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Front Cover: *By TSgt Ben Bloker*



The Secretary of Defense has set a goal to reduce preventable mishaps by 50 percent. We are making great strides toward fulfilling that goal by strengthening existing safety programs and implementing several innovative flight, ground, and weapons safety programs. Our focus in Air Combat Command is to ensure safety is an integral part of everything we do. Before turning over the reigns of Air Combat Command, I want to take this opportunity to review the safety achievements from the past year and the challenges before us.

Our flight safety successes include a 66 percent reduction in Class A mishaps during FY04 versus FY03. Scheduling dedicated safety days into the annual flying hour program has proven invaluable in focusing aviators on safe flight practices. Likewise, Flight Leadership Focus Days identified unit safety concerns and communicated them through the Numbered Air Forces to HQ ACC, where corrective actions and mishap prevention initiatives could be shared throughout the flying community. Sharing flight mishap vignettes within 5 days of an accident out-brief and stick-to-the-basics campaigns have also provided valuable training opportunities for both new and experienced aviators. All of these flying safety initiatives, coupled with our active Operational Risk Management program, have helped ACC lead the Air Force in reducing flight mishaps. In fact, during FY04 ACC experienced only five rate-producing mishaps — the lowest in command history.

Regarding ground safety, ACC was the first command to provide definitive guidance for motorcycle training when we required all riders, regardless of their rank, to be briefed on riding safety and responsibility before operating a motorcycle. As a result, motorcycle fatal mishap rates are down 11 percent, but still show we have a long way to go in this area. Our safety grams, mishap vignettes, and fatality VTCs have “put a face in front of the numbers,” driving the safety message home to our ACC family. We’ve also established the “Airmen Helping Airmen” program, designed to prevent life-threatening accidents through direct intervention — Airmen helping each other identify and then alter risky behavior or potentially hazardous situations. These ground safety programs and your efforts have put us on our way toward meeting the Secretary’s challenge.

The ACC Weapons Safety community has just completed its fourth consecutive year with “zero” weapons Class A mishaps — an extraordinary ACC record-breaking safety accomplishment. We’ve also achieved a 15 percent decrease in weapons Class B and C mishaps in FY03, and a 55 percent reduction in Class D mishaps in FY04. Additionally, we’ve closed over 50 percent of the command’s open Dull Swords — helping to resolve significant resource protection issues and providing sound nuclear safety advice to the field. This active mishap prevention program, which includes a monthly newsletter, ensures Airmen are up to speed on the latest safety techniques and procedures.

You have served your country well these past 3 years, and I am proud to have served with you as your commander. Train hard. Fight hard. Do it all safely. You, America’s Airmen are critical to our nation’s security and prosperity. Stay focused on safety; we can’t do without you.

**General Hal M. Hornburg,  
Commander**



Photo by TSgt Ben Bloker