

F.E. WARREN AIR FORCE BASE

PEACEKEEPER

OCT
2020

7-9-0 wins Cheyenne Trophy

Story and photos by Joseph Coslett

The Greater Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce recently presented the Military Affairs Committee's Cheyenne Trophy to the 790th Missile Security Force Squadron for mission accomplishments, patriotism, off-duty volunteerism and community involvement resulting in a positive impact on the city of Cheyenne and its residents.

Also known as the 7-9-0 with a motto of "second to none," the actions of the Airmen earned the unit several team and individual awards, including the 90th Missile Wing's Outstanding Large Security Forces Unit, Air Force Outstanding Flight Level SNCO of the Year, 20th Air Force's United Services Organization's Servicemember of the Year and the Nuclear Deterrence Operations NCO of the Year, as well as Air Force Global Strike Command's Airlift Tanker Association's Leadership Award.

"The [790 MSFS's] dedication to the mission truly shows and is something not only the 90th Missile Wing but Cheyenne and all of Wyoming can be proud of," Ward Anderson, Greater Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Committee chairman. "Doing the job is one thing, but doing the job right is what sets Wranglers and Cowboys apart."

The award also recognizes Airmen going above and beyond to help the community. According to the citation, two

young Airmen on patrol in Nebraska observed a house on fire. Without hesitation, the Airmen rescued a trapped family inside and assisted volunteer firefighters until the appropriate fire and medical services arrived.

"The men and women of 7-9-0 are dedicated to their service on-and off-duty, and I'm extremely proud of their accomplishments," said Lt. Col. J. Joseph Zrodowski. "7-9-0 has always prided itself for executing our mission out in the missile complex, but our Airmen are also passionate and committed to giving back and being a contributing pillar in the local community."

Senior Airman Jannah Foster, 790 MSFS flight security controller, donates her time to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Wyoming as a big sister to a 12-year-old girl.

"I wanted somewhere where I could interact with kids because I like making people smile," Foster said.

Another Airman described his time helping two underprivileged children pick toys for the holidays. Senior Airman Ronnie Frey, 790 MSFS response force leader, recounted the father sharing the story of the little girl he was helping.

"The father ended up telling me his daughter's story. She had a rough upbringing and it is a blessing she is here," Frey said. "The kids went nuts when they could pick any toy they wanted."



Airmen of the 790th Missile Security Forces Squadron pose for photos with the Cheyenne Trophy on F.E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyoming, Sept. 10, 2020. The Greater Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce recently presented the Military Affairs Committee's Cheyenne Trophy to the 790 MSFS for mission accomplishments, patriotism, off-duty volunteerism and community involvement resulting in a positive impact on the city of Cheyenne and its residents.

What touched Frey the most was when the daughter went \$40 over the amount of the gift card.

"I just forked over the \$40, because she bought gifts for her entire family," Frey said. "She hugged me and said thank you so much."

7-9-0 Airmen also organized a team to do a canned food drive and ruck-march event. The food drive raised more than 2,000 pounds of canned goods for the Cheyenne Comea House and Resource Center.

"Once you volunteer in the community, it feels like home," said Airman 1st Class Jodie Benally, 790 MSFS

commander support staff.

The Airmen all mentioned a story where the commander tells about the importance of teamwork.

"My point of telling this story is that you will fail in our line of work by trying to tackle tasks alone," Zrodowski said. "It's all about teamwork."

The story goes as follows:

A lion prowled in a field in which four oxen used to dwell. Several times he tried to attack them; but whenever he came near them, the oxen stood tail to tail, so that whichever way the lion approached them he was met by the horns of one of them. At last, however, the oxen fell to quarreling amongst

themselves, and each went off to pasture alone in a separate corner of the field. Then, the lion attacked them one by one and soon made an end of all four.

"We must work together to accomplish our mission; that's how we stay safe and are successful," Zrodowski said. "We're proud to be part of this amazing community and are humbled and honored to be selected as last year's recipients of this prestigious trophy. Their selfless dedication and contributions to the city of Cheyenne are 'second to none'."

Ground Based Strategic Deterrent Environmental Impact Statement

The United States Air Force is issuing this notice to advise the public of its intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent basing action and Minuteman III demilitarization at F.E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyoming; Malmstrom AFB, Montana; and Minot AFB, North Dakota.

The EIS will assess the potential environmental consequences of the proposal of GBSD, which will modernize and replace Minuteman III flight systems, weapon system command and control, and launch systems (launch facilities, control centers, and other ground infrastructure). It will also address GBSD and MMIII support locations at Hill AFB, Utah; the Utah Test and Training Range; and Camp Guernsey, Wyoming.

Due to public health concerns surrounding the coronavirus pandemic, the Air Force will not hold

face-to-face public scoping meetings. Instead, scoping materials that would have been presented at the meetings are available on the project website at www.gbsdeis.com. For inquiries about the project, or to request printed or digital copies of the scoping materials, please contact the 75th Air Base Public Affairs Office at (801) 775-3652.

The Air Force invites agencies, organizations, and members of the public to review the scoping materials and submit comments online at www.gbsdeis.com, by email to gbsdeis@tetrattech.com, or by mail to Tetra Tech, Inc.; c/o Jennifer Jarvis; ATTN: GBSD Comments; 10306 Eaton Place, Suite 340; Fairfax, VA 22030. Comments will be accepted at any time during the environmental impact analysis process; however, to ensure the Air Force has sufficient time to consider public input during preparation of the draft EIS, please submit comments by Nov. 13.

The scoping process is intended to involve the public early with the planning and development of the EIS and to help identify issues to address in the environmental analysis. To effectively define the full range of issues and concerns to be evaluated in the EIS, the Air Force is soliciting scoping comments from interested local, state, and federal agencies and interested members of the public.

Air Force Global Strike Command is comprised of more than 33,700 Airmen and civilians assigned to two numbered air forces, 11 wings, two geographically-separated squadrons and one detachment in the continental United States, and deployed to locations around the globe. The command oversees two-thirds of the Nation's nuclear weapons including all bomber and Intercontinental Ballistic Missile operations for the U.S. Department of Defense. [More information can be found here.](#)

MISSILE MINUTAE



The Open Door

Commentary by Lt. Col. Brian Low, 90 CES

"I have an open door policy" is something that we have all heard many times from leaders at every level across the Air Force. While this is a common phrase, how often is it truly meant?

I strongly feel that leaders need to be accessible to those they lead. This can be done many ways, from visits to your work centers, presence on the job site, office calls or even something as simple of really having an open door while working in your office. Ensuring you are available is the first step to having your Airmen approach you.

Trust is also an important aspect in truly having an "Open Door" policy. Stephen R. Covey, author of The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, stated, "Trust is the glue of life. It's the most essential ingredient in effective communication. It's the foundational principle that holds all relationships." Your Airmen need to trust that you will listen, trust that you will take action. Building trust is not easy and takes work on your part as a leader.

Trust leads into building the right environment that promotes improved communication and makes it easier for your Airmen to come to you with problems. Open communication is critical to building a healthy workplace environment.

That healthy environment now allows your Airmen to approach you with their questions, issues and problems. General Colin Powell once said,

"Leadership is solving problems. The day Soldiers stop bringing you their problems is the day you have stopped leading them. They have either lost confidence that you can help or concluded you do not care. Either case is a failure of leadership."

I learned the importance of creating the right environment early on in my career. I would like to relay an experience that I had as a captain where creating the right environment allowed me the opportunity to help a young Airmen.

While deployed overseas, I was serving as a flight commander covering all civil engineer activities at a base. The majority of my young Airmen were located in my escort section providing oversight of all contractor actions on the base. My superintendent and I made it a focus to visit them as much as possible, but due to the long hours they worked, when we visited it was more often than not in the field while they were conducting escort duties. For many, it was their first deployment and overall what they relayed to us was high job satisfaction and enjoyment with the deployment. From the outside, it appeared that the technical sergeant running the section was doing an excellent job of managing his resources and caring for his personnel.

About half way through the deployment, one of the young female Airmen in the section stopped by my office and asked to speak to me and the superintendent. After some light conversation, she proceeded to tell us about the on-going sexual harassment her and other females in the section we subject to on almost a

daily basis by the NCOIC. What we found was the NCOIC was able to present a positive face and in the background threatened his subordinates to not bring up anything that was happening when leadership was not present. The Airman that came forward, her biggest concern was that we would not do anything once the situation came to light.

I was and am still grateful that this young Airman had trust in me and my superintendent that she would bring this to us for action. Most importantly, to maintain that trust you must act and work to solve the problem.

In this case, as soon as she left the office calls were made to the squadron commander and first sergeant. The NCOIC and other NCOs in charge of that section that stood by and allowed the harassment to happen were removed by the end of the day. We immediately begin an investigation with the end result of the allegations being confirmed and the NCOIC facing a court martial.

The propose of the story is not to highlight the fact that the technical sergeant was court martialled but that positive work environments and trust with subordinates can empower them to use the "open door" and allow us as leaders to help with their problems.

As leaders in the Air Force, find ways to connect with your Airmen. Build trust that allows for a more open communication and positive work environment. Then next time you say that you have an "open door" policy, they know that you mean it.

Warren Firefighter commended

Story and photo by
Glenn S. Robertson

Imagine selecting between items in a grocery store, only to have your spouse run toward you shouting that another person in the store is sexually assaulting females and that she herself had been attacked.

That was the reality that confronted Staff Sgt. Brandin McGovern, Fire Captain with the F. E. Warren Fire Department in the 90th Civil Engineer Squadron, while shopping at a local grocery store.

McGovern took no time in jumping into action, unsure of what he would be met with, but sure that he had to do something to stop the individual.

It was the action of stepping up and confronting an assailant who assaulted five women that earned him a commendation from the Cheyenne Police Department during a ceremony Sept. 2, 2020 at the Public Safety Building in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

"Nobody was stopping him, so I trailed him and ended up body blocking him and trying to get a confession out of him while detaining him to stop him from doing anything to anyone else,"

said McGovern.

While McGovern did what he could to ensure the assailant did not touch anyone else or leave the store, the man started becoming irate and aggressive, eventually threatening to kill McGovern with a razor he pulled from his pocket, according to McGovern.

At this point, off-duty Cheyenne Police Sgt. Zac Bentley had become aware of the commotion and stepped in, taking the assailant to the ground with assistance from McGovern. Bentley and McGovern, with assistance from others present, held the assailant down until police arrived.

McGovern acknowledged that it was potentially dangerous, but he believed he had an obligation to step in and do something.

"It might not happen as fast as we would like sometimes, but people will step in when they see they're needed," said McGovern. "We all need to step in and take care of each other."

While some would likely call his actions heroic, those who work with him say it is the norm.

"The actions taken by McGovern were completely



Cheyenne Chief of Police Brian Kozak awards Staff Sgt. Brandin McGovern with a commendation during a ceremony Sept. 2, 2020 at the Public Safety Center in Cheyenne, Wyo. McGovern received the commendation for actions detaining an individual who was sexually assaulting others at a local supermarket. Though off-duty, Cheyenne PD Sergeant Zac Bentley became aware of what was happening and took the assailant to the ground with McGovern's assistance.

in line with his character," said Todd Nielsen, F. E. Warren Fire Chief. "He is always looking out for others and would come to the defense of anyone in distress and his kind and concerned nature is shown every day in the leadership he provides for his troops."

In giving the commendation, Cheyenne Chief of Police Brian Kozak expressed his gratitude for citizens stepping up to support the community, particularly in dangerous situations.

"When we see people step up and help police officers, we need

to recognize them," said Kozak. "The quick actions of these two sergeants, while off duty with their families, prevented others from being assaulted, and perhaps even saved someone's life."

F. E. Warren remembers 9/11

Story and Photos by Glenn S. Robertson

Airmen of the 90th Missile Wing participated in a 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony and Ruck March beginning at 6:30 a.m., Sept. 11, 2020 at the base flagpole on F. E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyoming.

Nineteen years ago, the U.S. was attacked in coordinated terror strikes in New York and Washington, D.C., with another strike thwarted by the passengers of Flight 93 over a field in Pennsylvania.

Today, the Wranglers of F. E. Warren honored those lost and commended the

courage of those who walked into near-certain death to help others.

"The memory of this fateful morning is seared into so many of our minds," said Chaplain 1st Lt. Debbie Giles. "Yet in the midst of this tragedy, we witnessed something extraordinary: ordinary citizens rising to the occasion and responding with unexpected acts of bravery."

Organized by members of the Warren Fire Department, the event was split into two separate efforts – a memorial and a ruck march. The ceremony included narrators, the laying of a wreath and the playing of taps to remember those lost. Those who participated in the ruck followed firefighters in full firefighting equipment in a march around the base.

Though courage shown by those in the

face of evil was frequently mentioned by those speaking, there was also a thread of national resilience and cohesion woven into the speeches.

"2,977 people from 52 countries lost their lives in one of the most horrific attacks on American soil; but also on that day a wounded city, its citizens and their country banded together like few alive had ever seen before," said Master Sgt. Fred Gallop. "The individuals who took four flights captive intended to frighten our beloved nation and send its people into chaos; however, their efforts failed and they could not break the spirit of this country and its amazing people."

In spite of all the hurt and loss from that day, there was a sense of hope and of looking forward to a better tomorrow.



Servicemembers march down Randall Ave. during a 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony, Sept. 11, 2020 on F. E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyo. The event included a ceremony, followed by a ruck march. More than fifty individuals participated in the event honoring those lost in the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

F. E. WARREN
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Defenders graduate Weapons and Tactics

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Nicole Reed

Defenders from across the country graduated the Security Forces Weapons and Tactics Instructors Course September 3, 2020 at Camp Guernsey, Wyoming.

This most recent iteration of the course was the first to be validated, or accepted for military wide use, after four years of hard work and effort from many different parties. Prior to the Weapons and Tactics Instructor training, two other, separate courses were employed, with one focusing on tactics and the other on critical thinking.

“We needed a course that merged these two prior courses together,” said Master Sgt. Christopher Alcalá, Air Force Global Strike Command weapons and tactics manager. “This final course was established and validated in an effort to integrate a tactics network across the security forces community as a whole.”

Throughout seven weeks of training, students were given a deeper understanding of how their weapons systems worked. They trained in distance firing, threat discrimination, firing around targets, nuclear security operations, mounted and dismounted operations, area security and finally, law and order operations.

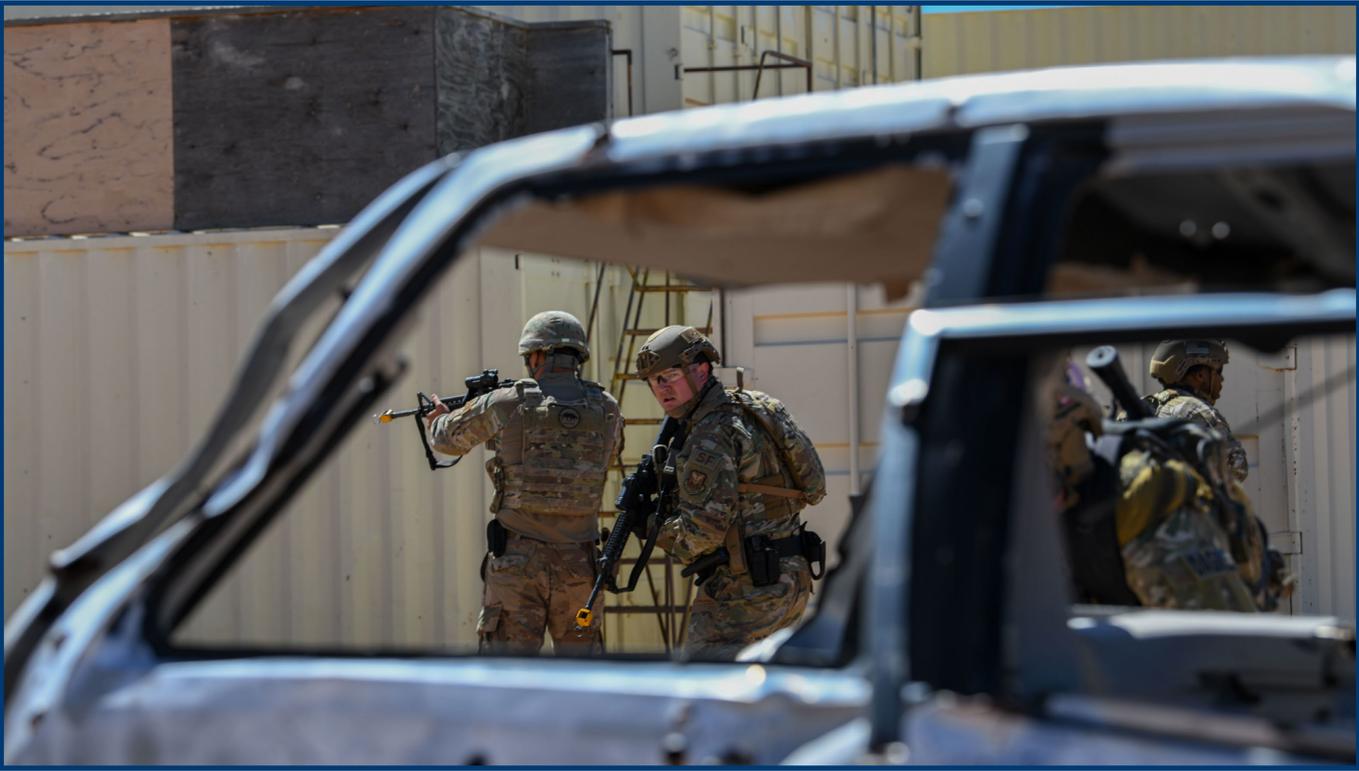
“As students, we went through everything that a normal defender would face on a daily basis but then we stepped it up a notch through a variety of courses that reinforced the foundation of our skills” said Staff Sgt. Andrew Hill, 736th Security Forces Squadron Pacific Air Forces Regional Training Center instructor. “This training allows us to be a subject matter expert on a larger portion of our jobs as defenders.”

Defenders from every major command were present at the training. A key goal of the course is to be able to take methodologies and tactics from different missions and utilize them across every aspect of the career field.

“We bring an expert and their tactics from each base,” said Tech. Sgt. Junior Ramirez, 90th Security Forces Group Weapons and Tactics Instructor Course instructor. “We essentially ask the question ‘How are you doing things at your base?’, so that students can take back that knowledge to their home stations. It’s all



Defenders advance into simulated enemy territory during a hostage rescue exercise at Camp Guernsey, Wyo., Sept. 1, 2020. The exercise wrapped up a seven week Weapons and Tactics Instructor Course that involved defenders from every major command. The course covered standard law and order procedures that every defender is faced with throughout their career, as well as skill-sets that were more unique to specific missions across the Air Force such as nuclear security operations.



Students in the Weapons and Tactics Instructor Course use the knowledge they learned in the seven week training to advance through simulated enemy territory during a hostage rescue exercise in Camp Guernsey, Wyo., Sept. 1, 2020. Throughout the course, defenders learned skills such as reacting to situations while under stress and appropriately operating their weapons systems while fatigued.

about standardization.”

This method of training allows students to go back to their home stations and be unit integrators with their mission partners, according to Alcalá.

Feedback and in-depth debriefs were key in the process of constant improvement throughout the course duration. Course cadre constantly pushed students to evaluate themselves, reassess and reattack.

“By not having good, hard feedback, students are actually being set up for failure down the road,” emphasized Tech. Sgt.

Cory Irvin, 27th Security Forces Squadron Deployed Aircraft Ground Response Element program manager. “Humility is a huge component of our debriefs. No matter how well an exercise was executed, it is our job as cadre to continuously search for something to improve upon.”

Irvin also stressed that course cadre were adamant in encouraging students to think outside of the box.

“We need our students to be open-minded and to move away from the rigidity typically found within the career field,” Irvin said.

“We are moving past the old-school line of thinking of ‘this is how we have always done it.’”

The course ended with a hostage rescue exercise to cap off a continuation of scenarios students faced throughout the training. Alcalá says he hopes that the end of this course leaves students with a feeling of empowerment and camaraderie.

“It’s all about the person to your right and left,” he stated. “We are trying to create a team of teams, so when students leave, they understand that we all have a shared purpose.”



Students of the Weapons and Tactics Instructor Course access simulated enemy territory during a hostage rescue exercise at Camp Guernsey, Wyo., Sept. 1, 2020. The Weapons and Tactics Instructor Course brought defenders from every major command together in an effort to learn and utilize skillsets from more than just one mission area.

Half-Century on Alert: Minuteman III turns 50



The Air Force marks a significant milestone this year for the Minuteman III Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM).

Fifty years ago, on Aug. 19, 1970, Strategic Air Command placed the first flight of 10 Minuteman III ICBMs on alert at Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota, and shortly after its emplacement at the 741st Strategic Missile Squadron, Minuteman III has stood watch as the nation's strategic deterrent.

This noteworthy occasion was the byproduct of the Air Force's nine-year Minuteman Force Modernization Program governing the replacement of all deployed Minuteman I (A and B) ICBMs with either Minuteman II or Minuteman III missiles. The Air Force determined to replace the arsenal of Minuteman I ICBMs at the 91st Strategic Missile Wing at Minot AFB with the military branch's latest weapon system, Minuteman III.

The Minuteman III was the first U.S. ICBM designed to carry the Multiple Independently targetable Re-entry Vehicle capability, or MIRV. This configuration allowed individual targeting upon release for each of the weapon's three warheads.

Dating back to 1959, when matched against the Air Force's previous on-alert ICBM systems—Atlas, Titan I, Titan II, Minuteman I, Minuteman II, and Peacekeeper—Minuteman III has dutifully stood guard more than one-third of that time compared to the combined service activation from those former programs. And it did so despite a projected service life of 10 years.

Contrary to that expectation, Minuteman III has served uninterrupted for 50 years, having undergone a series of life-extension programs to maintain viability. It still stands alert while development of its successor, the as-yet named Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent, continues.

"Until GBSD comes online fully, we must continue to take the actions necessary to ensure Minuteman III remains a viable deterrent for the Nation," said Gen. Tim Ray, Air Force Global Strike Command commander. "24/7/365 our missiles remain on alert, lethal and ready, providing the deterrence necessary to allow the rest of the Nation to sleep peacefully at night. We all owe a large debt of gratitude to the missileers, maintainers, security forces and countless others, who held the watch over the past generation. However, the Minuteman III is 50-years-old. It's time to modernize and bring on the GBSD."

"My hat's off to the Airmen across 20th Air Force who continue to operate, maintain, secure, and support Minuteman III after 50 years of service to the nation," said Maj. Gen. Mike Lutton, 20th Air Force commander. "This is a proud moment worth reflecting upon—especially for the world's most respected and feared global strike team."

Located across five states, Minot AFB, Malmstrom AFB, Montana, and F. E. Warren AFB, Wyoming, Colorado and Nebraska, Minuteman III remains the most responsive leg of the nuclear triad.

Civil Engineers train to fight

Story and Photos by Airman 1st Class Anthony Munoz

"As soon as we popped the door open, the first Airman started firing, the second Airman went past the one who was firing, and the whole thing was a mess," said Airman 1st Class Steven Pfister, a Water and Fuels System Maintenance Apprentice assigned to 90 Civil Engineer Squadron. "The guy who was running the simulation called 'cut' immediately."

Pfister looks forward to Prime Base Engineer Emergency Force Day since the tactical training evokes intense focus and a lot of adrenaline, he said.

"You're doing semi-dangerous stuff, so you don't want to lose your focus and hurt yourself or someone else," Pfister said.

Prime BEEF Day is a monthly training exercise held within 90 CES to ensure Airmen are ready to face adversarial threats while on deployment.

The Prime BEEF Day on Sept. 3, 2020, is unique since opposing forces will be incorporated into the training exercise, said Tech. Sgt. Allen Adams, Prime BEEF manager with 90 CES.

Airmen will be hit with injects such as unexploded ordnance (UXO), small arms fire, and simulated improvised explosive device attacks while trying to complete the mission.

"We're going to have smoke, we're going to have M4s out there, blast simulators, speakers and we're going to have a good group of volunteers," said Adams.

Training with these resources will enable Airmen to become more mission ready during deployments or on station.

"This definitely helps our Airmen in the sense of being multi-capable Airmen," said Adams. "Being able to not just be engineers, but also gunners on a convoy. We can call in 9-line med evacs. We can call in SALUTE reports. We can spot UXOs. That makes us more ready to fight, more multi-capable Airmen, more mission essential."

Adams is confident in the capabilities of his Airmen at 90th CES on base and in deployed environments.



U.S. Air Force Airman Neu, an Airman assigned to 90 Civil Engineer Squadron (left), aims a weapon at U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Shane Sergeant, an Airman assigned to 90 Missile Security Operations Squadron (right), on F.E. Warren, Sept. 3, 2020. Neu's objective was to free U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Noah Clark, an Airman assigned to 90 Civil Engineer Squadron (middle), who was playing a hostage role during a training exercise.

"They excel through teamwork, and they excel through communication," said Adams. "They also excel through application and performance. I would say my Airmen are ready to go at any time."

Proper instruction is essential to ensure Airmen can excel at their jobs.

"There's a lot of responsibility on me to provide good training," said Adams. "That follows through with instructors. I need instructors who care and who are passionate about what they're teaching."

If the instructor team was not passionate and did not care about the mission, the Airmen would not care about the mission either.

"If you have that instructor who's passionate,

you'll find interest in what they're talking about," said Adams. "That's the type of interest that I like to spark within my students."

The instructor team does an outstanding job ensuring their students receive the proper training, Pfister said.

"The Prime BEEF instructors are always on top of their stuff," said Pfister. "They're always making sure people are involved, especially Sergeant Adams," said Pfister. "He kills it every Prime BEEF day."

Airmen within 90 CES are well prepared to continue the Air Force mission due to the diversity of their training and dedication of their instructors.



U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Shane Sergeant, an Airman assigned to 90 Missile Security Operations Squadron (left), aims a weapon at a group of Airmen assigned to 90 Civil Engineer Squadron while covering behind a pretend hostage on F.E. Warren, Sept. 4, 2020. 90 Civil Engineer Squadron was conducting a training exercise on Prime BEEF day where they had to rescue a hostage in a simulated training environment.



Missed opportunities, lifetime of regret

Commentary by Glenn S. Robertson

The day before one of my best friends tried to take his own life, he was laughing, joking and goofing around like he usually did.

It was a normal March Florida day in 2001, and several of us were hanging out after class. We talked about the upcoming football season, the ongoing hockey season and whatever else came to mind.

Though nearly everything seemed normal, the clarity of hindsight allowed me to see later something out of place. Near the time I was about to leave, he offered me things that I wouldn't have expected him to part with, and then, as I was walking out the door, he said, "I love you, man."

It never occurred to me that he was in such a bad spot that he would hurt himself.

I had to go to work an overnight security shift, and it was early the next morning that his brother, who was also a good friend of mine, called me to tell me that my friend was in the hospital after attempting suicide.

He survived that attempt, and we did our best to support him and not make him feel like an outcast.

We didn't really even address what had happened, at least not to any deep level.

Time passed and we both moved on with our respective lives. I joined the Navy after college, and he moved to Texas. I saw him a handful of times between 2002 and 2007.

For years, I knew my friend had demons that he was fighting, even if he wasn't fighting them out in the open. I knew he struggled, and while I offered to be there for him, I wasn't when he needed someone the most.

I had not spoken to him for several months, due to my being stationed overseas. The time difference, along with the requirements of my job just did not leave much time for long-distance calls back to the

U.S.

Then, the worst happened.

The night of June 5, 2007, my computer started buzzing with an alert of an internet phone call. It was about 3 a.m., and I woke to see who was calling. It was my friend's brother.

I knew. I knew what he would say, and I didn't answer. I just sat in my barracks room quietly, waiting for the voicemail.

My friend, his brother, was gone.

I did call back the next day to talk to his brother and connect with him in our grief. We both expressed that we wished we had done more when it counted.

I want to be clear that I do not blame myself for my friend's passing. His decision was his alone and

was made at the end of suffering I do not, nor could not ever, understand.

However, I cannot help but look back and consider what I could have done differently, even if I don't blame myself.

Maybe if I had paid closer attention or called more often, maybe he would not have felt the need to take that terrible last step. Maybe if I had tried to help him soon after his first attempt, to help him get to the root of why he attempted, he would have had better coping skills to not want to try again.

Don't miss a chance to tell someone you ARE worried about them. You might not get the chance to say you were.

SUICIDE WARNING SIGNS

If you notice a loved one displaying these behaviors, intervene - they may be at risk

- Hopelessness
- Giving Away Personal Possessions
- Reckless Behaviors
- Makes Amends, Thanks Others or Apologizes Excessively
- Sudden Changes in Mood
(especially being unusually calm or happy after a period of depression)

#ConnectToProtect

Veterans Crisis Line
1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1

VETERAN'S DAY



[WWW.VA.GOV](http://www.va.gov)



HONORING ALL WHO SERVED