate and energize us to practice the habits and virtues of our commitments ("hands").

Put simply, our commitments are built on the anvil of habits. These habits form and focus our commitments. Moreover, what philosophers and theologians call the virtues can also be understood as habits of thought, emotions and actions in service to our commitments. As an example, let's say a soldier is committed to being a good brother or sister. What does having a commitment to being a good sibling mean in terms of habits and virtues? Showing concern? Sacrifice? Honest feedback? Most of us are committed to specific life-projects (such as being a good brother or sister) and it's through these commitments that we experience the virtues.

5. Be Ready for Challenges (I need to be ready for the challenges I will face in my commitment to X)

Every commitment has a cost attached to it (either to our time, resources, or to pursuing other opportunities). In addition, every commitment worth having will – at one time or another – face an internal or external threat. Having doubts or regrets about your career choice is an example of an internal threat. Learning that you will soon be deployed to Afghanistan and being concerned how this will affect

features (or “steps”) is invariant, but the pace is not. Often, we are unaware of these features and their progression. But there is an endpoint: Our commitments become the fiber and connecting threads of our life narrative, the story lines that become the plot of our lives. Our primary commitments become sacred to us. They tell us what we're willing to die and live for. We identify with our commitments and over time they form the core of our self-identity. Put simply: We become our commitments and our commitments become us.

Training For Commitment

The very idea of training for commitment sounds a bit strange. How could we ever build commitment muscle in ways analogous to developing a physical muscle? What would a commitment workout look like? I've listed below nine exercises to develop and hone our commitments. Think of these nine as a training regimen for anyone who wants to strengthen his or her commitment muscle:

1. Each of us should be able to articulate our current life goals

Our life goals are much broader than our commitments. For example, many students, soldiers and young professionals might have a life goal to get married but they've yet to make that commitment. A college student might have being a leader as a life goal, yet his or her commitment to this goal may be difficult to fully enact in their current role or responsibility. Our

life goals serve as the main bridges to our commitments. In many ways, they help to formulate our commitments. It's also important to underscore that our life goals are more than just a listing of platitudes, ideals and principles (“I want to keep all my promises”). Instead, they are unique to our personal narrative (for example, one student recently shared with me that one of his life goals is to display the same strong work ethic as his grandfather and father before him). Finally, our life goals do not have to be a fixed blueprint, but a true response to our experiences and learning about ourselves. In other words, our life goals can (and should) evolve and change.

2. Each of us should be able to articulate our current commitments

Many people do not have a keen insight into their own commitments. What does it truly mean to commit to a military career or a medical career? Isn't it just a job? Most societies have yet to find a mechanism or a structure by which young people are challenged to articulate their commitments (professional, relational, ethical) in ways that are imbued with meaning and purpose.

3. Each of us should fiercely scrutinize whether our commitments are truly self-determined

The research is clear: Borrowed commitments (from our parents, our faith tradition, what a profession expects) are less likely to be adhered to than those we authentically own. No one can impose a

commitment upon us. We need to both self-legislate and self-govern our commitments. Put simply, our commitments are more than simply “walking the talk.” Our commitments are about determining what our talk should be about. Identifying our commitments is an achievement in self-determining what is most important in our lives (Deci & Ryan, 2002).

4. Each of us should have our own “if/then” commitment scripts

“If/then” planning is common to the research on goal commitment. It is also a key insight of the leader self-structure, developed by Hannah and colleagues. In this model, a leader's cognitive affective processing system (CAPS) is activated when a particular situation primes the preferred behavioral or cognitive response. We don't possess traits, suggests Hannah, we possess skills and behavioral tendencies (scripts) that are activated during particular situations. In other words, we can learn – via training and feedback on that training – how to produce consistent behaviors within particular situations. For example, the CAPS model explains how a first responder, soldier or fire fighter can be trained to face danger and uncertainty with confidence and competency. The question is whether this training orientation can be applied to situations where our commitments will likely be challenged. Clearly, such training would need to be individualized to ensure that these “if/then scripts” focuses on our particular commitments and the relevant challenges that each of us may face, including challenges to particular oaths, vows and pledges we've taken (Hannah, Woolfork & Lord, 2009; Gollwitzer & Oettingen, 2010).

5. Each of us should be aware of the images and rituals that speak to our commitments

Images matter. We all have mental pictures of people who are our commitment role models. For many of us, our parents serve as these commitment exemplars. For others, stories from sacred scriptures summon for us what it means to be committed. In addition, there are various “commitment rituals” that express and embody our commitments, ranging from people who run in marathons to religious pilgrimages. Each of us should be able to identify what images and rituals nourish our commitments.

6. Each of us should be able to explain how we practice the habits and virtues of our commitments

Aristotle suggests that habits are indispensable to our commitments. Indeed, there is empirical evidence (Gollwitzer & Oettingen, 2010) to suggest that encoding particular habits (behaviors of commitment) can actually lead to caring more about that commitment (what is generally known as a felt commitment). The point here is not to allow the habit or behavior to become so settled that we forget or devalue the why of our requisite duties or responsibilities. It is this reflective quality that ultimately defines and gives depth to our commitment.

7. Each of us should be encouraged to reflect on what we've learned when one of our commitments was challenged or threatened

We know that learning from our challenges, even our failures, predicts growth and development. Just as pilots are trained to fearlessly examine their mistakes (and to learn from these mistakes), each of us should train ourselves to gain insight on how we responded when one of our commitments was challenged or threatened.

8. Each of us should be able to identify someone who will hold us accountable to our commitments

We have coaches for sports and non-athletic teams (such as the chess or debating teams) because we know that coaching can make a difference in performance. Coaching can also hold us accountable. Thus, when it comes to showing fidelity to our commitments, each of us should have our own “accountability coach.” We should be able to understand how our coach holds us accountable to our commitments and helps us to be our best possible selves.

9. Annually, each of us should reflect on our commitments

Once a year, men and women in the military take a physical fitness test. Why? Because we recognize that physical fitness is important to being in the military. The test is a way to quantify and measure our fitness. Analogously, might we one day develop a way to measure the extent to which we are living our commitments? In several faith traditions, there is a time of the year when we are commanded to intentionally self-reflect on our behaviors during the past twelve months. Can we imagine a time when each of us, in our own way, fiercely reflects on the extent to which we have shown fidelity to our commitments? Taking the time to conduct this inventory would seem especially salient to becoming a leader of character.

Our commitments become the fiber and connecting threads of our life narrative, the story lines that become the plot of our lives. Our primary commitments become sacred to us. They tell us what we're willing to die and live for. We identify with our commitments and over time they form the core of our self-identity.

Conclusion

There are several dimensions of commitment I have not addressed. For example, I have not examined the antecedents of commitment. Personal characteristics are also clearly important to the concept of commitment (age and education have been linked to levels of commitment) and so is a person's disposition (e.g., our need for achievement, affiliation, autonomy). In addition, environmental factors and family structure also play a role (Johnson, M, 1999). I have also not discussed the seminal relationship between commitment and integrity. As I understand the term, integrity is being true in word and deed to a

In some ways, our commitments are like quests. As we strive to keep a commitment, many of us will face adversity and crisis. Our strength of will and volition will be tested... when we persist through adversity and setbacks we bolster and escalate our fidelity to what we're committed to.

your marriage is an example of an external threat. Anticipating and being ready for these internal and external challenges – before these threats emerge – is a critical but often overlooked step in the structure of our commitments. Those who care deeply about their commitments will find ways to ensure that they are holding themselves accountable to their commitments, whether through the support of prayer, family, or friends (or other accountability pathways such as self-regulatory strategies). In sum, for most of our commitments it is prudent to build a dyke before the proverbial storm hits.

6. Persistence (I persist in my commitment to X, even in the face of crisis, setbacks or sacrifice)

In some ways, our commitments are like quests. As we strive to keep a commitment, many of us will face adversity and crisis. Our strength of will and volition will be tested. For some of us, we will devalue our commitments, and over time care less about showing fidelity to them. However, the good news is that there is a body of research suggesting that when we persist through adversity and setbacks we bolster and escalate our fidelity to what we're committed to. In short, when a person's commitment is being challenged or attacked, a person with “high commitment” will respond by strengthening his or her commitment (Keisler, 1971).

7. Identity (Over time, X becomes a part of my identity)

My untested hypothesis is that the progression through the above

set of values and principles to which one is committed. In other words, we should strive to show integrity to our commitments—whether these commitments be personal, ethical, intellectual or professional.

In addition, I have not sufficiently addressed the relationship between commitment and noble purpose. Not all commitments are noble. Some are selfish and destructive. I have also tended to emphasize the positive commitments rather than our negative commitments. For example, a student can have a positive commitment to being a good friend as well as a negative commitment to take whatever steps are needed to avoid failing physics a second time.

Nor have I adequately explained the ambiguity of some commitments. For example, what does it mean—in terms of specific actions—if I am committed to ending poverty in Africa? This commitment may not immediately translate to any specific action steps. This sort of commitment serves only as a backdrop for potential action rather than serving as a general rule of behavior (such as a commitment to keeping one's promises).

Finally, I believe we are called to our commitments and that discerning this call requires a certain kind of listening - a listening to the heart. All of us can be trained to hear this call and to become shaped by a vision of noble purposes that extends beyond mere self-interest. Indeed, I'd argue that we're most alive when we do. Perhaps this is why the wisdom literature suggests that if memory is the mental organ of our past, commitment is the mental organ of our future.

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Commander's Comments from pg. 3

to the mission, and others, enables the other core values to naturally follow. Excellence and Integrity are the natural outcomes of serving others and not yourself.

Service before self strikes a patriotic chord. We choose to pledge our lives to defend our country and then respond when called. We have a proud heritage as minutemen. We are citizens, leaving our families and livelihoods to risk life and limb to defend our nation and its values. Our jets being armed and launched to carry out our lethal mission will always be a testament of our proud history of service.

However, the heritage of 180th is more than jets and mission success. Our missions succeed because we serve one another. When tragedy strikes one of our brothers and sisters in arms, the Airmen of the 180th swing into

action. We take care of their needs and support them. It is truly amazing and humbling to see how you all give of yourselves. On drill weekends, exercises, annual trainings, and deployments, there are countless examples of 180th Airmen training, equipping, encouraging, caring, and watching out for each other.

Service to our nation would not be possible without the generosity, mentoring, and support we give and receive. From Airmen Basic to Chief, Second Lieutenant to Colonel, I commend all of you for serving one another and never leaving an Airman behind for any reason.

The 180th Fighter Wing HAS the secret to success. Service. 🇺🇸

CHANGE OF AUTHORITY: 180FW'S 7TH SENIOR ENLISTED ADVISOR



U.S. Air Force Command Chief Master Sgt. Edward Wagner speaks during a Change of Authority ceremony May 7, 2017, at the 180th Fighter Wing in Swanton, Ohio. Wagner assumed the role as the wing's seventh senior enlisted advisor, bringing 30 years of enlisted experience and leadership to the role. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Shane Hughes)

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