



Airmen supporting Airmen

by SMSgt Cliff Motley, HQ ACC Safety, Langley AFB, Va.

Air Combat Command has developed an innovative theme for this year's "101 Critical Days of Summer" campaign ... "Airmen Supporting Airmen." The theory behind the theme for this year's summer safety campaign is a two-pronged approach aimed at instilling safety as an overall culture in ACC. The first approach is to incorporate Airmen into everything we do this summer starting with the planning, programming, and execution of our command's "101 Critical Days of Summer" programs. If implemented appropriately, this approach will encourage an open and clear-cut mishap prevention dialog among both officer and enlisted personnel at every level. The second aspect of the "Airmen Supporting Airmen" is this: to

encourage supervisors at each management level to solicit and implement the proactive mishap prevention concepts proposed by our young Airmen. This across-the-board approach to mishap prevention should help us foster alternative out-of-the-box approaches to safety within the command. The concept is straightforward — young folks reminding young folks of how to be safe works much better than "old folks" telling young folks the same message! The concept for this year's theme focuses on the very core of our quality force structure ... Airmen.

The lessons learned from the command's FY04 summer safety campaign's after-action reports, which were a prerequisite for all ACC units to complete, identified one

central weakness within our overall mishap prevention processes. The reports clearly indicated that Airmen were excluded from the entire "101 Critical Days of Summer" planning, implementation, and execution processes.

I truly believe if we incorporate the ideas, concepts, and yes, a new innovative approach to safety as designed by our young Airmen, we all will benefit. According to CMSgt Kevin Ennis, Chief of Air Combat Command's Ground Safety Division, "In today's environment, we want people to challenge how we do things and make us better at recognizing each and every hazard in our effort to reduce mishaps. I believe our newer Airmen can help us. Sometimes it's

simply a matter of asking them what they think or how they would handle a certain risk management situation."

Sadly enough, Airmen from 18 to 26 years of age remain our largest demographic for both fatal and non-fatal mishaps. During our FY04 campaign, Airmen were involved in 192 non-fatal mishaps — with the average age being 26. There were nine fatal mishaps during our FY04 campaign — with the average age being 23. The most disheartening aspect of my job in the command's safety office stems from my professional responsibility to review and recap each and every mishap experienced in ACC. The circumstances surrounding a large majority of our preventable mishaps strike a personal cord in me,

because a few years ago, I too was that same young Airman driving fast and hanging out with my own indestructible peers.

Call it luck or personal fate, but we "old folks" have survived our own indigenous pasts. We can all facilitate change within the mishap prevention processes by applying the ample knowledge from our own experiences to reverse the negative consequences created by mishaps. Just ask yourself, from your own personal experiences, could you have helped to prevent a mishap or fatality from happening? Now think about this, over the last four "101 Critical Days of Summer" campaigns, 37 Airmen have lost their lives to preventable mishaps. Did these 37 Airmen receive the necessary support from their peers and

supervisors? Better yet, did we really listen to any of their ideas, concepts, or approaches to staying safe and mishap prevention in general? If your answer is no, now is the time to collectively muster the necessary support to ensure each and every Airman assigned to our command avoids the negative consequences created by mishaps this summer. ✪

I'm going to ... What about you?