

## Air Force goal: zero mishaps

By Gen. John P. Jumper  
Air Force Chief of Staff

During the past 10 years, we have prevailed in combat in Kosovo, Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Iraq. We have toppled dictators, provided opportunities for democracy to flourish and destroyed terrorist networks. We have demonstrated time and time again we are the greatest Air Force in the world. I am very proud of our record in combat and in securing our nation's safety. But we aren't doing enough to keep our airmen safe.

During those same 10 years, the Air Force has lost more than 1,000 airmen in accidents that shouldn't have happened and could have been prevented. People are our most important resource and our greatest investment. We must protect them. It is tragic to lose a fellow airman and every time we do, we also lose a piece of our combat capability. We can do better.

I'm asking for your help in reducing our mishap rate by at least 50% over the next two years. Secretary of Defense, Mr. Donald Rumsfeld, shares this goal, and he established the Department of Defense Safety Oversight Council to review our safety practices DoD-wide. But real change has to start with each of us individually.

Commanders and supervisors are accountable for safety practices and performance and must take action to reduce mishap rates. Leaders have to make sure risks are balanced against mission requirements and mitigate those risks or stop operations when they become too great.

Most importantly, we have to get rid of the idea that safety is a concern only when "on-duty." Safety has to be part of every airman's daily life -- in combat, on the commute to and from work, at home and on vacation -- anywhere you might be.

Our ultimate goal is "zero mishaps." Over the past decade, despite some excellent safety programs, we haven't made

much progress in making the Air Force safer. Instead, we've been moving in the wrong direction. Another program, procedure or lecture won't help. Each of us paying attention will. The right attitude about safety in peacetime is no different than how we feel about surviving in war. The difference is, any loss of people or equipment in peacetime means they will never get to the war.

We know the mission always comes first and our environment will always be "high-risk." Plus, the Air Force cannot become so risk averse that we jeopardize the mission. But we cannot fall into the trap of accepting accidents as a cost of doing business, and almost all accidents are preventable.

First, we have to turn around the trend in motor vehicle collisions. Off-duty private motor vehicle accidents have steadily risen since fiscal year 1998 and remain the number one killer of our people. We're taking action to raise motorcycle-safety awareness and skill level, but success depends on our people embracing and then practicing safe riding habits. We also have to decrease the rate of aviation accidents. Mid-air collisions, controlled flight into terrain, and engine failures consistently drive mishap rates higher.

We'll do our part to ensure you get the training and technology, but you have to put it into practice. Seat belts don't work if you don't buckle them; helmets don't save lives if you don't wear them.

I have established the Air Force Operational Safety Council to oversee safety matters. The AFOSC will monitor safety performance, examine new or emerging technologies from both the operational and safety perspectives and direct required changes in Air Force policy, programs and investment. But all the oversight in the world won't help if our airmen don't take each other's safety -- their survival -- seriously.

## Commander's Connection



Photo by Staff Sgt. Josef Cole

Col. Sam Angelella and Mrs. Martha Wright officially open Shaw's new Education Center Feb. 19. Mrs. Wright, in whose honor the building's auditorium is named, worked with education services at Shaw from 1971 to 2001.

"Commander's Connection" is a link between Col. Sam Angelella, 20th Fighter Wing commander, and the Shaw community. Questions or concerns that can't be resolved through normal channels can be called in and recorded at 895-4611 or e-mailed to [commandersconnection@shaw.af.mil](mailto:commandersconnection@shaw.af.mil).

Callers should leave a name and telephone number in case questions need clarification. Comments of general interest may be published in *The Shaw Spirit*.

Q

The Airmen's Center is currently located by Shaw Lanes. Could we move it closer to the dormitories by relocating it to the old hospital shoppette? I think usage might increase if it were within walking distance of the dorms.

A

Thank you for your thoughts on improving the quality of life for Shaw members. The hospital shoppette is an Army and Air Force Exchange Service facility. AAFES has future plans to relocate Military Clothing Sales and Alterations to that location.

## The Shaw Spirit

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