

## Commander's Connection



Photo by Staff Sgt. Lee Watts

**Col. Sam Angelella answers questions from airmen at the Professional Development Course Thursday.**

## Kudos

*"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** I live in the 5000 housing area, and there is a leak in the downstairs closet coming from the upstairs bathroom. I have called housing maintenance several times trying to get the problem fixed.

**A** Thank you for giving us the opportunity to address this issue. Plumbing personnel from the 20th Civil Engineer Squadron repaired a slightly loose drainpipe between the two floors, and we're happy to report the problem has been fixed.

# Judgment is approved

By Lt. Col. Dan Swayne  
20th Fighter Wing chief of safety

Some years ago, I was involved in a squadron deployment unlike any before or since. We were taking eight jets and about 100 operations, maintenance and other personnel to another country for an extended stay.

The country we were about to spend five weeks in is internationally known for several things: one: availability of inexpensive public transportation; two: abundance of first-rate nightlife; and three: some of the most strict and conservative laws in the world. We were also getting 15 vehicles to use while we were there. By the way, they drive on the wrong side of the road in Singapore.

As we sat in the large base auditorium getting our deployment briefings, some of us talked about the unusually high potential for some kind of accident or incident during the TDY.

Being an "ugly American" in Singapore doesn't just anger the local population; it may get you thrown in jail. It would be very difficult, if not impossible, for supervisors to have any kind of real control over our deployed folks there.

Finally, it was time for our brand new squadron commander to speak. We were preparing ourselves for the fire and brimstone that was sure to come as he stepped to the podium. He looked around the

room for what seemed an eternity. I suspect he made eye contact with every person there. When he finally spoke, he said, "Men, women, you are all responsible adults. You know the rules and more importantly, you know what's right and what's wrong. I want you all to know that judgment is approved." You could have heard a pin drop as he stepped down from the stage.

When we reached our deployed location, the words "Judgment is approved" found their way onto every briefing room chalkboard, on the maintenance bulletin board, above the operations desk, above the doorway to our squadron facility and even into the day rooms at the TDY quarters.

Those words became the mantra of the squadron for whole five weeks. When the deployment ended, there hadn't been a single incident or accident of any kind.

In reflection, I'm not sure I've ever heard a more empowering phrase. The lieutenant colonel was absolutely right. We are all responsible adults; we know what's right and what's wrong. Commanders and supervisors aren't going to be there to keep you out of trouble 24 hours a day.

Ninety percent of safety is about attitude and personal choice. You've got to take responsibility for yourself and provide support for your fellow service members. Remember, "Judgment is approved."



## The Shaw Spirit

### Shaw Air Force Base editorial staff

Col. Sam Angelella.....20th Fighter Wing commander  
Maj. Lisa Caldwell.....Public Affairs chief  
Staff Sgt. Stacy Simon .....Internal Information chief  
[stacy.simon@shaw.af.mil](mailto:stacy.simon@shaw.af.mil)  
Staff Sgt. Lee Watts.....Editor  
[spirit.editor@shaw.af.mil](mailto:spirit.editor@shaw.af.mil)  
Staff Sgt. Alicia Prakash.....Staff writer  
[alicia.prakash@shaw.af.mil](mailto:alicia.prakash@shaw.af.mil)

Airman 1st Class Susan Penning.....Staff writer  
[penning.susan@shaw.af.mil](mailto:penning.susan@shaw.af.mil)

Adriene Dicks.....Correspondent  
[adriene.dicks@shaw.af.mil](mailto:adriene.dicks@shaw.af.mil)

Information intended for the *The Shaw Spirit* must be submitted Thursday the week prior of intended publication. Direct e-mail correspondence to [spirit.editor@shaw.af.mil](mailto:spirit.editor@shaw.af.mil) or mail to:

20th Fighter Wing Public Affairs Office  
517 Lance Ave., Suite 107  
Shaw Air Force Base, S.C. 29152-5041

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# ACC has unrelenting focus on safety

**By Gen. Hal M. Hornburg**  
*Air Combat Command commander*

**LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va.** -- Air Combat Command airmen should be proud of this command's contributions to Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom, and Iraqi Freedom. We've all played a vital role in protecting against and defeating terrorist threats both here and abroad. During this period of sustained surge operations and high personnel tempo, Air Force leadership has aggressively promoted safety practices that protect our primary combat capability, namely our people.

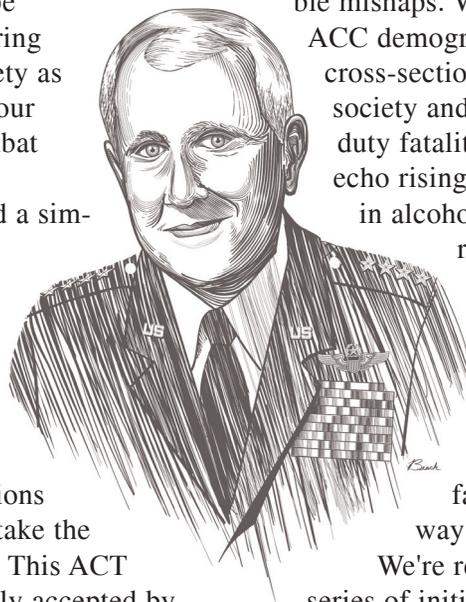
Everyone in this command knows my number one priority -- our people. If we don't have the right people and the right force to fly and crew our airplanes, to load our bombs, to do the things that are important for airmen to do, then all

we have is metal on the ramp. That's why taking care of our people is so critical and why every leader in the command should be involved in mentoring and ingraining safety as a way to preserve our most valuable combat resource.

ACC developed a simple way to remind troops to practice operational risk management. The six steps became three: assess the environment for risks, consider options to limit risks, and take the appropriate action. This ACT process was recently accepted by the Air Force for inclusion into all risk management courses and syllabi.

Lastly, our ground safety efforts

to protect our airmen on and off duty need to be redoubled. We're losing too many of our airmen to preventable mishaps. While Air Force and ACC demographics reflect a cross-section of American society and culture, our off-duty fatality statistics also echo rising nationwide trends in alcohol and high-speed related four- and two-wheel vehicle mishaps. In particular, motorcycle accidents by airmen ages 18 to 25 are the largest factor in our high-way fatality statistics.



We're responding with a series of initiatives aimed at reversing these negative trends.

New to ACC was the recent partnership with nationwide law enforcement officials in the "You

Drink & Drive -You Lose" campaign. ACC also has an on going commitment to Airmen Against Drunk Driving.

For these programs to have maximum impact, everyone must "walk the talk." Every airman needs to know he or she is a leader and a critical link in the safety chain.

Every airman in ACC must share my concern for preventing on- and off-duty losses. Safety is about protecting our most valuable resource and maintaining our ability to fight and win our nation's wars. Commanders and supervisors must instill and demand airmanship, discipline, and basic safety awareness of their troops. Continue to attack all safety deficiencies, be they human, mechanical or environmental.

Make no mistake about it, safety is a 24/7 leadership issue. Thank you for serving our nation and our Air Force.

## Mentorship should be a joy, not a chore

**By Lt. Col. Terry Hamilton**  
*20th Medical Support Squadron commander*

"Lead, follow or get out of the way." How many times in your career have you heard these words? Probably many times, and you've probably heard them spoken in times of great frustration. And, as many times as I have heard these words, or silently uttered them myself, I've only recently begun to take a different meaning from them.

I've come to realize this is not a one-or-the-other proposition. To be truly effective, we need to do all three of the things--lead, follow, and get out of the way, just at the right times.

But how do you know when it's time to lead, follow, or step aside?

From my career, I've come to believe we learn these skills only through experience and solid mentorship. As a supervisor and a commander, I've learned to cherish the influence I can potentially have on the bright young officers and airmen I work with and among my peers as well. There is no greater joy than to witness the transformation of a young, unsure new troop who originally offered only questions blossom into an independent thinker who immediately takes charge under pressure, becomes the one with the solid recommendations or

who steps to the front in a crisis.

Counseling, advising, encouraging, teaching, being a sounding board when needed and taking swift action to address negative issues are the necessary tools we use as mentors. Sometimes, we use these tools as we lead. Sometimes we do the very hardest thing -- step aside, allowing others the freedom to make and learn from their own mistakes. And sometimes, we follow not just our superiors, but anyone with a good idea and the right motivation. And, each action, I believe, has its rightful place.

There are times when a mentoring relationship may not seem too successful.

Difficult as it can be, there are times when the end result might just be that a military career is not the right path for an individual, or maybe they need to realize their performance is simply lacking. I've come to learn that is mentoring, too. The success of it is in the realization of the right choices and direction, regardless of what the final path might be.

Sometimes, it's hard to keep all these thoughts in perspective. It can feel like just one more chore when it's time to fill out a performance feedback form, when its time to write an Officer/ Enlisted Performance Report or provide a counseling session. But, I only have to remember what it felt like

to be that new, unsure lieutenant and remember what a big event it was to get that "official" thumbs up on my performance. It was a big deal. It still is. I realize I owe the same respect for those I influence as my mentors showed for me, so making that effort is important.

As I view my junior airmen and officers, I see they all need to learn to be good followers, to be good leaders and to develop discretion and judgement. More importantly, I see they are doing all these very well, and their successes, large and small, are a great source of pride. They teach me what mentorship and service are all about.

After all, all of us are or can be mentors. As such, we can choose to take an active role in shaping tomorrow's leaders or not. We can let mentorship become a checklist item and set the example by default, or we can actively lead and teach the things we intend.

When the time comes for me to finally step aside, I will do it with pride, knowing the Air Force's future is in the hands of our best and brightest yet. Today they deserve nothing less than all we older, and sometimes wiser, have to offer.

When it comes to the question of should we "lead, follow or get out the way," the answer is yes to all three, all in good time.

**20th Fighter Wing Mission Statement ANY CHALLENGE,**

*To provide, project and sustain combat - ready air forces*



**ANYTIME,  
ANYWHERE**