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Front Cover: *TSgt Ben Bloker*



SAFETY ... ARE WE THERE YET?

The 101 Critical Days of Summer Campaign just kicked off a few days ago; you recently finished having the second of two COMACC directed "safety days" and by now you most likely feel inundated with all things associated with safety. The question is: are we there yet? The answer is obviously no — we simply can't afford to have a mishap and lose any Airman or ACC family members at any time. The flight, ground, and weapons mishap goal is zero, something we must all strive to achieve.

The next few months will be costly to the command if we lose our focus. We must have involved leaders, ensure our combat and deployment training is up to task, and we must all assume some personal responsibility in making the right risk management decisions. Summer brings visions of well-deserved vacations, reunions of all types, leaves, celebrations, and sports. Let me spend a few lines talking about sports and recreation.

In 2003, the Air Force experienced 223 sports and recreational mishaps. All total, these mishaps resulted in over 230 days in the hospital, 1,755 days on quarters, and over 10 million dollars in medical and associated expenses. In Air Combat Command our losses were profound — 11 lost warriors ranging from an Airman First Class to a Lieutenant Colonel. The common thread seen between these mishaps fall into: speed, inexperience or inadequate training for the equipment, and fatigue. Use personal risk management and appropriate safety gear whether boating, biking, playing a game of softball, or even just driving to these events. Take the time to do things safely.

The summer sports and recreational activities we take part in will help build friendships and memories that can last a lifetime. Don't shorten that lifetime by not being prepared. Safety ... are we there yet? No, not yet. But we can be if we manage our risks and think about safety in a proactive manner. We can "be there" by making safety our Combat Edge.

Colonel Creid K. Johnson,
ACC Director of Safety



Photo by TSgt Ben Bloker