



THE EN GARDE



174TH ATKW, NYANG, HANCOCK FIELD ANGB, SYRACUSE, N.Y.

Runway 5K Sets
New Records

C.A.P. Corner: Developing
Tomorrow's Leaders

Understanding
Survivorship Bias



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The En Garde



The En Garde is an official publication of the New York Air National Guard's 174th Attack Wing. Headquartered at Hancock Field Air National Guard Base in Syracuse, NY, the Wing's primary mission is to operate the MQ-9 Reaper remotely piloted aircraft.

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To contribute to the En Garde contact the PA office by phone at (315) 233-2651 or email at 174.ATKW.PAO.Org@us.af.mil.

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Lt. Col. James Hockey
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1st Lt. Elizabeth Green
Public Affairs Officer

Master Sgt. Tabitha Hurst
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Tech. Sgt. Duane Morgan
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Tech. Sgt. Alexander Rector
Public Affairs Specialist

Staff Sgt. Dylan McCrink
Public Affairs Specialist

Senior Airman Liam Eveleigh
Public Affairs Specialist

Front Cover Photo:

U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Espoir Kibingira, a services specialist assigned to the 174th Attack Wing, carries the American flag as he crosses the finish line during the 5th Annual 174th Attack Wing Runway 5K at Hancock Field Air National Guard Base, Syracuse, N.Y., Aug. 1, 2026. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Dylan McCrink)

Back Cover Photo:

U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Christen Mills, assigned to the 224th Air Defense Squadron, sings "God Bless America" during the seventh-inning stretch at the Syracuse Mets Military Appreciation Game at NBT Bank Stadium, Syracuse, NY, Aug. 6, 2026. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Alexander Rector)



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174th Attack Wing Deputy Commander's Comments

Engagement, Compassion, Honesty, and Transparency in Leadership

A message to the next generation of 174th Attack Wing Citizen Airmen, grounded in the Air Force's Foundational Competencies

Leadership in the Air Force isn't limited to commanders, chiefs, or officers. It belongs to every Airman who chooses to step forward, take responsibility, and influence the team around them. Our Wing and today's Air Force needs leaders who are engaged, compassionate, honest, and transparent. These qualities aren't slogans; they are daily habits that shape how we serve, how we treat each other, and how we build the future force. They tie directly to the Air Force's Foundational Competencies and are essential to strengthening the 174th Attack Wing.

Developing Self: Leadership Begins With You - Engagement starts with being present; mentally, emotionally, and professionally. The next generation of Airmen must understand their impact and commit to continuous growth. Compassion requires humility and emotional intelligence: recognizing your own reactions and seeing humanity in others. Honesty and transparency take courage, the willingness to speak truth, admit mistakes, and communicate openly. When you invest in yourself, you build the kind of character people trust and willingly follow.

Developing Others: Lift People, Don't Just Lead Them - Every Airman has the ability to influence someone else's path. Engagement means taking time to mentor, coach, and check in. Compassion means noticing when a teammate is struggling and stepping in early. Honesty ensures your feedback is real and useful; not watered down or performative. Transparency helps your team understand the "why" behind decisions, giving them clarity and confidence. These behaviors build inclusive teams, empower diverse voices, and prepare every Airman for future responsibilities.

Developing Ideas: Innovation Requires Trust - Our mission depends on Airmen who think critically, challenge assumptions, and bring forward new solutions. Honesty and transparency create the trust needed for innovation. Airmen speak up when they know their leaders value truth over comfort. Engagement keeps leaders connected to the mission and aware of emerging challenges. Compassion encourages creativity by removing fear of failure. Combined with problem solving, systems thinking, and creativity, these traits drive meaningful change.

Developing Organizations: Build the Culture You Want to Serve In - Strong organizations are built by leaders who communicate clearly, act with integrity, and genuinely care about their people. Transparency aligns teams with mission priorities. Honesty strengthens decision making and accountability. Engagement builds cohesion and trust. Compassion fuels resilience and morale. These behaviors reinforce the competencies that allow leaders at every level to shape vision, manage change, and build disciplined, mission ready teams. When we embody these traits, we create units where people feel valued, informed, and motivated to give their best.

A Call to Step Forward - The future of the 174th Attack Wing will be shaped by Airmen who refuse to stay comfortable. Engagement, compassion, honesty, and transparency aren't passive traits. They are choices you make every day, especially when the mission is demanding and the path ahead is uncertain. The next generation of Citizen Airmen must be willing to lean into discomfort, speak up when silence is easier, invest in others when time is short, and lead with integrity even when no one is watching.

Every Airman, regardless of rank, AFSC, or experience, has the ability to influence the culture and character of this Wing. Stepping forward means volunteering for the hard task, having the tough conversation, asking honest questions, serving our communities, and offering a compassionate hand. It means engaging with your team, your mission, and your own development with purpose and courage.

The Air Force's Foundational Competencies provide the framework; your character provides the momentum. The challenge is simple: step out of your comfort zone and into the arena of leadership. Your teammates are counting on you. Your organization needs you. And the future of the 174th Attack Wing will be stronger because you chose to lead.

Col. John D. Meili
174th Attack Wing Deputy Commander

174th ATKW Hosts Record-Setting Fifth Annual Runway 5K



Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Dylan McCrink and Senior Airman Liam Eveleigh

SYRACUSE, N.Y. – More than 500 participants registered for the fifth annual 174th Attack Wing Runway 5K at Hancock Field Air National Guard Base Aug. 1, giving military members, families and local residents the rare opportunity to race on an active airport runway while supporting the airport's Gregory J. Harris Military Courtesy Room.

Hosted by the New York Air National Guard's 174th Attack Wing in partnership with the Syracuse Hancock International Airport, the annual event promotes community engagement while raising funds to help support the airport's military courtesy room, which serves service members and their families traveling through Central New York.

Now in its fifth year, the Runway 5K continued its steady growth, drawing more registered participants than ever before. A total of 431 runners crossed the finish line, setting a new event record and surpassing the previous high by 43 finishers.

Unlike a traditional road race, participants ran on an active airfield as commercial aircraft continued arriving and departing on an adjacent runway throughout the event, providing a one-of-a-kind experience rarely available to the public. The race began following an opening ceremony featuring the 174th Attack Wing Honor Guard presenting the colors and the singing of the national anthem.

"This Runway 5K is a chance to open the base to the community and our partners at Syracuse Hancock International Airport while bringing everyone together," said Staff Sgt. Miguel Rodriguez-Peraza, 174th Attack Wing 5k planner. "Seeing commercial aircraft take off or land while you're running makes it a pretty cool experience."





Throughout the morning, runners of all ages, from 6 to 79 years old, crossed the finish line alongside family members, first-time participants, retirees and Airmen. Two MQ-9 Reaper aircraft flanked the finish line on static display, while Scooch, the Syracuse Mets mascot, greeted participants and celebrated runners as they completed the course. Michael Benny, anchor for CNY Central, emceed the event, while the station also covered the race as part of its local news coverage.

Competition remained strong throughout the race. Capt. Kevin Davis, assigned to the 174th Maintenance Group, 174th Attack Wing, claimed first place overall with a time of 16:58, averaging a 5:28-mile pace. His finish ranked among the fastest recorded in the event's five-year history.

Awards were presented to the top overall male and female finishers, as well as winners across multiple age divisions. Col. Brett Batick, commander of the 174th Attack Wing, also presented the Commander's Trophy to a young participant as he recognized her determination to complete the race.

"This was our fifth annual Runway 5K and the best experience yet," said Batick. "The weather turned out great, and the motivation level of all the participants was outstanding. It was a great opportunity for us at the 174th Attack Wing to showcase our local Air National Guard wing to the community.

"It will be tough to top this one next year."



*Col. Brett Batick
wing commander, 174th Attack Wing*

As participation continues to grow each year, the Runway 5K has become a signature community event for the 174th Attack Wing, bringing together Airmen, families, airport partners and local residents while providing an experience few communities can offer.



The 174th Attack Wing is one of five wings that make up the New York Air National Guard. Headquartered at Hancock Field Air National Guard Base in Syracuse, New York, the 174th primary mission is to operate the MQ-9 Reaper remotely piloted aircraft.

JOIN TODAY

THE 174TH ATTACK WING HONOR GUARD



*Honor those who
serve!*

As a member of the Honor Guard your main focus is to provide military funeral honors to Veterans, retirees and active-duty members.

Other community events include:

- Parades
- Flag folding ceremonies
- Retirements
- Change of command ceremonies
- Community patriotic events

BENEFITS OF JOINING

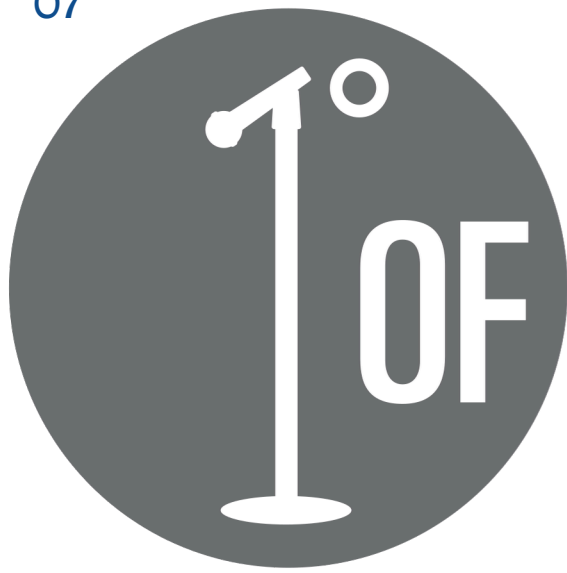
- One Statement for your EPB/OPB
- Technician/DSGs receive one full day of base pay for each day worked
- Each event adds one retirement point to your service record
- The ability to make a positive impact on the Wing and local community
- Uniform, & dry cleaning services provided
- Paid training

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6001 East Molloy Rd. Syracuse, NY 13211

Depression has one degree of separation:
if you don't suffer, then someone you know does.



OF SEPARATION

A Look at Depression
← Funny and Suicide

SEPTEMBER 12

174th ATKW
@the 152 AOG

shows: **0930 & 1230**

Open to service members and civilians.



1 Degree of Separation is a comedy show and suicide prevention effort aimed at ending the stigma of mental health through discussion, laughter, and straight talk.
www.1DegreeOfSeparation.life

Learn more about this groundbreaking Suicide Prevention Training Program that combines comedy with life-saving education.





La Rock n' Roll-Out

To the Men and Women of the 174th Attack Wing,

In my last column, I challenged each of you to find new ways to get involved and take ownership of our wing's mission. We talked about how our daily actions and our willingness to step up tie directly into the Wing Commander's priorities of Warfighting, Readiness, and Civil Support.

Today, I want to talk about the single most powerful way you can get involved and directly impact our Readiness: Mentorship.

True readiness isn't just about having the right equipment or checking boxes on a training slide. It is about our people. It's about ensuring that the hard-earned knowledge, discipline, and warfighting mindset of our most experienced Airmen are actively passed down to the next generation. When Airmen feel like someone is invested in their personal and professional growth, they lean in. They become the innovators and problem-solvers who streamline our processes, keep this wing lethal, and ultimately choose to stay in uniform.

Mentorship removes the isolation that can sometimes happen in our high-tempo environment. It builds trust, and trust is the foundation of any successful combat or civil support unit. But mentorship does not happen by accident; it requires deliberate time and effort.

To put action behind these words and model the involvement I am asking of you, I am dedicating time on my calendar specifically for this purpose. Each week, I have set aside blocked time for any Senior Master Sergeant or Chief Master Sergeant to schedule a one-hour session with me.

During this hour, we will sit down and focus on four critical questions:

What do you need from me to be successful?

What do I need from you to drive the mission forward?

How are you actively helping your Airmen grow and develop?

What are some areas where we can improve for the betterment of the wing and our Airmen?

My expectation is that these conversations will not stop at my office door. The goal is for our Senior Enlisted Leaders to take this exact same approach and replicate it down the chain of command. Whether you have been in uniform for twenty years or twenty days, you have a role to play in passing the torch.

If you are an NCO or SNCO, do not wait for someone to ask for your help. Look down and pull up. Carve out your own time to ask your Airmen what they need from you and how you can help them grow. If you are a junior Airman or new to the Wing, seek out the experts in your shop who emulate the warfighting discipline you want to achieve, and ask them for their time and feedback.

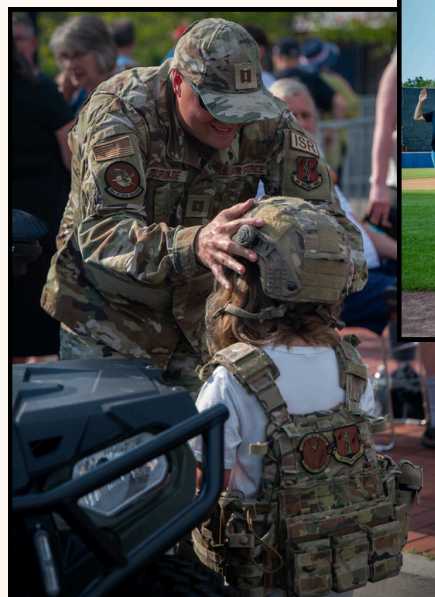
Getting involved doesn't always mean joining a council or leading a massive base-wide project. Sometimes, the most profound impact you can have on the 174th Attack Wing is simply pulling up a chair, asking the right questions, and passing the torch to the Airman sitting next to you.

Thank you for what you do every day for our state and our nation.

Chief Master Sgt. Corey LaRock
174th Attack Wing Senior Enlisted Leader

SYR Mets Military Appreciation Day

Airmen from the 174th Attack Wing joined fellow service members from across the region at the Syracuse Mets Military Appreciation Day, connecting with fans and showcasing military equipment and missions. The event celebrated the service of the military community — with Scooch even taking a Humvee for a spin.



C.A.P. CORNER



Developing Tomorrow's Leaders at Hancock Field

Story by. 1st Lt. Clara A Cordato, Assistant Director of Public Affairs, Northeast Region, Civil Air Patrol



Civil Air Patrol cadets present the colors during a pass and review ceremony at Hancock Field Air National Guard Base, Jul. 26, 2026.

(SYRACUSE, NY) – The New York Wing of Civil Air Patrol (CAP) once again had the privilege of conducting its annual Cadet Encampment at Hancock Field Air National Guard Base, thanks to the continued support and partnership of the 174th Attack Wing. Held July 19–26, the week-long encampment welcomed more than 100 cadets from across New York State for an immersive leadership experience that challenged them to grow as leaders while exploring careers in aviation and military service.

As the official auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, Civil Air Patrol serves communities through emergency services, aerospace education, and cadet programs. The Cadet Program develops young men and women into responsible citizens and leaders through aviation, leadership training, character development, physical fitness, and hands-on experiences.

Encampment is the cornerstone activity of the Cadet Program and is required for cadets seeking to advance to the program's highest achievements. During the intensive week, cadets lived and trained in a structured environment, developing leadership skills, self-discipline, teamwork, and confidence while experiencing many aspects of military life. The 2026 encampment was led by Maj. Michael Cassidy, serving his second year as Encampment Commander, along with a dedicated team of senior member and cadet staff.

The continued partnership with the 174th Attack Wing gave cadets a unique opportunity to experience the Air National Guard mission firsthand. Airmen from across the Wing volunteered their time to host a career fair, sharing their experiences and educating cadets about the many career paths available within the Air Force and Air National Guard. These conversations gave cadets valuable insight into military service while reinforcing the importance of leadership, professionalism, and service before self.

One of the week's highlights was an up-close look at the aircraft and missions that make Hancock Field unique. Lt. Col. Shannon Vickers, Commander of the 127th Operations Group, flew an A-10 Thunderbolt II to the installation, giving cadets the opportunity to learn about the aircraft's close air support mission directly from one of its pilots. Cadets also met Soldiers from the New York Army National Guard's 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation Regiment, after they arrived in a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter to discuss Army Aviation missions and career opportunities.

Additional aerospace experiences included a static display of a C-17 Globemaster III from Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst and a leadership development day at Syracuse University's high ropes course, where cadets strengthened communication, trust, and teamwork while overcoming challenging obstacles together.

The week concluded with a Pass in Review ceremony celebrating the accomplishments of the cadets and staff. Distinguished guests included Col. Jason Taylor, Commander of the 174th Attack Wing's Mission Support Group; Chris Guarniere, Civil Air Patrol Interim Director of Cadet Programs; Col. Tim Nelson, North East Region Deputy Commander North; and Col. Michael Woolfolk, Commander of New York Wing.

The New York Wing is grateful for the longstanding partnership with the 174th Attack Wing and the tremendous support provided by its Airmen. The opportunity to train at Hancock Field gives cadets an authentic military environment while strengthening the relationship between Civil Air Patrol and the Air Force it proudly serves as the official auxiliary.

On behalf of every cadet and senior member who attended this year's encampment, thank you to the men and women of the 174th Attack Wing for your hospitality, mentorship, and commitment to developing the next generation of leaders. Your support makes experiences like this possible and leaves a lasting impact on the young people who may one day serve alongside you.





Chaplain's Message

The Pentagon is driving an effort to encourage the Chaplain Corps and strengthen the positive impact we can have on our service members and families. Central to the reinvigoration of the Chaplain Corps is a return to our religious foundation. Over the years, the word 'spiritual' has replaced 'religious' in official military publications and training, recognizing that one can find purpose and values without being a member of an organized faith group. Along with this recognition, though, came a hesitance to celebrate or talk about religious faith. Even in Chaplain training we were encouraged to remain very 'generic' in our conversations. Making space for individuals of all faith backgrounds or no faith background is vital to ensure we can offer care and counsel to all Airmen. That said, people with deep religious convictions will tell you that their spiritual strength comes from those convictions. Faith is foundational to their resilience and sense of purpose. Removing religion from the conversation removes the ability to have any real discussion about where many find values, meaning, and connection.

Religion does not have to be a taboo subject whispered only in private. Refocusing on the religious foundation of the Chapel is a great opening to celebrate the diversity of religious and spiritual practices of those around us. Instead of seeing the potential for offense or misunderstanding, we can use discussion of our beliefs as a way to understand each other better. I love learning about the holy days and practices and beliefs of our Jewish and Muslim and Pagan brothers and sisters. I not only learn something I didn't know about the world, but I learn more about the people I serve alongside. The more we understand each other the deeper our connections become and the stronger our community becomes.

Of course, we navigate these conversations humbly and kindly. We must never disparage others' beliefs, seek to coerce, or violate the freedom of religion we are sworn to defend—especially when rank and command influence are involved. But welcoming and voluntary discussions of what we believe, why we believe, and how our beliefs shape who we are, are completely acceptable. Sharing what a holiday means to you, why you attend Synagogue on Friday, or how prayer keeps you going are wonderful ways to share what's meaningful to us with others. Our religious and spiritual traditions aren't things that separate us but can build unity. We don't all value the same things but we all have those things we value and more often than not, we find more common ground than we expected. When we speak openly and listen humbly, we discover that our shared values are far more powerful than our differences, and we grow stronger and closer for the missions ahead.

Lt. Col. Matthew Hallenbeck
174th Attack Wing Chaplain

174th ATKW

PROMOTIONS



Chloe Call, Alexander Cooley, Uriel Ferrer, Joshua Wilkinson

Ashton Anderson, Hernan Avalos, Nicholas Ferreras, Matilde Kraeger, Logan Longley, Nazir Osbourne, Kevin Ramon, Kaleb Seltzer, Sukhmandeep Singh, Camila Windsor



Caleb Davis, Cory Green, Alexandra Johnson, Logan McIntosh, Noah Reff, Joshua Turner, Kevin Wright,

Robert Abbott, Nathan Jennings, Molly Jensen, Rojas Quintero, Ariel Salisbury,



Mathew Cole, Sage Eberly, Mason Cowles, Mitchell Sauer,

Joel Barr, Liam Dolan, Bijou Hamilton, Chad Heisman, Elisa Layton, Tonia Larson, Andrew Merrill, James Mintner, Douglas Murdie, Thuy Nguyen, Shane Patrick, Alan Quinones, Maxwell Webster,



Rachael Alcorta, James Carini, Adam Clark, Bobby Holness, Robert Hood, Terry Konz, Katie Miller,

Michael Zimmerman



Nicholas Bottar, Christopher Kelly, Ryan LaClair, Alexander Lotito, Keith Lubey, Daniel Wagner, Patrick Young,

Daniel Chesebro, Cory Hisel



Jensen Cheong, Aaron Drumgold, Jacob Nappi,

Daniel Larsen, Andrew Leader



Airmen Answer the Call: SAR Mission

More than 50 Airmen from the 174th Attack Wing supported a two-day MQ-9 search for a missing boater on Lake Erie. The mission demonstrated the wing's rapid-response capabilities and the dedication of Airmen who stepped up to support a multi-service search and rescue effort.



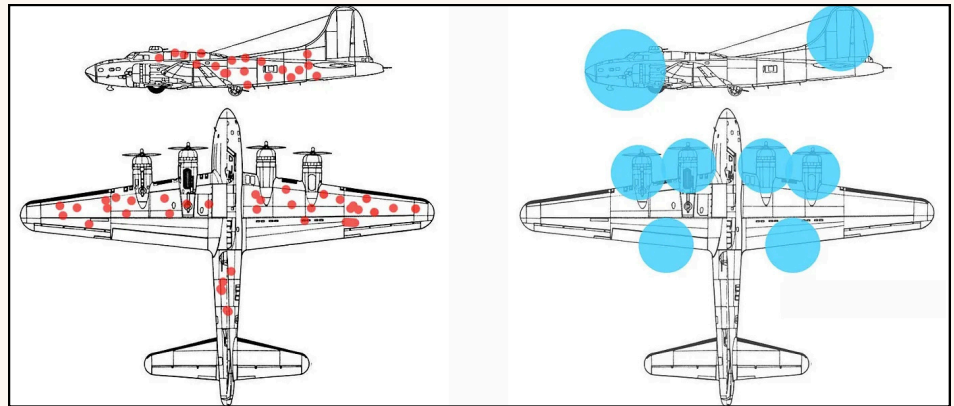
“What is Missing?”

Survivorship bias and armor theory:

Story by Staff Sgt. Andrew M. McNamara, SARM, 108th Attack Squadron

What is survivorship bias?

It is a “fallacy, or piece of faulty reasoning, consisting of drawing inferences from the characteristics of present, existing, or remaining (surviving) phenomena without also considering similar phenomena that are not present, existing or remaining”.



Picture: In these two drawings of B-17 Flying Fortress bombers, the left one shows the hits normally shown on returning aircraft, while the second shows the more vulnerable areas of aircraft that did not return.

The most notable example of this concept took place during World War II. The massive daylight bombing runs in Europe conducted by the USAAF were mostly done by B-17 Flying Fortress bombers. Although bristling with guns from nearly every angle possible, they were slow and presented massive targets to both German fighters and antiaircraft batteries.

Tragically 4,735 of these bombers were shot down over Europe, amounting to more than 37% of all 12,431 B-17 Flying Fortresses produced during the entire war.

In response to such a high attrition rate, the US Army Air Forces desperately looked for ways to increase the survivability of the crews, through the increase of armoring vulnerable places on the bombers.

A critical breakthrough came in the form of a Hungarian mathematician, Abraham Wald, who was asked to look for solutions to help prevent their warplanes from being shot down.

The standard approach at the time was simply to observe and document the bullet holes on aircraft and increase the armor for them in areas where the damage was considered the worst. However, upon closer examination of this strategy, Wald realized a pattern emerging and that it was being approached the wrong way.

He realized that the bullet holes in aircraft that had returned were actually zones that a bomber could sustain damage, and still be able to make it back home.

Wald suggested that it was engines and other sections without bullet holes that should be given special attention, since aircraft rarely returned with damage in those areas.

Upon this discovery, the B-17s would receive additional armoring in those sections and this improved the survivability of the crews and more aircraft gradually returned safely.

Abraham Wald didn't just apply this concept to bombers, and he would later recommend areas to be armored on US Navy aircraft.

How can we apply this concept to what we do at the 174th?

I can think of a few ways...

Learn all you can about failures, what when wrong and what solutions didn't work. They are just as important as the successes!

Think outside the box when attempting to solve problems and be willing to go outside your comfort zone a bit. Try to approach an issue from different directions.

Try to consider, *"Am I wasting too much armor (time and resources) into trying to solve a problem this specific way?"*

Finally, ask yourself the question: "What is missing?"



The B-17 Flying Fortress "Memphis Belle" flies after completing 25 combat missions over Europe during World War II. The famed bomber represents the aircraft that survived the war's dangerous daylight bombing missions, reinforcing the article's lesson on survivorship bias: understanding what survives also requires considering what did not.

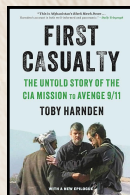
Commander's Reading List

Strategy, Leadership and Warfare



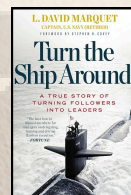
A Message to Garcia

Elbert Hubbard



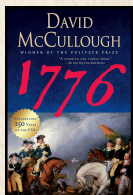
First Casualty: The Untold Story of the CIA Mission to Avenge 9/11

Toby Harnden



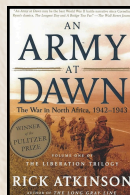
Turn the Ship Around!

David Marquet



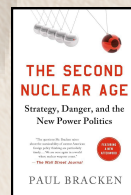
1776

David McCullough



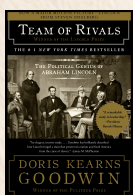
An Army at Dawn: The War in North Africa (1942-1943)

Rick Atkinson



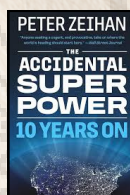
The Second Nuclear Age: Strategy, Danger, and the New Power Politics

Paul Bracken



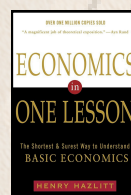
Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln

Doris Kearns Goodwin



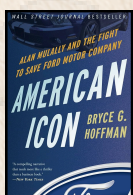
The Accidental Superpower: Ten Years On

Peter Zeihan



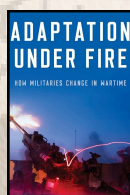
Economics in One Lesson

Henry Hazlitt



American Icon: Alan Mulally and the Fight to Save Ford Motor Company

Bryce G. Hoffman



Adaptation Under Fire: How Militaries Change in Wartime

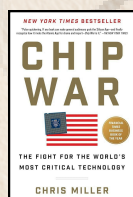
Barno/Bensahel



Oh, the Places You'll Go!

Dr. Seuss

Technology



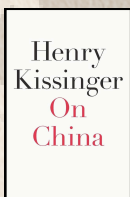
Chip War: The Fight for the World's Most Critical Technology

Chris Miller



The Kill Chain

Christian Brose



On China

Henry Kissinger



The Hundred-Year Marathon

Michael Pillsbury



White Sun War: The Campaign for Taiwan

Ryan/Saxon

Podcasts

- War on the Rocks
- Defense One Radio
- Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)
- WSJ What's News
- Economist Podcasts

174th ATKW Leadership



WING COMMANDER
COL. BRETT BATICK



**DEPUTY WING
COMMANDER**
COL. JOHN MEILI



COMMAND CHIEF
CHIEF MASTER SGT.
COREY LAROCK



WING FIRST SERGEANT
SENIOR MASTER SGT.
DAVID DINOLFO



**174th OG
COMMANDER**
COL. SETH ANDERSON



**174th AOG
COMMANDER**
COL. NICHOLAS WELLY



**174th MXG
COMMANDER**
COL. LEE NEITZEL



**174th MSG
COMMANDER**
COL. JASON TAYLOR



**174th MDG
COMMANDER**
COL. MISTY LOONEY



Readiness • Civil Support • Warfighting

