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CRISIS ACTION LEADERSHIP FOR COMMANDERS

by

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Contents

| | <i>Page</i> |
|--|-------------|
| DISCLAIMER | ii |
| ILLUSTRATIONS | v |
| TABLES | vi |
| PREFACE | vii |
| ABSTRACT | ix |
| INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| PREPARING YOURSELF | 2 |
| The Four Dimensions of Your Nature | 3 |
| Physical Preparation | 4 |
| Spiritual Preparation | 5 |
| Mental Preparation | 8 |
| Social/Emotional Preparation | 12 |
| Leadership Principles | 13 |
| Personal Mission Statement | 15 |
| Time Honored Leadership Traits and How Work Them Out | 18 |
| Time Management | 25 |
| PRE-CRISIS PHASE | 32 |
| Making A Plan | 33 |
| Building Planning Teams | 37 |
| Information Gathering | 40 |
| Prepping and Training the Troops | 54 |
| Exercising the Plan | 58 |
| CRISIS RESPONSE PHASE | 62 |
| Notification | 63 |
| Taking Care of Yourself | 66 |
| Leadership and Chain of Command | 67 |
| Decision Making | 71 |
| Initial Actions | 72 |
| Implementing the Family Plan | 87 |
| Deployment | 89 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Potential Pitfalls..... | 91 |
| CONTINGENCY OPERATION EXECUTION PHASE | 94 |
| Ensuring Success on the First Missions | 95 |
| The Bare Base..... | 101 |
| Putting the Pieces Together to Make a Whole | 103 |
| Sustaining Operations..... | 104 |
| WHAT TO DO WHEN THINGS DON'T GO RIGHT | 108 |
| SUMMARY | 112 |
| APPENDIX A: MORGAN STANLEY STORY | 115 |
| APPENDIX B: RECOMMENDED READING LIST | 117 |
| GLOSSARY | 118 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY..... | 120 |

Illustrations

| | <i>Page</i> |
|---|-------------|
| Figure 1 The Four Dimensions of Your Nature | 4 |
| Figure 2 The Time Management Matrix | 27 |
| Figure 3 AEF Crisis Action Deployment Time Line | 34 |

Tables

| | <i>Page</i> |
|--|-------------|
| Table 1. Recommended Reading Game Plan | 11 |

Preface

If you are the commander of a United States Air Force expeditionary squadron, you are in the lead of a tremendous force in our nation's military capability. Additionally, you constitute a powerful force in the lives of each of your Airmen. Among your many responsibilities, you are expected to: 1) positively impact the lives of your Airmen, and 2) shape your unit's and our nation's success in contingency operations, including, of course, combat. During your command, you will have an impact on your people everyday—you may never lead them to war, but if you do, you will want to get it right; you must get it right. Even though others will always be above you in your chain of command to assist and guide, you have the ultimate impact to success and well being of mission and personnel. This book is designed to help you get it right when it counts and to help you to leave a legacy of sustained excellence in your squadron. After all, you will only be the commander for a relatively short time, but your squadron and the folks within it will carry on.

Readings on general leadership and crisis action leadership, a rich learning experience in the U.S. State Department's nine-month leadership and national security strategy seminar, personal experience in AEF crisis action, and the experiences of other commanders form the bedrock of this book. There are a million stories, a hundred thousand considerations, and a thousand ways of doing things, but my desire from the beginning was to keep this book short enough that you will read it all the way through quickly, then pass it to your Operations Officer and other key

leaders in your squadron to read, while you formulate your vision and master plan for getting ready for your squadron's potential AEF crisis action deployment.

This book is not meant to be a step-by-step checklist of how to handle every conceivable crisis situation. Nor is it a training syllabus designed to teach you the specifics of crisis management. Rather, the overarching goal is for this book to be a think piece. It is designed to take you beyond the familiar and important Phase 1 and Phase 2 wing exercises that you have done and will continue to do. It will hopefully influence you to think introspectively on who you really are and what you really desire to accomplish during your tenure as commander. If you command an expeditionary squadron, you will want to spend a considerable amount of time thinking about how to accomplish your AEF mission. Even if your squadron is not expeditionary, the general concepts on planning and preparing for crisis response are the same. Hopefully, this book will give you some valuable ideas to get you started on the right track.

Jim "Mo" Molloy, Colonel, USAF

Abstract

The 25 October 2002 CSAF Sight Picture states, “*We must continue to push the theme to our people that our main attention in today’s Air Force is on expeditionary operations. Training and operations at home base should all be focused on preparing and supporting deployment.*” The Air and Space Expeditionary Force (AEF) concept has been executed for a multitude of operations, including the recent Operations ENDURING FREEDOM, IRAQI FREEDOM, AND NOBLE EAGLE, during which several units deployed on very short notice, and in some cases, into bare bases. Every Airman is important to AEF mission accomplishment, and the unit commander has the biggest play in overall mission success. To ensure mission success, commanders should be trained and equipped for this very demanding role. The purpose of this book is to provide a think piece for new commanders desiring to prepare themselves and their units for the AEF mission. Research of top books on leadership, management, and crisis action planning provides key principles and ideas for commanders to excel in a crisis situation. A review of Air Force and Joint publications provides a summary of information sources and required commander actions. Finally, interviews of commanders who have led their units in limited-notice AEF deployments and other leaders who have themselves experienced crisis situations provide a rich filling to support the concepts.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The American Heritage College Dictionary defines *crisis* as, “a crucial or decisive point or situation; a turning point; an unstable condition...involving an impending abrupt or decisive change.”¹ Not in that definition is an indication that a crisis is always a bad thing. A crisis situation may in fact cause a change for good as well as bad, and often a crisis may opportune positive results.² We enter everyday not knowing what will happen to us or to our organizations on that day. Think back to 11 September 2001—what expectations did you have for that day prior to the fateful attacks? For many, what began as a normal day, became a real life exercise in crisis action response of all forms.

Each of us is prepared to handle crisis situations with varying degrees of skill depending on our training, experience and competency. Historical known risk factors drive our motivation to prepare for crisis situations and training for crisis action response becomes institutionalized. Civil Engineer Firefighter training includes academic and procedural drills in myriad incident response scenarios driven by the high potential for catastrophic results if duties are not performed well. Air Force wings plan, prepare, and train for major disasters and AEF deployments. The purpose of this book is to help commanders and potential leaders to plan, prepare and train for limited-notice AEF deployments. First of all, you have to prepare yourself.

Preparing Yourself

The past is present in memory, the future is present in expectations, the present is present in attention.

—Timothy George

An aircrew experiences a serious aircraft malfunction while airborne. They methodically analyze the situation, take appropriate action, and prepare to land as soon as practical. Throughout the situation, the crew practices teamwork and calls upon expert assistance of Air Weapons Controllers, Air Traffic Controllers, other airborne aircrew, a Supervisor of Flying, etc. They refer to checklists, technical orders, and trained crew resource management procedures. They safely recover their aircraft and debrief the situation afterward with themselves, maintenance personnel, safety personnel, supervisors and others.

This aircrew and the supporting ground personnel successfully handled a crisis situation. Preparation for their unpredicted airborne crisis included hours of academics, self-study, team study, “hanger flying” sessions, simulator time, and stringent evaluations on the part of all involved. Although the aircraft commander may have never experienced this particular emergency before, he or she was able to handle it skillfully and professionally, effectively leading the aircraft team and coordinating with supporting agencies in a timely manner. As a squadron commander, you must be prepared to handle many types of crises situations as well, and planning, preparation and training for such situations must be as robust as that of an Air Force aircrew or firefighting team.

The scope of a crisis action AEF deployment is most likely larger than anything you have led before. Your response will have impact on yourself, your Airmen, their families and your nation. It is your job to make the impacts positive and lasting. *You are their commander*, and your Airmen will look to you for steadfastness, calmness, and sound decision-making. The physical and mental stresses will be great, but self-preparation provide the knowledge and skills you will need and will serve to minimize those stresses on your body and on your mind. The first part of this paper discusses ways to prepare yourself for the unknown.

The Four Dimensions of Your Nature

By this point in your military career, you understand the importance of maintaining physical fitness and health. You also know the advantages of maintaining a professional reading program and continuation in education and advanced training, and you probably have experience counseling subordinates in the same. In addition, you know the advantages of building relationships with others, and you have most likely considered the spiritual elements of life. In the book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, the author, Stephen Covey, explains the concept of the “four dimensions of your nature—physical, spiritual, mental, and social/emotional,” as shown in shown in figure 1. He says that each dimension must be exercised regularly and consistently, and “this is the single most powerful investment we can ever make in life—investment in ourselves...”³

Why did I choose to begin a treatise on AEF crisis action leadership with a discussion on how to care for yourself? Quite frankly, if you are not in physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional shape with a *balanced* program to continually improve in each dimension, you will soon find yourself well behind the power curve when it comes time to give full, sustained effort

as a commander in a crisis situation. In addition, you probably have not cultivated an environment where your squadron is fit and balanced in those four dimensions, and you will be a personal witness to their faltering also. To provide the sustained leadership that your unit requires in any situation for any amount of time, you must deeply consider how you will maintain a four dimensional program for yourself that you will sustain during your time in command. The following sections discuss each dimension as related to AEF command.

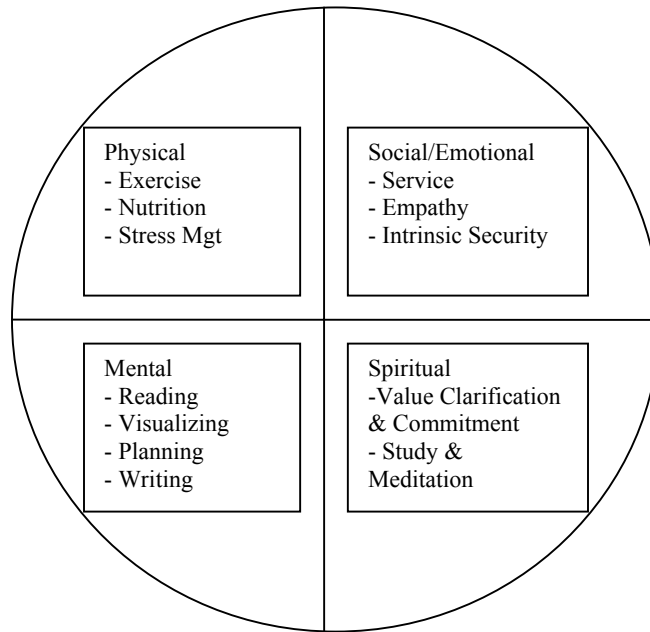


Figure 1 The Four Dimensions of Your Nature⁴

Physical Preparation

Make physical fitness a top priority. If it already is, great, don't lose the sight picture. If you have always had trouble making physical fitness a priority, you will have to work extra hard to make it a target now. Air Force fitness standards notwithstanding, you can make it through command without a dedicated program, but just making it through command is not the objective

here. You were chosen to make our Air Force and its people better and to excel in mission execution whenever and wherever called. In order to excel in command and in potential crisis situations, you must be healthy and physically fit. For your unit personnel to excel, especially in crisis situations, they must be healthy and fit, and you are the one to set the example. As their commander during a crisis action deployment and operation, you will potentially “run” at a sustained high pace for up to weeks or months on end. Physical fitness and a healthy lifestyle is the key to that sustainability.

Maintaining a good physical fitness program is not just about finding time; it is about finding a place for it in your world that works in balance with everything else. I know a wing commander who goes to the gym four days a week at 10:30 PM, with his wife. He has found a way to maintain fitness, spend time with his wife and make a visible presence and example to his troops. His wing personnel are aware of his fitness values because of his everyday actions. If physical fitness is important to you, it will be important to your Airmen.

Spiritual Preparation

Stephen Covey says, “The spiritual dimension is your core, your center, your commitment to your value system.”⁵ Those who do not have a deep and solid personal value system tend to react off of other people’s values and feelings. As commander, your job is to set the vision and environment of your unit,⁶ and you cannot effectively do that if you do not truly know who you are and what you are about. Your values determine your response to critical situations, and just in case you have not heard this already, your values will eventually become your unit’s values, affecting the response of many of your Airmen.

As you take command, your Airmen will want to know who you are and what you are about, and they *will* figure you out regardless of what you say or do.⁷ It is important to take a close

look at yourself to see if you are truly on the right track. Lt Col Jerry Gandy, who went from being the 1st Operations Support Squadron (OSS) Commander at Langley AFB to commanding at the group level for the 485th Expeditionary Operations Group at Tabuk AB, Saudi Arabia during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) takes this concept to heart in everything he does, and by natural occurrence he extended the concept to his leadership style and his unit as he took command of the 1st OSS:

In my first F-15 assignment, my flight commander Skunk Fitch passed on a great nugget of wisdom he had learned from a previous commander of the 9 FS, Lt Col Barnett. The advice he gave the squadron's officers was to "Look in the mirror and know who you are and what you stand for every day." Those words stayed with me through the years and helped me as I prepared to take command of the squadron. As I took stock of how I intended to approach command, I knew that my moral center of gravity would lead me to set integrity as the cornerstone of my leadership. I had read several books concerning character, leadership, command, courage and management to help forge the other blocks of my leadership. Additionally, I got great advice from friends, family and my bosses. Each piece of advice was helpful, but some standouts were such as when my OG/CC Col Kmart Kresge told me that I had to love my airmen and if I wasn't enjoying myself and having fun, then I was doing it wrong. My Wing CC, Col Goldy Goldfein told me to take a leap to make a difference, to create an environment and provide a vision, and probably most important, to be careful what my standards are—set them carefully and then don't pull back from them. He also cautioned me that people won't always remember what I said or did, but that they would always remember how I made them feel. All of this was helpful as I wrote my values, expectations and vision in my newcomer's orientation talking points, first commander's call outline and checklist of issues to address in the first few weeks.

I have to say though, beyond the reading, advice and preparation, I felt that my attitude toward command would in large part determine how successful the journey would be. I was humbled at having the opportunity, and borrowing from two famous movies, I had to decide what to do with the time I was given and to earn this...the privilege of command. I knew that I would need to have character that engenders trust, courage to lead and take risk for excellence, and compassion to remember that people are at the heart of any organization, not equipment or processes. My JOB was to be a difference maker, to know myself and my profession well enough to leave my squadron and those serving with me better than when I took command...to borrow from Col Goldfein, to understand the power of one to make a positive difference. What I hoped to do was shape the culture in such a manner as to have everyone coming to work each day wanting to do well and contribute...to feel like they were part of a winning team.

This enabled me to set the standards bar high, knowing that any deviations from it at the top or sanctioned from the top would ripple down and cascade through the squadron. It does not have to be big issue that tests your standards. I found this out during my first few weeks of command when I turned down a new chair for my office that one of my SNCOs had offered to purchase in a less than a straight forward manor. I believe to this day that my ensuing discussion with him on the purchase price of my integrity set in motion a standard that made it easy to sleep at night with a clear conscious through the remainder of my command. The bottom line—who I was and what I stood for was as much a part of my professional reputation as was my ability to fly jets.⁸

Another altruistic viewpoint toward leadership and personal values is from former Miami

Dolphins head coach, Don Shula:

If you're going to be a good coach, you may have to set aside temporarily the fascination with game science and look first at what's true for you. What are your beliefs? This is such an important first-priority question that I would say your long-run success depends on your answer. Why do I say that this examination of your own belief system is so critical? Because beliefs are what makes things happen. Beliefs come true. Inadequate beliefs are setups for inadequate performance. And it's the coach's—the leader's—beliefs that are the most important; they become self-fulfilling. The realization of a dream like the Dolphins' 1972 unbeaten season is invariably the result of a strong set of operating beliefs and principles that are continually in evidence throughout the formation, training, and day-to-day practice of a team. I always carry with me a set of core beliefs, values, and convictions that support my vision of perfection. These beliefs drive my entire philosophy of coaching. They set the context and the boundaries within which our players and coaches can operate. They also keep me honest and heading in the right direction. My coaching beliefs, in a nutshell, are these:

- Keep winning and losing in perspective
- Lead by example
- Go for respect over popularity
- Value character as well as ability
- Work hard but enjoy what you do⁹

Another aspect of the spiritual dimension regards prayer. Being skillful at anything requires practice, so if you think you may include prayer in a future crisis situation or combat operation, start practicing now. The more you practice now, the better you will be in the really tough situations.

Mental Preparation

You are getting ready to assume command—you have spent many years honing your mind in education, training and self-study. As commander, you will most likely continue to do so simply as a function of your many duties and responsibilities. Your objective in the mental dimension should be to design a program that will keep your mind sharp for the mission at hand and for the tremendous task of providing and keeping vision for your unit. Keep your mental capacities sharp and ready by reading, taking formal courses, debating and discussing relevant issues or tactical problems, writing (articles, personal journal, etc), giving speeches, and deep thinking as you plan and create in your mind. There is so much you can do, and so much that you must do, that the program is just as important as the material. In this section, I will focus on a reading program since reading is an activity that should be practiced as regularly as your fitness program.

Consider this the time to get your reading and study program going if you haven't already. The amount of relevant printed information that relates to your vocation is rather daunting indeed, so I will briefly recommend a flow that will help you get started. First, read Goldfein's *Sharing Success—Owning Failure*; then read Timmons, *Commanding an Air Force Squadron* and Air University's *Guidelines for Command* (Each may be provided to you at the squadron commander course; once you finish reading them, pass them to your Operations Officer and other leaders in your squadron to read.). Next, obtain and read *Rules and Tools for Leaders*, by Maj Gen Perry M. Smith (USAF, Retired). Of immediate help is Maj Gen Smith's chapter entitled, "Taking Over," which includes a valuable "Transition Checklist." These four books (Each book is a very quick read.) will assist you in formulating your vision, goals, and objectives

and in preparing for the critical transition to squadron command. There are many other books that are valuable and relevant to leadership—see those listed in Appendix B.

The next step in your reading game plan is to develop a reading schedule for the long term. Make a realistic goal for yourself to read a certain number of books or applicable publications in a given time period. For example, your goal could be to read a book every two weeks and to read or browse relevant AFIs, doctrine publications, tactics manuals, technical orders, periodicals, etc. at regular intervals. In addition, you will need a plan to keep up with current events, technological advances, current intelligence and future innovations. I have found that a reading (or intellectual/mental program) is similar to a physical fitness program. Once on a regular physical work out program, it is easier to maintain consistency and to increase muscle strength and stamina. In like fashion, whenever I begin to follow a consistent and sustained reading program, I notice increased performance in reading speed and comprehension.

There is much to read as a commander, without even considering emails and administrative reports. A common pitfall is to sacrifice your professional reading program as other interests and influences compete for your discretionary time (email, meetings, daily crises, etc.). In *Rules and Tools For Leaders*, Maj Gen Smith recommends that all leaders take a speed reading course or just practice their reading to enable them to accomplish the amount of reading that is required to be successful and to allow more time to be with their people.¹⁰

Next in this recommended reading flow are publications that will help you to start thinking about crisis action planning. There is no way to accurately predict if or when you will be called to deploy your squadron in support of a crisis action contingency tasking. The Air Force's AEF construct has done much to provide schedule stability and increased predictability, but all deployable units are required to meet a prescribed tasking regardless of their AEF window.¹¹

The sooner you begin to plan and prepare for a potential crisis action AEF tasking, the better off your unit will be throughout your tenure as commander and long after.

In addition to reading this book, refer to the following publications. Read AFI 10-403, *Deployment Planning and Execution*—this instruction will familiarize you with every major aspect and functional process of deploying Air Force units or Unit Task Codes (UTCs), and it summarizes some specific unit commander responsibilities. AFI 10-403 is the Installation Deployment Officer's (IDO) AFI, but you should be fairly familiar with its contents. Attachment 4 to AFI 10-403 includes Deployment Checklists and a Unit Commander Checklist, and Attachment 5 contains "Recommended Deployment Training Requirements."¹²

Read AFI 10-400, *Aerospace Expeditionary Force Planning*—this publication explains the AEF process and also includes specific responsibilities of squadron commanders. Attachment 1 contains an additional list of pertinent references that have applicability to pre-crisis planning.¹³

The following publications should be scanned for overall familiarity and knowledge of applicable sections. AFI 10-404, *Base Support and Expeditionary Site Planning* is the base support plan, expeditionary site plan, and site survey AFI, and it contains one paragraph that provides site survey and base support planning guidance to deploying unit commanders.¹⁴ AFM 10-401, Vol 1, *Operation Plan and Concept Plan Development and Implementation* "provides guidance on Air Force-unique planning aspects not addressed in Joint Operation Planning and Execution System (JOPES) documents and complements JOPES guidance for Air Force planners and all levels."¹⁵ AFI 25-101, *War Reserve Materiel (WRM) Program Guidance and Procedures*—scan this AFI and schedule a briefing with the wing's Logistics Readiness Squadron commander for additional information on WRM management.¹⁶ Chapter 1 of AFM

32-4004, *Emergency Response Operations* contains a good summary of Unit Control Centers (UCC).¹⁷ Finally, conduct a quick review of AFPD 10-11, *Operations Security*.

Table 1 below summarizes the recommended reading flow to get you started in your command and in AEF crisis action preparation.

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <i>Books to Prepare for the Transitioning to Squadron Command</i> | Sharing Success—Owning Failure Commanding an Air Force Squadron Guidelines For Command Rules and Tools For Leaders | <i>Read</i> <i>Read</i> <i>Read</i> <i>Read</i> |
| Publications to Prepare for AEF Crisis Action Deployment -- Preparation (should be accomplished ASAP, preferably prior to taking command) | <i>AFI 10-403, Deployment Planning and Execution</i> <i>AFI 10-400, Aerospace Expeditionary Force Planning</i> <i>AFI 10-404, Base Support and Expeditionary Site Planning</i> <i>AFM 10-401, Vol 1, Operation Plan and Concept Plan Development and Implementation</i> <i>AFI 25-101, War Reserve Materiel (WRM) Program Guidance and Procedures</i> <i>AFM 32-4004, Emergency Response Operations</i> <i>AFPD 10-11, Operations Security</i> | Read it, keep it with you, educate your bosses with it <i>Read</i> <i>Scan</i> <i>Scan</i> <i>Scan</i> <i>Scan</i> <i>Read</i> |
| Other Stuff for AEF Crisis Action Deployment Preparation (accomplished through your self-developed reading plan) | Current Intelligence on a regular basis Applicable Plans Applicable doctrine manuals Applicable tactics manuals Applicable professional publications and periodicals Lessons Learned | <i>Read or briefed</i> <i>Read/Scan</i> <i>Read/Scan</i> <i>Read/Scan</i> <i>Read/Scan</i> <i>Read/Scan</i> |

Table 1 Recommended Reading Game Plan

Another great perspective on the “preparing yourself” piece with regard to the mental dimension is one that you have probably already done, and is definitely one that you should advocate for your subordinates. A few former squadron commanders I spoke with each said they had prepared for their combat deployment experience practically their entire career, or at least since they were Captains. Lt Col Donald Bacon, who deployed his 41st Electronic Combat Squadron (ECS) to Qatar for OSW, OEF, and OIF related that he reviewed notes he kept from deployments dating back to his Captain days. He recorded what worked and what didn’t work; what went well and what went badly. He built his combat deployment plans using his notes of lessons learned, and he inculcated ideas from all of his previous commanders. He advocates teaching each of your subordinates to take notes from a young age.¹⁸

Social/Emotional Preparation

The social/emotional dimension deals with how we interact with others, and Covey relates that it requires practice and exercise also.¹⁹ This dimension is not about being an extrovert or introvert, or being someone who is able to speak easily with others. The social/emotional aspect relates to the natural human condition; namely, we see things through the lens of our own experiences and cultural norms, not as they really are. In fact, everyone does this, which means that there is always a natural difference of opinion, no matter how slight, among people with whom we interact.

This is a difficult dimension to practice because it includes the values and feelings of others, but that is what command is all about. In the next section, on Leadership Principles, I will discuss further how to prepare yourself for effective personal interactions, something you have been doing all along, but will now do as the commander. Effective interactions with those you command are key to crisis action preparation and response. This is where you will use all you

have learn about leadership and command to turn your unit into a successful team for the present and long into the future.

Leadership Principles

Leadership is the art of accomplishing more than the science of management says is possible.

- Gen Colin Powell, USA, Retired
Secretary of State

In the last analysis, what we are communicates far more eloquently than anything we say or do. We all know it. There are people we trust absolutely because we know their character. Whether they're eloquent or not, whether they have the human relations techniques or not, we trust them, and we work successfully with them.

- Stephen R. Covey
The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People

The bulk of this book is about preparation, and the first person you must prepare is yourself. You must prepare yourself for responding to the unknown—in a sense, that is what you have been doing your entire career. Now it is time to really focus and refine that preparation (that which precipitated your selection to command) to be the best you can be for all concerned—your nation, your squadron, your family, yourself—during a crisis situation. Once you prepare yourself, you will be equipped to prepare your unit for their AEF mission. This section contains key leadership principles to consider as you transition to command and prepare for AEF crisis action and employment.

Using the aircrew training experience once again, all aircrew receive the same standardized training; the best are those that go the extra mile to improve themselves and their fellow aircrew, more often than not, regardless of raw talent. It is an attitude that is both contagious and

empowering. You were chosen to command because you demonstrated that attitude—you strive to be the best, and you work for the good of those around you. You demonstrated a potential to lead. There is something different now, however. The people in your unit look at you differently because you are their commander, and they are hoping they have a good one. From the start, they are prepared to serve you with utmost loyalty and trust. At the very minimum, as Colin Powell says, they'll follow you if only out of curiosity. It's up to you to keep that initial trust and to improve upon it. In *Everyone's a Coach*, Ken Blanchard says, "The moment you accept leadership responsibility, whether it's in business, education, government, or the family, the spotlight is turned your way when tough decisions are to be made. How you make these decisions, and whether or not you stand by them will impact your respect and credibility."²⁰ A head coach would not go into the Super Bowl without having thoroughly prepared and trained his team or himself. The decisions he makes come from years of experience, thoughtful introspection and thorough planning. The way he implements those decisions are the direct result of his personal values and his leadership experience.

There are many good books on leadership, and there are many valued opinions on what makes a good leader. If you have read the books that I have recommended in the previous section, then you already have a pretty good intellectual beginning to effective command. These books discuss the qualities of good leadership and how to effectively "take command," to lead your folks and to excel in the mission. Each of the books should be read with a critically thinking and open mind. They should cause you to ask additional questions. They should help you to define the type of commander you desire to be, the place you desire to take your squadron and how you desire get there.

In his book, *My American Journey*, Colin Powell relates that people, not resources, environment, or whatever else are the keys to success and good commanders are able to motivate their people to succeed under any conditions.²¹ So, with that in mind, how should you launch your command leadership plan? Referring back to the section on the “spiritual dimension,” I suggest you begin by creating your own personal credo, which is a system of beliefs, principles, or opinions.²² It represents your values. Stephen Covey says, “...until we take how we see ourselves (and how others see us) into account, we will be unable to understand how others see and feel about themselves and their world. Unaware, we will project our intentions on their behavior and call ourselves objective.”²³ Once you truly know who you are, what you are about, and what you want to do, you should be able to verbalize those things into your own credo or *mission statement*.

Personal Mission Statement

By natural occurrence, your values will eventually extend into your unit and become your unit’s values. There is an adage that Col Dave Goldein often related when he was the commander of the 366th Operations Group: within about six weeks of taking command, your unit will begin to take on the personality of the commander.²⁴ Handling a crisis situation is the most important thing you will do as a commander. In crisis, your true character, which is a manifestation of your values, will be displayed for all to see. Your values will be those that others will come to know well during and after the crisis.

In *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey writes that a personal mission statement based on correct principles is like the Constitution of the United States that serves our nation with timeless strength, even in the midst of social ambiguity and change. He says:

It becomes a personal constitution, the basis for making major, life-directing decisions, the basis for making daily decisions in the midst of the circumstances and emotions that affect our lives. It empowers individuals with the same timeless strength in the midst of change. People can't live with change if there's not a changeless core inside them. The key to the ability to change is a changeless sense of who you are, what you are about and what you value.²⁵

Once you become a commander, you add a different role to your life, and you should know that it is a big one, and potentially an all-consuming one. Even so, who you are should not change—you were selected for command because of who you are; you should keep being that person. This new role brings additional commitments and responsibilities, but it should not change your inner core. The idea of a personal credo or mission statement is to help you to think introspectively about yourself and what you desire to do. With that firmly implanted in your brain, you will be able to face even the most challenging and stressful situations with the same steadfastness, resolve and personality that you would in a less stressful situation—in other words, the situation will not control your personality; rather, your value system will drive the situation.

Any discussion on preparing to respond to crisis action situations must begin with a deep look inside yourself. Your many roles right now possibly include spouse, parent, family member, friend, neighbor, church member, Air Force officer, colleague, coach, mentor, etc. Each of your roles will continue to challenge you in various ways with myriad demands, change and pressure. They should also continue to provide enjoyment as you seek to fulfill each role. When I took command of my squadron in 2001, I was not aware of Covey's sophisticated ideas for a personal mission statement, but I did formulate a sense of one with the following: *that I would maintain a high level of integrity and that I would work to have a positive impact and influence on others.* That statement had relevance to each of my roles at the time.

I carried that statement, or personal credo, into my change of command speech, stating that I wanted our squadron *to be a squadron that has a positive influence everywhere we are*, and I stated a desire *to be flamboyant in a way that causes positive change and has positive impact*. I also carried that credo my new person orientation briefs, commander's calls, etc. Out of my personal and then squadron credo I derived my basic goals: *to be always ready to perform the mission, to ensure that each of us continues to grow professionally, and to ensure that our families are always well cared for*. We maintained an attitude of “*doing everything the right way the first time, even when no one was looking*.” The idea was that we would use our credo, attitude and basic goals to guide us through our journey as a squadron of 270+ warriors. It became the guiding bedrock. Whenever the situation changed, our bedrock guided us through to the end and beyond. Your end state desire should be: a set of values that guides responses to situations, rather than a situation where you are driven by feelings, circumstances, other actors, and events.²⁶

Miami Dolphins coach, Don Shula has this to say about having a set of core beliefs.

I always carry with me a set of core beliefs, values, and convictions that support my vision of perfection. These beliefs drive my entire philosophy of coaching. They set the context and the boundaries within which our players and coaches can operate. They also keep me honest and heading in the right direction. My coaching beliefs, in a nutshell, are these:

- Keep winning and losing in perspective
- Lead by example
- Go for respect over popularity
- Value character as well as ability
- Work hard but enjoy what you do

These beliefs are at the heart of everything I do with my coaches and players. Holding on to them in actual practice is the basis of my being a winning coach. You won't be a successful leader if you don't have a clear idea of what you believe, where you're headed, and what you're willing to go to the mat for.²⁷

Each of Don Shula's beliefs may not apply directly to fighting and winning wars, but the concept is the same, and your beliefs will be based on who you are and what your roles are.

Time Honored Leadership Traits—Their Importance to AEF Crisis Action

One person of integrity can make a positive difference. Anywhere you intervene, it has a positive impact everywhere.

-- Elie Wiesel
Nobel Peace Prize Recipient

In the countless books, articles, seminars, and lectures on leadership, you will find no shortage of exposition upon many different leadership styles and traits. There are many pithy quotes on leadership, by renowned people, and much sage advice to be discovered around every corner. This book is not meant to be another “how to” on leadership. The purpose here is to give you a start on getting yourself and your squadron focused on AEF crisis action planning, preparation and training. The leadership traits I have highlighted here are common and well known, and I have chosen these traits to use as an avenue to help you to reflect on the subject at hand. The list is short, and it comes from personal experience, research of relevant literature, interviews of squadron commanders who have recently led in combat, and priceless insights gained over the past several months of working and living with senior foreign affairs officers who have also been under fire. These traits are: **integrity, humility, competency, vision and ability to communicate**. If you look closely, you will see that each of these traits also fit directly into our Air Force core values (Integrity First, Service Before Self, Excellence In All We Do).

Integrity. In his book, *Rules and Tools For Leaders*, Perry Smith states, “Of all the qualities a leader must have, integrity is the most important.”²⁸ Integrity is the basis for trust. If you cannot trust your subordinates, or your subordinates cannot trust you, or each other, you will have a dysfunctional squadron. You can set the theoretical bar of integrity high, but once it is

lowered by one act or word, it is almost impossible to raise it to the original height again. Maintenance of high standards in a continuous process; it must be nurtured and monitored.²⁹ Crisis action situations drastically increase the need for a leader with integrity and for a solid environment of integrity throughout the unit.

Humility. After five years of intense research, teacher and author, Jim Collins discovered that the leaders of what he describes as “great” companies have a “paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will.”³⁰ The humility he refers to is the type that Col Dave Goldfein discusses in his book, *Sharing Success—Owning Failure*, and it is the type whereby the leader “channels ambition into the company, not the self; sets up successors for even greater success in the next generation.”³¹ Humility comes from the inner self—it is not a persona that you wear whenever advantageous to a given situation. Humility is a trait that fosters permanent success and excellence. It points to unit accomplishments, rather than individual achievements. This also fits into the, what you are about category. Your AEF crisis action preparations are not just for yourself; they are for your troops and their families. If done right, those preparations will foster an attitude that will live on in the unit long after you have left the scene.

Competency. The type of competency that applies here is leadership competency. How does one obtain this type of competency? Mainly through training, study and practice, just like practically everything else. Leadership as a skill must be practiced. You may be aware of certain “born leaders,” but you can bet that they each required practice to hone their natural talents. You have practiced leadership at various levels throughout your career prior to taking command of a squadron. You have probably not practiced crisis action leadership as a squadron commander, however. That is why it is important to focus on the training of leaders during Operational Readiness Exercises and other combat training exercises. If the leaders do not

receive meaningful practice, they cannot be expected to achieve excellence when the real thing occurs. Your second in command requires practice also—he or she could be facing the same situation as you, especially if you happen to be absent when the crisis occurs.

As mentioned earlier, study is important also. Study other leaders, including those around you. Read books by people who have been under fire.³² Take notes, and constantly reflect on what you are doing.

Vision. The leadership trait of “vision” relates to the ability to “live in the future.” “Visualizing” is the process of determining how the end state should look before you even get started—the “vision” is the “picture” of that end state.³³ The leader not only knows how the end state picture should look but he or she also knows what planning, preparation and resources are necessary to get to that desired end state. A leader with good “vision” is able to keep the organization focused on the desired objectives even in the face of adverse inertia and often-encountered resistance. The ability for “visioning” starts with knowing yourself and your unit. You must be value centered, and you must have a firm understanding of your capabilities and your unit’s capabilities and resources.

Vision also includes formulating your *expectations*—expectations for integrity, for social norms, for mission accomplishment, for every work process and standard of performance. You must ensure that each member of your unit understands everything that is expected of him or her. You cannot assume that your folks will inherently know your expectations. You need to express them early, clearly, and completely. Covey says, “We create many negative situations by simply assuming that our expectations are self-evident and that they are clearly understood and shared by other people.”³⁴ Specific to AEF crisis action, you must provide your expectations for

planning, preparation, and training. Your expectations will provide the proper roadmap to achieving your vision.

A civil engineer draws plans that show every detail that will be constructed into a building project—it is a picture on paper of the final product in super detail. Pilots and weapon systems operators “chair fly” missions in their mind—they visualize the bomb hitting the target or the 20mm rounds hitting the MIG-29 and every switch, throttle and stick action it took to get from the briefing room to the kill and back to the debriefing room—a mental picture of the entire mission culminating in the desired end state. Having a vision of your desired end state is a critical step to getting there successfully.

As a squadron commander, you have a mission; you have people; you have resources, and you have expectations from your commander above you, just like the civil engineer and the aircrew, but on a larger and more complex scale. A common trait of successful leaders of large organizations is a clear vision and sense of what the perfect end state looks like. To Don Shula when he was the head coach of the Miami Dolphins, it was to win every game, to qualify for the playoffs, to win the playoffs, to get into the Super Bowl, and to win the Super Bowl, and he did just that in the 1972 season.³⁵ Pretty simple. In formulating your vision of the desired end state, you will want to ask yourself and others many questions. A few suggestions include (who, what, where, when, how, why):

- Who are you as a squadron?
- What is it you are aiming at? What is the target?
- Where is it you are trying to go?
- When do you want to get there?
- How are you going to get there?

- Why are you trying to get there?
- Why do you need to get there, and who are you going to take with you?

Organizational visioning and action can be broken down into five basic process areas—**info gathering, vision creation, task assignment, communication and follow-through**. (The same process flow can be used effectively for decision-making, both in terms of crisis action preparation and crisis action execution.)

Info gathering includes self-study and research, discussions with other commanders at all levels, and discussions with members of your squadron. Info gathering can be accomplished through brain storming, through individual and team research, and through briefings by functional experts (ex: briefing by base supply manager on how War Reserve Material accounts are managed; briefing by Ammo personnel on the status of weapons stockpiles and process for preparation, releasing, and shipping weapons). You should define the boundaries of the problem and provide your expectations on the information you need, without limiting the scope of creativity. In the process of info gathering, you will also learn who the key contacts are in your greater organization, and you will be able to build relationships that will serve you later.

Vision creation can be accomplished in several ways. Many successful leaders advocate including the folks in your organization in the creation of your unit vision. One technique is to take your key leaders to an off site location. When Col Steve Wilkins, U.S. Army, took command of a military police battalion, he took his leaders on a three-day off site to develop a vision for the unit. He related that,

I find off sites valuable to invigorate creative thinking as it gets people out of the office environment so that they can focus. (Off sites should get people away from phones and email!) Equally important, off-sites are useful for team building (most people know little of their co-workers). After 9-11, we faced a number of external challenges including deploying units for war, training a new civilian police force and supporting increased security procedures on a major installation.

These new requirements fundamentally changed how we operated. It was important that the unit leadership agree on what we wanted to be as a unit. We recognized the need to deal with this change and we used the off site as a vehicle to develop our vision. Off sites provide a unique experience for all to share.³⁶

As commander of the 366th Operations Group, Colonel Dave Goldfein, included spouses in his off site sessions. He scheduled working sessions with himself and his squadron commanders, while his wife conducted sessions with the commanders' spouses; then, he brought everyone together for additional working sessions. Once the business day was finished, he hosted a social dinner for all participants.³⁷

Once you have created your vision for your squadron, you should formulate the goals, objectives, and **tasks** that need to be accomplished in order to fulfill that vision. Considerations in task assignment include the following:

- What are you trying to accomplish?
- Who is best to accomplish the task?
- Where are you trying to go with this task, and where should it be accomplished?
- When do you want it accomplished by?
- How do you want it accomplished? (in terms of commander's intent, not step-by-step how to)
- Why do you want the task accomplished?

Next, and it doesn't necessarily have to be in this order, is **communication**. How are you going to communicate your vision to your squadron, and how are you going to help them to internalize the vision in everything they do? If members of your unit were involved in the vision creation process, this should be easier than if they were not. How are you going to communicate

changes to the way business is done if your vision requires such a change? How are you going to communicate the hard stuff?

The final piece is **follow-through**. Everything you do requires some sort of follow-through. You need some way to know the job is being accomplished within your expectations and you need to know the appropriate level of details, without micromanaging.³⁸ Are mid-course corrections required? How do you get feedback from the troops? Are the right things being accomplished, in the right way? Are you accomplishing the who, what, where, when, how, and why?

The visioning process is not necessarily as step-by-step as I have laid it out. It is continuous, interwoven, and interactive. It takes much thought, evaluation, and re-evaluation. As new people come into the unit, they must be indoctrinated to the unit vision and to your expectations.

A good vision grounded in good unit values does much to help you lead and to help the followers to follow and also to lead. It is not the be all to end all, but it does serve to guide everyone during mission accomplishment, crisis action, and everyday life. You will read that the great leaders are those that have the ability to formulate and communicate great vision. The great organizations are those that accomplish great visions with integrity and humility. This you can do.

Ability to Communicate. The ability to communicate is obviously an important trait to a leader. But, I believe you do not have to be a “great communicator” to communicate well. You just need to figure out how to communicate your vision and ensure everyone in your unit understands your expectations. If the message is good, it should be repeated over and over. A good test of communication flow is to ask your lowest ranking member about something you expected to be passed downward through your chain of command.

Integrity (character and professional will), **humility** (servant leader), **competency** (self-preparation), **vision** (end-state picture, expectations), **ability to communicate**—these are all timeless traits of great leaders. They are also traits that will serve you well in an AEF crisis action situation, but only if they truly represent who you are. You were chosen to command because you demonstrated proficiency in each of these traits, including the *potential* to utilize them effectively in command. The final section in this opening chapter will concentrate on ways to effectively manage your time with all the demands of the mission and the people of your squadron.

Time Management

The challenge is not to manage time, but to manage ourselves. The key is not to prioritize what's on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities.

- Stephen Covey

Some would say, it's all about time management. Others would say, if I only had a few more hours in each day, I could do so much more. In the words of Perry Smith, "You really only have to work half a day, it can either be the first 12 hours or the second 12 hours." Just think discipline—*personal discipline and organizational discipline*—not the type of discipline that follows a strict schedule or formal regimen, but a discipline that is grounded in what you are about (personal values and unit values), what is important to you, and what are you trying to do (unit vision).

Chapter Two discusses actions (planning, preparing and training) you should take during the pre-crisis phase. It is often those actions which we fail to do, because they can be tedious,

seemingly unimportant, and because we find ourselves inundated with our day-to-day crises. We just don't have time. The goal of this section is to highlight how effective planning, preparation and training not only "creates time" for yourself, but also allows you to more effectively manage the time of your subordinates while you are training them for leadership. The guiding center should always be the values and activities that are important to you and your squadron and that, of course, support your larger organization's mission. This is highly important to your ability to continue your visioning and to maintain an environment where your sharp people can also create vision (because you do not have to do it all yourself) and lead.

Most commanders manage their time by priorities (important tasks of the day) and daily schedules full of meetings and suspenses. Getting out with the troops sometimes precipitates a late night session of catching up on other work. The schedule is almost always full, so whenever something happens to throw the schedule off, we tend to drop the non-immediate priorities and continue to work in what we consider the immediate priorities (responding to "hot" email, going to meetings, handling the "daily crises"). The daily routine becomes reactive, rather than proactive. This is why, in most units, the unit vision and goals are nothing more than a wall decoration, recreated after every change of command, rather than a guiding center.

Refer to the diagram in Figure 1. In *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey says, "You need a tool that encourages you, motivates you, actually helps you spend the time you need in Quadrant II, so that you're dealing with prevention rather than prioritizing crises."³⁹ Your desire should be to build an environment where Quadrant II activities are the primary focus. The pressures, both internal and external, against this sort of environment are great in any busy organization, but those units who can overcome those pressures tend to

accomplish more, have a more positive impact, and are full of people who like coming to work each day.

| | Urgent | Not Urgent |
|----------------------|--|---|
| Important | I ACTIVITIES: Crises Pressing Problems Dead-line driven projects | II ACTIVITIES: Prevention Relationship Building Recognizing new opportunities Planning, recreation |
| Not Important | III ACTIVITIES: Interruptions, some calls Some mail, some reports Some meetings Proximate, pressing matters Popular activities | IV ACTIVITIES: Trivia, busy work Some mail Some phone calls Time wasters Pleasant activities |

Figure 2 The Time Management Matrix⁴⁰

The subject of this book, getting yourself and your unit ready for AEF crisis action, is a Quadrant II activity. As a squadron commander of an AEF unit, you are responsible for ensuring your unit is ready to deploy at all times. The reality remains, however, that you are responsible for a whole bunch of other things that demand your time and the time of your Airmen. The key is to never lose sight of your values center and the credo philosophy and vision that you create to guide you in every aspect of your mission, your personnel, and your families.

Begin each week by thinking about the Quadrant II activities that you need to accomplish that week and the Quadrant I activities you would like to resolve or prevent. Begin each day by

thinking about how that day will support your week's vision. End each day with a self-debrief, going through your performance on that day. Did you maintain your center throughout the day? Were your actions and your unit's actions guided by your values? Were you working to attain your vision? Did you approach each event proactively, maintaining control of the situation? If not, then why not? How much time did you spend in each Quadrant? How much time did your unit spend in each Quadrant? Is your unit psychologically and materially ready to excel into the next day? If not, where do you need to intervene? End each week with an assessment of the week. Teach your subordinates to do the same—teaching by example being the most effective way. By teaching yourself and others to proactively control events, you should even see the lines of communication opening up, since all, grounded in the same principles, are working toward a common goal and vision each week.

How does this relate to AEF crisis action planning, preparation and training? Your job is to guide the planning, preparation and training for AEF employment. Through the process of doing those things, your unit personnel will learn how to work better as they become more prepared. If a crisis action situation occurs, they will have more than enough time to react, because they will know what to do. A prepared and well-trained aircrew with the emergency situation resolves an aircraft problem quickly and has plenty of time available to concentrate on flying the aircraft to a safe recovery. Hypothetically, an aircrew who does not invest the time in preparation and practice, would require more time and effort to accomplish the emergency procedures checklist and would be overly distracted to safely fly the aircraft.

Always remember to put first things first. Keep the important foremost in mind. If a child has chores to accomplish, in which situation would the chores take longer—if you tell the child to finish chores before playing, or if you tell him or her to play first, then work on the chores?

Finish the important things first, then you will have more discretionary time for other things that you like to do.

Chapter Summary

1. Write out your personal values, beliefs, and a personal mission statement.
2. Construct a plan to keep yourself physically, mentally, socially, spiritually fit throughout your command.
3. Construct your unit's vision, goals and objectives, including your vision for AEF crisis action preparation.
4. Devise a plan to maintain disciplined time management.

Notes

¹ *The American Heritage College Dictionary*, Fourth Edition (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002), 337.

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³ Stephen R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 288-289.

⁴ *Ibid*, 288.

⁵ *Ibid*, 292.

⁶ David L. Goldfein, Colonel, USAF, *Sharing Success—Owning Failure* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 2001), 23

⁷ Covey, 22.

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- ⁸ Lt Col Jerry Gandy, USAF, interviewed by author, February 2004.
- ⁹ Don Shula and Ken Blanchard, *Everyone's A Coach* (New York, NY: Harper Business, 1995), 29.
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- ¹¹ *Background Paper on Air & Space Expeditionary Forces*,
- ¹² Headquarters USAF/ILXX, *Air Force Instruction 10-403, Deployment Planning and Execution*, 14 April 2003, 38, on-line, Internet, 26 February 2004, available from <http://www.e-publishing.af.mil/pubs/majcom.asp?org=AF>.
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- ¹⁸ Lt Col Donald Bacon, USAF, interviewed by author, February 2004.
- ¹⁹ Covey, 297.
- ²⁰ Shula, 52-53.
- ²¹ Colin L. Powell with Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York, NY: Random House, 1995), 264.
- ²² *The American Heritage College Dictionary*, Fourth Edition (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002), 334. Definition of "creed."
- ²³ Covey, 67.
- ²⁴ Goldfein, interviewed by author, April 2004.
- ²⁵ Covey, 108.
- ²⁶ Ibid, 72.
- ²⁷ Shula, 29-30.
- ²⁸ Smith, 22.
- ²⁹ Ibid, 33.
- ³⁰ Jim Collins, *Good To Great* (New York: Harper Business, 2001), 12-13.
- ³¹ Ibid, 36.
- ³² Gandy interview.
- ³³ Ibid, 131-35.
- ³⁴ Covey, 195.
- ³⁵ Shula, 18-29.

Notes

³⁶ Col Steve Wilkins, USA, interviewed by author, February 2004.

³⁷ The author was a participant in a Col Goldfein off site.

³⁸ Lt Col Ronald Babski, USAF, interviewed by author, February 2004. Recounts his observations of the leadership style of BGen Stephen Miller, 1st FW/CC during 1st Fighter Wing's preparations to deploy to Operation IRAQI FREEDOM.

³⁹ Covey, 161.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 151.

Chapter 2

Pre-crisis Phase

True leadership also rests in the understanding that people do not like being ordered around or told what to do. They would rather feel a part of the process, that their contributions really do make a difference, that they are part of a team—rather than only a servant or employee.

—Donald T. Phillips
The Founding Fathers on Leadership

The leader does not just vaguely affect others. He or she takes others toward the object of their joint quest.

—Garry Wills
Certain Trumpets

Congratulations. You have just accepted the squadron Guide On and all the responsibilities of command—you have also just entered the *pre-crisis phase*. Sometime, during your command, you will face a crisis situation. My first occurred less than 24 hours after accepting command—on a Saturday. The voice of my maintenance officer on the phone said that all of our jets had been grounded due to a potential malfunction with the ejections seats. On the bright side, we had the entire weekend to figure out what to do and to do it. Crisis situations come in many forms—the primary focus of this book is on AEF crisis action deployments, *but the principles and thinking have relevance toward any no-notice crisis situation*. Just like the fictitious aircrew in the beginning of the book, you must plan, prepare and practice, practice, practice. Being ready

for a short-notice AEF deployment should be included as part the vision for your squadron. Pre-crisis phase planning, preparing, and practicing is how you realize that vision.

Making A Plan

Leaders who are not planners are simply caretakers, gatekeepers, and time-servers.

- Maj Gen Perry M. Smith
USAF, Retired

Francis Hesselbein of the Leader to Leader Institute says, “Crisis management is not a discipline to be learned on the job, in the midst of the storm. It must be learned and practiced when there’s not a cloud in the organizational sky.”¹ This chapter is really the meat of this book. The focus of Chapter One was on the values and traits that you and your unit will need to excel in a crisis situation. The discussions in the succeeding chapters rely on this chapter as a base line.

Your AEF crisis action time line is that illustrated in Figure 3. You know now that you are in the pre-crisis phase; what you do not know is when, or if, the other phases will occur during your tenure. It is still important to plan, prepare and practice. In reality, the act of planning and exercising is the preparation.² Even if you never face an AEF crisis action deployment, your successor may, and the legacy you leave behind could be the juice that makes your unit excel after you are gone.

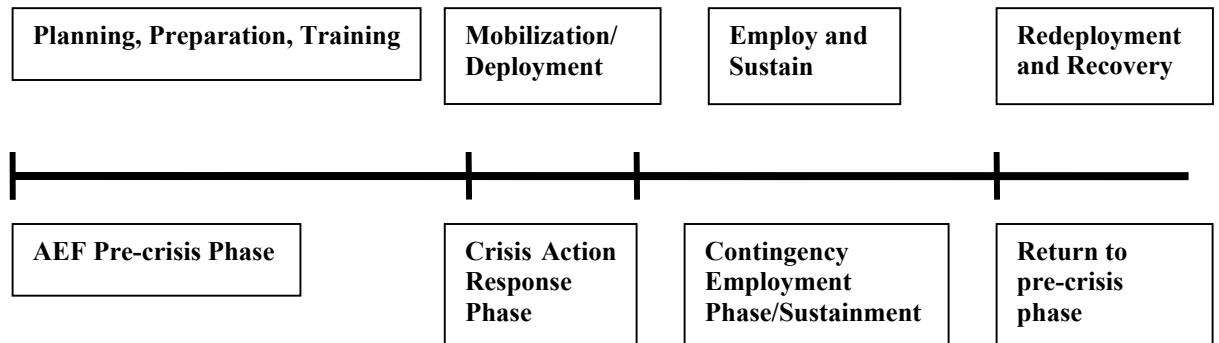


Figure 3 AEF Crisis Action Deployment Time Line

Remember, AEF crisis action planning and preparation is a Quadrant II activity—it is important, but not urgent, in most cases. In fact most planning and preparation activities that are important, may also seem less urgent as many other demands. Nonetheless, it is planning and preparation that prevents you from wasting valuable time and actually earns you the time you thought you would never have. The following illustration is from Rudy Giuliani in his book, *Leadership*, where he makes a strong case for relentless preparation:

When I was a clerk to Judge MacMahon, he would frequently repeat that dictum (don't assume a damn thing) in explaining how errors arise. Dissecting a blown cross-examination, he show how the lawyer failed to ask the right question. Untangling a failed argument, he'd point out where someone had forgotten to insert a critical point. The biggest mistake that good lawyers made, he said, was assuming too much—that the jury would make inferences, that the opposing counsel would raise specific issues, that their own clients wouldn't say ludicrous things, or behave in some ridiculous way. Judge MacMahon observed that really bad lawyers made so many mistakes that they never even reached a level of error that involved assumptions. As my own career progressed, I realized that preparation—thus eliminating the need to make assumptions—was the single most important key to success, no matter what the field. Leaders may possess brilliance, extraordinary vision, fate, even luck. Those help; but no one, no matter

how gifted, can perform without careful preparation, thoughtful experiment, and determined follow-through.³

If you make a plan, prepare the resources, train and practice the plan, incorporating the concepts in chapter one, then you and your unit will be able to execute with success and excellence in any crisis situation. In this discussion on plan creation, I will use the same ideas that were used in the previous chapter for visioning. The five main steps in this context are:

- **info gathering** – studying and learning (recommended reading game plan, figure 1; getting the right briefings and asking the right questions (your commander, your peers, your subordinates, other agencies); utilizing planning teams
- **vision creation** – picture of the desired end state, including the who, what, where, when, how and why
- **task assignment and plan creation** – the things that must be done to build and implement the plan
- **communication** – making sure everyone in the unit understands the importance of the task and knows their individual roles and responsibilities
- **follow-through** – keeping the plan alive and ensuring that your expectations are being met at every level

Crisis preparation is not sexy, and it is easy to think of it as not being immediate. As already mentioned, this type of activity is in Quadrant II of Covey's Time Management Matrix (Figure 2); therefore, it is easily neglected if you and your organization are driven solely by urgent tasks (the day-to-day crises). You may be already planning for your scheduled AEF vulnerability period. You may think *that* planning along with scheduled wing exercises will be adequate preparation for a short-notice crisis action AEF. In addition, your squadron may be highly experienced in AEF deployments because they do them all the time, but how about personnel

turn-over and contingencies that haven't been seen or executed before? Planning and preparation can be mundane and difficult and can take time away from the activities your folks really like doing.⁴ In *Everyday Crisis Management*, Dr. Mark Friedman says, “While you may intuitively grasp the value of planning for a predicted crisis, it may be difficult to understand the value of planning for an unpredictable crisis. It is even more difficult to understand how.”⁵

There are many examples of organizations that thoroughly planned for crisis response and actually had to put it into practice. An example that really struck me was an account about Morgan Stanley, an international financial brokerage firm with 700 offices around the world employing over 63,000 people. They were the largest tenant in the World Trade Center in New York, occupying floors 43 through 74 in the south tower, where 2700 people worked everyday in addition to another 1000 folks who worked in Number 5 World Trade Center. Read the full story in Appendix A to see how their “contingency plan” not only saved all but six of their 3700 employees on 9-11-2001, but also allowed them to continue operations with no interruptions on the very next day!⁶

Planning is your responsibility as commander, but that does not mean that you will do all of the work. Your job is to set the vision and the environment, to lead the planning efforts. Effective planning utilizes teamwork. You should provide your intent for all planning efforts. Do not focus only on the process; rather, put most of your focus on your purpose and desired end state. Coach the process—lead them to the end state goal. It is easy to start strong with process, but then lose focus later on. By maintaining focus on purpose and desired end state, efforts can be sustained for the long haul and in the face of competing tasks.

Planning for the unforeseen can be tedious, but the words of Albert E.N. Gray provide inspiration: “The common denominator of success – the secret of success of every man who has

ever been successful – lies in the fact that he formed the habit of doing things that failures don't like to do.”⁷ As your teams plan, don't accept the easy results. Push them and teach them to think long and hard about potential situations and contingencies. Create an environment for thinking out of the box so you won't have to operate out of the box in an actual situation. When I was a young Captain flying F-15s at Bitburg AB in the late 1980s, we had the usual wing exercises where everyone would be recalled early in the morning and the majority of the wing population would drive onto the base at the same time. I ascertained that if the Soviets were to actually initiate war in Europe, they would have their special forces agents (Spetsnatz) outside the homes of each F-15 pilot, and with one shot each would eliminate the majority of the air defense capability of the Central Region. Recently, I learned that there may have been an actual plan to do just that. Don't assume anything. The other guys do not want to lose, and they already know our capabilities.

Solid words from Lt Col James Dennis, who commanded in three wars:

Get them prepared before you ever leave. What you say prior to the deployment will mean everything. This is what they train for. This is what the country pays them to do. Make sure everything is in order before you deploy. Make them understand what combat means. Don't change the way you have trained. The preparation begins from the day you take command, not the day you deploy.⁸

Building Planning Teams

Lt Col Don Bacon, 41st ECS/CC for OSW, OEF, and OIF (all during one deployment) was given two weeks notice to deploy, but he said the hand-writing was on the wall regarding his probability of deploying, so he created three planning teams months in advance. Those teams became the process owners and were charged with learning everything they could on their processes and coming up with solutions.

In the early fall of 2002, it became obvious to many of us in the COMPASS CALL community that we were going to deploy again and be in a war with Iraq. The squadron had just returned home that May from a 6-month deployment in

support of OEF and was almost fully reconstituted. I initially formed three teams to prepare for this deployment that eventually became a part of OIF: a deployment team, a mission execution team and a family support team. I knew a victorious deployment rested on the success of all three areas—not one area could be allowed to fail. On the deployment team, we put a Major and several CGOs to work all facets of the deployment to Qatar, which became a full-time job for the month prior to the deployment. For the mission execution team, I put our weapons and tactics office in charge of ensuring we had all the right preparation to fly combat missions over Iraq and Afghanistan once we arrived in theater. Thirdly, I put our First Sergeant in charge of a team to build a solid family support plan—two CGOs, our squadron secretary and, thankfully, my wife were also very involved with this part of the deployment planning, which included everything from pet-sitting arrangements to assigning a team to make weekly phone contact with families left behind. As time went on, we brought in a fourth group, consisting mainly of our schedulers, to ensure all of the deploying folks were ahead of all their flying and ground training requirements, that all the looming flight evaluations were completed, and that all the medical needs like flight physicals and immunizations were accomplished. Additionally, about a month prior to deploying, Air Combat Command and folks from our SPO community made some new jamming equipment and software available that would enhance our jamming capabilities. To make this happen, we had to get the aircraft modified and train the operators on the new equipment. Trying to do all the above within a month of deploying was a kin to playing a giant Rubik’s Cube as adjusting the schedule for any one thing caused giant ripples through everyone else’s plans. What we did though was to have all the key members from each of the teams meet every day and discuss all the key issues they were working on. This allowed me to set priorities, ask lots of questions, and to get the coordination required among the teams. Lots of great questions were also asked by others that really helped us put together a super plan and enabled us to later execute to perfection. With all the balls we had in the air, we could not have done the job without the teams and team-leaders that owned the processes and wrestled with all the details.

The pay-off for the planning came quick. We arrived in Qatar on Thanksgiving—the first ACC unit to deploy for what became OIF—and were tasked to fly combat missions over Afghanistan 2 days later. Although that mission was canceled while we were en route to Afghanistan, we were proud that we were able to quickly respond and be available for the warriors conducting operations against al Qaeda. During this 6-month deployment, we flew 225 combat missions for OEF, OSW and OIF and jammed over 6,000 enemy signals. As we looked back, we were surprised by very little because we had great planning teams that had thought through all the major “gotcha’s” before they occurred. Our initial planning set the tone for the deployment and culminated in a great success for the COMPASS CALL team.⁹

Col Tod Wolters deployed to Tabuk AB, Saudi Arabia and commanded the 485th Air Expeditionary Wing during OIF. He is a believer that planning determines whether you succeed or fail. He advocates creating the following three planning teams in your unit, each with a designated team chief who takes the plan from cradle to grave:

- Crisis planning team – in charge of deployment planning; owns the execution of the plan from initial notification through deployment of all forces; tied to wing planning teams
- Stay behind planning team – Plans how the unit will continue operations after the deployment of tasked forces; plans the stay behind command and control and family support structure; also tied to wing planning teams; can become the redeployment reception planning team later
- Mortuary Affairs planning team – plans for potential tragic incidents that may occur at home station and at the deployed location during any phase; designated process owner¹⁰

Putting first things first, the key to effective planning teams is picking the right people for the job. Ideally, you would like people who have talents in long-range planning, farsighted thinking, innovation, and who are visionaries.¹¹ You also want good organizers, and in actuality, a mix of planners and non-planners is good to stimulate “out-of-the-box” thinking. Since you probably have to play with the cards you are dealt, you may have to train and coach your people and teams to work for the proper effect. If you have “gotten smart” on all of the subjects outlined in Chapter One, then you have a good start to provide your guidance and expectations to your planning team chiefs and members.

Throughout your planning, you will need assistance from relevant functional areas, to include agencies and units outside your squadron. For deployments, the most important officers on base to know are the Installation Deployment Officer (IDO) and the Wing Plans officer, or

equivalent. Not only will you do nothing (effectively, or at all) without their involvement, but more than likely, they will have critical pieces of information during an actual AEF crisis action deployment that you would like to have. Also, never forget that commanders above you in your chain of command will most likely have key information, and perhaps their own bit of guidance, so make sure you consult with them prior to getting too far along.

One factor to keep in mind is people continuity in this fast moving, unpredictable Air Force. You cannot always count on your key leaders and planners being on the scene when the crisis occurs, so you need back-ups and you must ensure *everyone* understands your expectations. In February 2003, my squadron received a five-day notice to deploy 12 F-15Cs and 200+ personnel. My Operations Officer (DO) was away at the squadron commander course; one Assistant Operations Officer (ADO) had a wife about to deliver a baby with potential complications, and another ADO had just PCA'd to a critical job in the wing. Just about all of my chief planners and leaders were unavailable at a time when I needed them most. No surprise to me however, my flight commanders, junior officers and NCOs stepped up to the task at hand and took us successfully to our deployment location and first mission.

Information Gathering

Provide your commander intent to your planning teams; then, charge them with becoming experts in each of their assigned areas. As subject matter experts, they will be the go to folks for whatever issue needs to be solved. Your teams should review your current capabilities, your training plans, your current resources, and potential missions to name just a few of the important areas. Lt Col Bryan Gallagher, who commanded a civil engineering squadron, is a strong believer in the importance of learning everything you can about what you are going to do. He sought information from all sources, including doctrine, plans, reports, lessons learned and folks

that had performed the mission previously, to name just a few. He expected each of his planners and leaders to do the same.¹²

Vision Creation

Vision creation is building a picture of what the end state should look like and determining the tasks and resources that are needed to get there. Stephen Covey says, ““Begin with the end in mind” is based on the principle that *all things are created twice*. There’s a mental or first creation, and a physical or second creation to all things.”¹³ In the case of a crisis action deployment tasking, the creation should be your vision of perfect mobilization, deployment, and employment phases. Even if you cannot predict the exact tasking you may receive, you should be able to create a picture based on your standard UTCs and your best guess (or your planning team’s best guess) of likely options.

Conduct research and don’t solely rely on your own past experiences. A few commanders interviewed found themselves executing missions in combat they had not expected or practiced to much extent. This was not out of negligence; it was simply due to the fact that the missions were not a previously stated priority or tasking for training, or they were missions that arose from new weapons systems or demands from component commanders. Other commanders planned for the obvious, but missed underlying issues. During the battle of Najaf in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, Maj Gen David H. Petraeus, commander of the 101st Airborne Division, reflected on the enemy he was engaging: “I should have thought about this earlier, but the people who have control of these towns, the Baath Party officials, have a bigger stake in this than the Republican Guard. The ones who are really fighting are those who have the most to lose, the local power brokers who are losing their cars, their headquarters, their houses, everything. In

hindsight, we should have anticipated this. It's the local power brokers we're going to have to root out.”¹⁴

Vision creation can be more about asking questions than about dictating your best prophecies. You must ask questions of yourself and of your planning teams. In addition, you must teach your teams how to ask the right questions. Questions can prepare you for the unknown. For those units that successfully executed unanticipated missions in OAF, OEF and OIF, maintaining an attitude and environment of continuous questioning and flexible training and leadership allowed them to succeed. A good question to always ask throughout the process is: Are our training and resources adequate for the future? Be proactive and visualize your future war.

Task Assignment and Plan Creation

In order to assign tasks, once again, you must keep in mind your vision of what the final product will look like. Your actual written plan format can look any way you want it to look; its purpose is to serve you in the process of building it, exercising it, and executing it in an actual crisis situation. I suggest simply building a binder that can be easily utilized and updated and that contains all your desired pieces. Another idea is to build the plan and store it on the unit's shared drive or web page. Items to consider for the plan are your unit's standard UTCs, DRMDs with actual names attached to positions, equipment pack up checklists, a list of POCs with phone numbers (wing plans, Command Post, IDO, wing battle staff, other squadron commanders, etc.), generic briefing slides, crisis action checklists, and short concept of ops for a variety of situations and contingencies with generic time lines. Additional details of what the plan should contain are provided in the following paragraphs.¹⁵

Leadership. Every plan should identify who the leaders are. Who will lead the deployment? Who will stay behind as the acting commander, under G Series orders? Who will supervise each aspect of the mobilization and generation? What will the leadership structure look like at the deployed location? At what level will decisions be made? What are the expectations of the leaders, in the unit and above the unit? This may seem like a list of things you can figure out when the time comes, but they are issues that can bite you hard if you do not think them through ahead of time.

Make an effort to share your leadership with lower subordinates. Nurture your deputies, and give them authority to make decisions. Include your deputies in all important meetings and decisions.¹⁶ Make sure everyone knows that your deputies speak for you. If you are not around when crisis action occurs, your other unit leaders must be able to respond and lead effectively in your absence.

One squadron commander that I spoke with related a situation in which he found himself while preparing to deploy his unit to multiple locations in support of OIF. Just prior to deployment, one of his key and talented leaders left the unit for another assignment. That left him with little to fall back on since he needed leadership at a couple of deployed sites and someone to lead the home station portion of the unit. A few weeks into the deployment, he ascertained that his stay behind acting commander was not working out, so he had to remove him from that position, dealing with the situation at long distance, while trying to fight a war. Lessons that this commander reaffirmed for himself included: 1) ensure the right person is picked for the key responsibilities; 2) expect that your folks will make mistakes, but if the situation dictates, make the tough call and remove a detrimental performer from the job; 3) you must provide leadership training for your potential stay-at-home acting commanders, and 4)

make sure all of your subordinate leaders understand what your standards and expectations are and that you will give them an honest assessment and feedback.

Chain of Command. Just as it is important to know who the leaders will be at each location, it is important to understand who reports to whom. Col Tod Wolters deployed to Tabuk AB, Saudi Arabia and commanded the 485th AEW during OIF. He stressed the need for a command and control diagram for every deployment area, including transition areas (stop-over bases, for example). He also advocated creating a command post or UCC function at each location.¹⁷ Again, you may think that this is something you can think about when the time comes to deploy, but just having thought this out ahead of time will make that critical task much easier and straight-forward when your time is limited. You will also be able to transmit your expectations to your folks sooner, which will enable them to respond more effectively.

Responsibility. This includes the roles and responsibilities of each member of the unit during the execution of the crisis action deployment and operations at the deployed location. The majority of the responsibilities of your folks will fall within the functional lines of their day-to-day duties, but crisis action is a 24/7 operation, and folks will have to transition immediately to a crisis action schedule, or a new *battle rhythm*, while trying to get last minute stuff done at home and say goodbye to their families or boy/girl friends. In addition, deployment time lines are strict, so you must ensure that required actions are completed on time and that people are where they are supposed to be at the right time.

This area provides a great opportunity for your planning teams to study requirements, brainstorm contingencies, define responsibilities that will be exercised later, and ensure that it is possible to get the right people to the right place at the right time. When discussing responsibilities, it is important to have other key players involved like the IDO, personnel

officers, maintenance officer if a flying squadron, second line support representatives, and others who are key to a deployment action. The IDO and personnel officers can provide your planning teams a clear picture of deployment timeline requirements and expectations.

Individual responsibilities should be included here also. Every individual should know his or her UTC position and AEF deployment requirements. Individual responsibilities include training completion, mobility requirements up-to-date, knowledge of the recall system and individual clothing and equipment packing. Ideas for how to internalize individual responsibilities are presented in the sections on “Training and Prepping the Troops” and “Exercising the Plan.”

Logistics. Somewhere along the way, I picked up the following quote by Alexander the Great: “My logisticians are a humorless lot...they know if my campaign fails, they are the first ones I will slay.” Logistics should be viewed from a broad perspective, or as a spectrum that proceeds from potential deployment locations, to items your squadron will take with you, to movement of pallets to the float yard, to myriad rules and regulations, to infrastructure and resources you will inherit at your deployed location. This is the area that requires the most research, thought and attention to detail. If you don’t get it right, you will find yourself unable to accomplish the mission, or at best, in a very degraded position, causing your troops extra effort and trepidation.

I could fill this book on stories of logistics alone. Once, there was the time that we had to leave two jets in Saudi Arabia an extra few days for lack of a tester that was inadvertently packed in our sister squadron’s pallets that left a week prior. On a larger scale are the cases where flying units arrived at their deployed location days or weeks ahead of their maintenance support equipment. Planning and attention to detail are critical, and you should not assume anything.

Your unit movement will be part of an immense worldwide effort that includes intense diplomatic negotiations, constant flexing of plans and strained movement resources.

When your unit planners start looking at logistics, their tendency will be to focus on the areas that they are familiar with and those that affect their piece of the mission. You will also be tempted to get into the weeds by providing pieces of data from your experiences. Although you certainly have valuable input, you must use your leadership presence to provide the bigger picture and to coach your teams. Make sure they are asking the right questions. Communicate your vision, set the environment and provide them your expectations, then let your teams go. If done correctly, they will exceed your expectations and think of things you never would have.

When considering what to bring, go for the worst case scenario—that you will be operating out of a bare base for an undetermined length of time. It is easier to scale back in the short-term crisis situation than it is to add stuff late in the game. You should reference the Base Support Plan if you know which base you will deploy to, and better yet, you should have your folks make contact with their counterparts at the deployed location and bring that information to the table. Direct them to obtain lessons learned from previous unit deployments, wing archives, and AEF Center sources. Have each of the sections or shops create packing lists, and discipline them to know how much pallet space they require. Normally, you will be able to pack morale items, so research what is allowed, how much space is available and include that in your planning.

Once again, you're most valuable player here is the IDO. The IDO has the base line of what is supposed to go, when it will go, and how it will go. No planning or action should be undertaken without consultation with the IDO.

Communication. Without communication throughout the planning process, there can be no plan. You must communicate your vision for the plan. Your planning teams must have a way to

provide feedback to you and to ask questions. The plan must be communicated to everyone in the unit. Finally, there must be communication with outside agencies and key players.

Contingencies. Here is where brain storming really comes into play, and this is where you and your teams start becoming wise and sophisticated in this process. You do not need to include every possible contingency in the plan. The idea is to exercise the thought process to help you see more clearly what you should be preparing for. It is also the fun part, with the potential for raucous debates, off line discussions, etc. Again, referring to lesson learned data bases can help.

Questions should drive the process. What are the frictions points? Many units deploying to OIF discovered that a huge friction point was the inability for the one or two seamstresses in the local area to sew rank and names on hundreds of desert camouflage uniforms in the short amount of time required. How do we handle deployments to multiple locations? Seek knowledge from those who have previous experience, but don't let them completely drive the process. Questions should continue throughout.

Constantly "what if..." the plan and the planning. Don Shula says, "The key to being adaptable is to be well prepared in the first place. "Audibles" are well thought out and choreographed ahead of time."¹⁸ With every aspect well thought out, your team will learn to anticipate friction before it even occurs, and they will learn to respond to problems with real-time solutions. Smooth deployments are always the result of proactive leadership, not blind luck.

Communicate the Plan. You need to make sure everyone in the unit understands what the plan is all about. A good way to start is to send the plan around the unit for review and comment. Talk about the plan during a commander's call and in unit newsletters. Just like everything else, you will find that if it is important to you, it will be important to your troops.

Follow-up. Every task requires follow-up. You will need some way to ensure that tasks are being accomplished and your expectations are being met during the plan creation. If you neglect the follow-up, there is potential that the task will lose importance in the minds of your folks. Once the plan is complete, you will want to keep it alive through periodic reviews and exercises. In the section on “Exercising the Plan,” I provide ideas on how to review the plan, while conducting simple exercises.

Planning Laundry List

The following provides areas for thought. Again, “plan” doesn’t necessarily mean a big formal document; it is whatever you need to make it all work. The list is not all inclusive, as every type of squadron has different requirements.

Unit Task Codes (UTCs). You should first gain intimate knowledge on the UTCs you are responsible for and those that may be attached to you should you deploy. Talk to your wing plans folks, your IDO, and your unit deployment manager. This knowledge is important both for planning and for accurate ART and SORTS reporting.

Deployment Guide. Many units develop a deployment guide that they use as a tool to help them in both deliberate and crisis action. Col Bill MacLure commanded the 493 FS at RAF Lakenheath and deployed to support Operation ALLIED FORCE. He had his folks build a squadron deployment guide that went into great detail on how to deploy—from what needed to be packed from each work center, to how to accomplish the aircraft generation, to where everything will be set up on the ground at the deployed location. One of his main goals for the guide was to maintain a continuity of knowledge that tends to disappear due to turnover of personnel.¹⁹

Family Plan. Every deployment plan should include a family plan. (This plan is separate from the Family Care Plan that is required by Air Force regulations.) A family plan is your plan for taking care of the families of your deployed members—keeping them informed, satisfying ordinary or extraordinary needs, ensuring they are well cared for, providing for family contingencies. The plan should include a ready list of deployable members of the squadron, on which you will be able to annotate where the family members will be while the member is deployed. Many families will depart the area while the deployed member is away. While the unit is deployed, your stay behind team will use this list to contact family members periodically. The plan can also include ways to keep the families involved in unit activities while their spouse is deployed, as Lt Col Gandy’s did when his Operations Support Squadron deployed to OIF. His stay behind team still planned and held their annual children’s Easter party for all of the families.²⁰

You should be aware of the multiple Air Force agencies that have support programs for families of deployed members. Information on these agencies should be briefed at your family deployment briefings. My project officer for an Operation Southern Watch deployment created a squadron specific Family Deployment Guide, which included a letter from myself and my wife, a pre-deployment checklist, contact phone numbers of the stay behind chain of command, and an incredible menu of additional information and available resources. You may even wish to conduct a family deployment briefing solely for the purposes of educating your families on the possibilities of a short-notice deployment and to inform them on measures they can take to always be prepared.

In a crisis action deployment situation, time may be too limited for you to personally meet with and brief the families prior to departure. The key is to have a plan in place ahead of time

for your stay behind team to execute. The biggest issue to deal with in a crisis situation is the lack of complete information that you can provide to family members. Lt Col Lawhead, who took his F-16CJ squadron to a bare base in the Gulf Region to support OEF worked through that issue in the following way:

My greatest focus pre-deployment was on prepping the families for the unknown length and nature of the deployment. My First Shirt did a great job preparing the troops and their families for the unknowns. Going to a bare base was a lot like deploying for Desert Storm. There was not a lot of communication capability at the deployed location, and we made this aware to the families ahead of time. Families knew they weren't going to hear a lot from their loved ones initially. We made sure they were aware when each load of folks arrived to the deployed location, and that everyone was fine. We also stressed to the folks to make sure they used whatever means possible to keep their loved ones informed. During the deployment, my DO, who stayed behind, did a great job keeping everyone aware of what was going on.

We also developed a good system for spouse briefings, which we updated as the deployment departure date slipped to the right. My First Shirt also created cards for spouses, which contained contact phone numbers of the at home chain of command.²¹

While creating your family plan, you should spend as much effort on the details as you would with any operational plan. You need to consider your environment, the demographics of your squadron and potential deployment situations. Lt Col John Robinson was the DO of a B-52 squadron that deployed in support of OEF. The squadron members' spouses were not familiar with extended deployments. Prior to 9-11, a long deployment for their squadron was two weeks, and therefore, squadron leadership faced many challenges with the families as they prepared to go out the door eight days after the World Trade Center attacks. They used techniques that are familiar to most deploying units—they created a contact list and provided as much information as they could in order to ease concerns. They also utilized an established spouse network, knowing that info travels well when it's by word of mouth—he advised that you must ensure it's

your words that travel, however. As every commander related, he believes that a good First Shirt is a must to deal well with family issues.²²

Lt Col Don Bacon related the following regarding his family plan.

When the 41st Electronic Combat Squadron was tasked to deploy for OEF and OIF in November 2002, an important part of our focus was how we could best take care of the families. I've learned from past deployments that if the "family support" fails, then the mission, cohesion and morale of the squadron will not only be seriously undermined during the deployment, but that the squadron will suffer those negative impacts for many months—if not longer—after "the war" is over. Consequently, we organized a team that built and executed a family support plan—and the plan they implemented was the best I've ever seen. What did the squadron do? The first action we took was a meeting with all the deploying members and their families where we explained as much as we could about the deployment. We also brought in a variety of support agencies from the base to explain what services were available. This also gave our first shirt, our group commander and me a chance to communicate with the families on what they could expect during the separation. We also tried our best to accommodate the spouses on the day of the deployment so they could say their goodbyes and see the EC-130s depart for the Middle East. During the deployment, the squadron provided a monthly newsletter to the spouses and we called each spouse every other week to check in on them. One of the most novel things we did was to start a deployed website where we were able to put in pictures and short articles on how we were doing in Qatar and we updated the website about every 2 or 3 days with new pictures. We received great feedback on the website and I learned later that some of the pictures were being accessed by various offices in the Pentagon to build their briefings on OIF. The only negative feedback we received was that at times it looked like we were having too much fun... so, we threw in more "work" pictures in addition to the beer and volleyball happy-snaps. We were also conscientious about OPSEC as some of the base information had to be close-hold. In addition to the website, I also wrote letters to the parents of single airmen, junior NCOs and CGOs. I found parents really enjoyed hearing from the commander about their son or daughter and how their child was doing a great job for America. The spouses group also met every month and we would sometimes use that opportunity to give the spouses a briefing on the deployment. We also made sure that every person at the deployed location had access to a computer with their own email address so that they could send regular messages home. When we first arrived at our base in Qatar, we were told that only key personnel would get email addresses... I think we led the way in getting this changed so that everyone had this capability to stay in touch. In short, we made the "family support" plan an integral part of our overall deployment plan—success or failure here would significantly impact the squadron during and long after the deployment.²³

Just like every other part of your planning, it is important to have the right people for the job. Lt Col James Dennis was very fortunate in this regard.

The families were critical in mission accomplishment. The only way the troops could devote 100% of their effort to the mission was to have the peace of mind that their families were being taken care of. I relied heavily on my wife for support. She had incredible ideas about what we needed to do for the families. She would arrange meetings with the spouses, encourage participation, and energize all wing assets available to help in pre-deployment briefings and preparation. She didn't wait for guidance from the wing. Above all, my wife had this attitude well before September 11th, 2001. The spouses were a tight knit group and had always supported each other. Every spouse felt like they were part of the family. From day one she had always felt that it was important for the families to know one another in the event that a deployment may happen. Her insight paid huge dividends in what turned out to be a very demanding two years.²⁴

Media Plan. You should have a plan for the media, both for good events and for tragic events, and both for home station and at the deployed location. Solicit inputs and guidance from Public Affairs and from your immediate commander. The guidance will probably be different at each location, home station and deployed.

Decision Plan. In transmitting your expectations, outline those decisions you want kept at your level, and those that should be executed at lower levels. During the planning phase, you have the time and freedom to keep more decisions at your level. Once you receive the call for a short-notice deployment, you should not bind your unit by requiring too many decisions to be made by yourself.

Hands-off leadership and empowerment is good, but your folks need to understand your expectations in order to effectively act under that style. This is another example of the importance of knowing your people. Some of your folks will boldly act on their own, and some will be more timid, possibly doing nothing because they expect you to give the go ahead. The planning and preparation time (pre-crisis phase) is the time to learn about your folks and the time

for your folks to learn about you. Understanding of each other and of expectations will help immeasurably during a crisis situation.

Communication Plan. Leaders must be seen and heard. Your communication plan should outline the processes you will use to keep everyone informed during every phase of the crisis action. Considerations include, use of the Unit Control Center (UCC), how to handle geographically separated units, handling of classified information, OPSEC and COMSEC, equipment availability (both home station and deployable), keeping the chain of command informed, etc.

Command and Control Plan. In most deployments, a few or several UTCs come together to form the deployed squadron or deploy together to provide support at the deployed location. Your planning should consider command and control of all units deploying for each of the phases. What are the command and control arrangements during the mobilization phase? During the deployment phase? At the transition points (stop over points, interim deployed locations, etc.)? At the actual deployed location? Who is in charge and who reports to whom? What communication mechanisms are available to communicate with higher headquarters? During the last couple of operations, several units operated at one location for awhile, and then moved to another location, each having different command and control regimes and different logistical environments. Even if you cannot answer each of those questions and others during the planning phase, just having knowledge of the questions will help you and your leadership to make key decisions when time is limited.

Prepping and Training the Troops

Do not make a habit of reliance on winging it as a primary strategy. It is a recipe for disaster.

- Mark Friedman, M.D.
Everyday Crisis Management

If you are going to achieve excellence in big things, you develop the habit in little matters. Excellence is not an exception, it is a prevailing attitude. My conviction—that you go in to win—was shaped in small encounters...

- Colin Powell
My American Journey

This section of the pre-crisis phase focuses on two areas: preparation and training. Proper preparation and training are important elements to effective exercising. You should ensure that all required resources are in place (preparation), and you should teach (training) your Airmen what they need to know to perform well. If you begin exercising before doing those two things, you will probably find yourself with some increasingly frustrated folks.

Your preparation and training should be grounded in your mission statement or credo and in your unit's vision. If you keep each those things tied together, it will be easier for you to overcome the inertia that keeps people from performing at their best. To be proactive instead of reactive, they must internalize the “who are we?”, the “what are we about?”, the “where are we going?”, and the “why are we doing this?” If they are secure in those concepts, it is simpler to give them the how and when. If you coach your folks to be guided by your unit's credo philosophy and you have provided the example and environment for integrity and trust, they will naturally make the decisions and take the actions that pass the “right choice” test.²⁵

Preparation

Preparation is both physical and mental. Readily apparent is a world-class athlete's dedicated physical training program in preparation for competition. Not so readily apparent, is the athlete's mental preparation. In the athlete's mind, he or she will rehearse every aspect of the event, visualizing the execution and successful winning conclusion. A fighter pilot does the same thing. For example, he or she will have mentally "flown" an entire Basic Fighter Maneuvers engagement many times prior to getting into the jet to practice for real. Likewise, you and your planning teams should visualize the execution of the plan along with possible contingencies. Allow yourself and others to formulate questions. What shortfalls do you see? What additional skills do you need to teach your troops? What outside help do you need? Have all the pieces been communicated adequately? Table top exercises with your key leaders and planners can help you fill in the blanks and discover new areas for work.²⁶

Your planning teams should review the unit and individual equipment requirements and availability. At your base there are probably known shortages of certain types of equipment. You must identify those shortages and formulate a plan for acquisition or raise the issues up the reporting chain. A recent example is the shortage of chemical warfare masks—if your unit is called to deploy, you should at least know who on your base to call for problem resolution. Your planning teams should try to identify all shortfalls and highlight them to you with potential solutions.

Training

The Air Force has a very specific list of training requirements that must be completed by every individual to be deployment eligible. It is your responsibility as commander to ensure that those requirements are complete. One of the first actions you should take as a new commander

is to review the mechanisms that exist to track those training requirements and give you a detailed accounting of unit readiness. You do not want to be the squadron commander that has to bring his or her folks in “last minute” to rectify training shortfalls.

It is up to you and your planning teams to identify other required training. That is, training that you and the leaders in your squadron feel is important to ensuring all of your folks are physically and mentally prepared to mobilize, deploy and perform the mission in an austere and potentially hostile environment. They will most likely have to do things they have never done before—how many 18 year olds have lived for months on end in a tent in the desert? For example, you cannot simply tell your 18 year old Airman to bring their mobility bag to work and expect it to be correctly packed. The Airman should be trained first—he or she needs to know how to do it and what your expectations for success are.

Each individual should know and understand that it is their responsibility to be ready at the standard *you* have set. A good starting point is with the packed mobility bag because an attitude that demands perfection in the packed bag is one that naturally extends to readiness in larger areas. TSgt Travis Turner of the AEF Center related a story about a unit he encountered while conducting an Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI). He found that everyone in that unit had packed their uniforms into ziplock bags for the inspection—he felt that showed true initiative and serious readiness. Another time, a unit was tasked to board an aircraft as part of their ORI; little did they know that the aircraft would actually take off and fly a mission. Many of the personnel had not brought jackets and thus experienced a cold flight without proper protection.²⁷

A good methodology is to make people accountable to each other—they will have to support each other while deployed, so they should learn how to do that now. Everyone should be paired up, and no one should be left on their own—establish a buddy system.

Once you identify the training your unit needs (the what), you should determine who will conduct the training (don't forget to check the availability of external trainers and experts), when the training will occur, where the training will occur, and how the training will occur. Much of your training can be accomplished through briefings or informal discussions led by unit supervisors. Whenever we prepared to deploy jets on ocean-crossing missions, the flight commanders would conduct informal discussions on how to do such a thing. Obviously, the pilots knew how to fly their airplane from point A to point B and how to conduct mid-air refueling, but the newer folks had never flown a 10 hour sortie in a fighter, wearing an anti-exposure suit, and taking off at 0200, among other trepidations. A simple informal talk led by the "old heads" did much to build confidence and lessen the chance for unexpected contingencies.

Once you equip and train your folks, giving them some sense of knowledge, skill, and confidence, you will be able to more effectively exercise and evaluate them, thus instilling even more confidence. According to Mark Friedman, "Training pays off in situations where we don't have the time to stop and think about the best course of action or where the best action may be obscure, require technical skills, or has been proven by previous experience. The time for training is in the pre-crisis period. There is often no time to train during a crisis. Train for the predicted crisis. Train for the generic crisis. Practice, practice, practice."²⁸

Another area for training is that of your subordinate leaders. It is your job to train your DO or deputy. He or she may be the person that leads the deployment in your absence. You and your deputy should focus efforts to also train each of your subordinate leaders in their duties and responsibilities as leaders.

Exercising the Plan

What has produced winning football teams for us over the years has been our willingness to create practice systems and procedures that are aligned with our vision of perfection: we want to win them all. Everything I do is to prepare people to perform the best of their ability. And you do that one day at a time.

- Don Shula
Former Head Coach, Miami Dolphins

They respect a leader who holds them to a high standard and pushes them to the limit, as long as they can see a worthwhile objective. American soldiers will gripe constantly about being driven to high performance. They will swear they would rather serve somewhere easier. But at the end of the day they always ask: "How'd we do?"

- Colin Powell
My American Journey

On a unit training day or flying squadron weather down day, call in your key folks, tell them: "Exercise, exercise, exercise, I have just been informed that we may be deploying to Base X in 3-5 days. I have to brief the wing commander in two hours. Let's look at the plan. Then, go over the plan with your folks, and have someone take notes on questions, unsolved issues, things that need updating, newly discovered shortfalls, etc.

Design a menu of "hip pocket" exercises that you can conduct whenever you have the opportunity. Additional examples follow.

Call in your unit mobility manager, provide a generic deployment scenario, and have him or her talk you through your standing UTCs and DRMDs. Conduct a table top discussion on the entire process from reception of a Prepare to Deploy Order and your tasked UTCs and DRMDs to returning a completed DRMD to the IDO for transmission to the AEF Center.

Conduct a unit mobility packing day. Pack selected increments and have Logistics Readiness Squadron inspectors check them for deployability. Your objectives should be:

- Review what each shop needs to bring
- Determine the packing footprint
- Practice packing and pallet building
- Review your documentation and security procedures

Practice unit recalls and “bag drags.” Lt Col Bryan Gallagher commanded a civil engineering squadron and took his squadron to Oman to support OEF and OIF. During his practice recalls, he would direct everyone to show up with their bags fully packed. This was an outstanding exercise for his young troops who had never deployed. He had each of the bags inspected in the various squadron sections by supervisors directly in their chain of command. His policy was that they would keep doing recalls until everyone in the section “got it right.” In that way, he utilized a bit of competition between the sections. He also brought PDF folks into the squadron, which enabled his troops to see the process, while providing one-stop shopping to clear or highlight any discrepancies, such as immunizations. His philosophy was: train to task, not to time, so he would take as much time as necessary to ensure everyone was knowledgeable and proficient.²⁹

Focus a unit training day on mobility. Lt Col Gallagher provided challenging and fun training experiences for his civil engineering squadron on their unit training days. He had them practice items on the unit’s mission essential task list. He also cross trained personnel in some basic skills, such as driving trucks and pulling hoses off fire trucks, to provide task redundancy where he was able. Since his unit had to train to provide their own force protection, he ensured that training was robust. He designed challenging events that put people into situations they may

not expect. He kept the training interesting through activities like playing volleyball and paintball in full CCW.³⁰

Notes

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² Ambassador Lang, U.S. State Department, lecture at the Senior Seminar, U.S. State Department Foreign Service Institute, 6 October 2003.

³ Rudolph W. Giuliani with Ken Kurson, *Leadership* (New York, NY: Hyperion, 2002), 51-52.

⁴ Mark Friedman, M.D., *Everyday Crisis Management* (Naperville, IL: First Decision Press, 2002), 23

⁵ Ibid, 30.

⁶ Ibid, 209-213.

⁷ Albert E.N. Gray, "The Common Denominator of Success," reprinted June 1992, n.p., on-line, Internet, 13 March 2004, <http://bssok.8m.com/success/cdsuccess.html>

⁸ Lt Col James Dennis, USAF, interviewed by author, February 2004.

⁹ Lt Col Donald Bacon, USAF, interviewed by author, February 2004.

¹⁰ Col Tod Wolters, USAF, interviewed by author, February 2004.

¹¹ Perry M. Smith, *Rules and Tools for Leaders* (New York, NY: The Berkley Publishing Group, 2002), 9.

¹² Lt Col Bryan Gallagher, USAF, interviewed by author, February 2004.

¹³ Stephen R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 99.

¹⁴ Rick Atkinson, "Shifting Sands and Shifting Plans," *The Washington Post*, 8 March 2004. This news article was adapted from *In the Company of Soldiers: A Chronicle of Combat*, by Rick Atkinson.

¹⁵ Friedman, 31. His concepts for a crisis plan utilized as a framework for this discussion.

¹⁶ Smith, 270.

¹⁷ Wolters interview.

¹⁸ Don Shula and Ken Blanchard, *Everyone's A Coach* (New York, NY: Harper Business, 1995), 105.

¹⁹ Col Bill MacLure, USAF, interviewed by author, February 2004.

²⁰ Lt Col Jerry Gandy, USAF, interviewed by author, February 2004.

²¹ Lt Col Thomas Lawhead, USAF, interviewed by author, January 2004.

²² Lt Col John Robinson, USAF, interviewed by author, February 2004.

²³ Bacon interview.

²⁴ Dennis interview.

²⁵ Friedman, 142-143.

²⁶ Ibid, 51-55.

²⁷ TSgt Travis Turner, USAF, interviewed by author, February 2004.

²⁸ Friedman, 58, 64.

²⁹ Gallagher interview.

Notes

³⁰ Gallagher interview.

Chapter 3

Crisis Response Phase

There is always room to improve combat techniques and when you stop trying to learn ways to do it better, you are asking for trouble.

—Jack Broughton
Thud Ridge

Crisis action response is the focus of wing Phase One exercises and evaluations. These exercises normally begin with a warning order, a general wing recall, and a wing battle staff meeting. The squadrons tasked to “mobilize and deploy” normally must execute their DOC deployment time line and tasks. It is a system that works well and that includes all of the planning, preparation, and training mechanisms that yield success. The objective of this chapter is to go beyond the planning, preparation, training, and exercising that comprises the general nature of wing Phase One exercises. It is to provide experiential components and lessons that you will need to handle AEF crisis action. As in previous chapters, the purpose of this chapter is to stimulate introspective and deep thinking and to discuss crisis response actions that may not be generic to a Phase One exercise. If taken as it is meant to be, it should help you to prepare for any real AEF crisis action deployment and most certainly for your next Phase One exercise.

This chapter is not designed to be a cookbook or checklist, but rather a think piece. Contained here are key areas to think about and resolve through planning. Hopefully, it will help you to visualize what the desired end state should look like, i.e. your picture of a perfect mobilization and deployment with you and your unit focused and ready on executing the mission

in any environment. It should also help you and your unit to respond to any situation that may occur during the crisis action phase.

The example of Rudolph Giuliani's motivations for preparation was provided in Chapter Two. What is better known publicly is his handling of the World Trade Center crisis on 9-11-2001. On that day he became a champion leader to millions. "There were five critical actions Giuliani took to become the champion to lead New York from the crisis. He:

- Provided an unwavering presence
- Became a great communicator
- Exercised the power of his position
- Was a cheerleader
- Wore many hats"¹

AEF crisis action should not be a traumatic experience, but your Airmen will still need a champion to follow and to rally around. They will need to see you, to hear from you, and at times, to be encouraged by you. According to Frances Hesselbein, editor-in-chief of *Leader to Leader*, "Crisis management is a test of the quality and character of leaders as much as it is a test of their skill and expertise. Organizations that cope well with crises have put their houses in order; they know what their values are and have a well-articulated mission that permeates the organization. They know what they stand for. *Even in a crisis, leadership is a matter of how to be, not how to do it.* (emphasis added)"² As you go through this chapter, consider how you will empower and encourage your leaders to do the same.

Notification

Awareness of an impending AEF deployment may occur in many ways. If you are in, or approaching, your AEF vulnerability window and the world situation is such that the Air Force

may be called upon, then you may be a near-future player. If it looks like the forces required for an impending conflict may dictate “surge” operations, then you should be aware of where your unit and your UTCs are in the AEF line up and then step up your readiness posture if necessary. Clearer methods of notification include a “head’s up” call from your MAJCOM or a call from your wing commander, who has already received a warning from higher. It may be a formal Warning Order or Prepare to Deploy Order. Regardless, you should never assume anything.

The following is from Air Force Doctrine Document 2:

Crisis action procedures are used in time-sensitive situations to plan for military action. Here, the situation is dynamic, and time for planning may be limited to a matter of days. An adequate and appropriate military response in a crisis demands flexible procedures keyed to the time available, rapid and effective communications, and use of previous planning and detailed databases and region analyses whenever possible.³

When Col Bill MacLure deployed his F-15C squadron in support of Operation ALLIED FORCE, the AEF concept was new, and his unit was not part of a scheduled AEF.

In October 1998, we (493 FS) deployed for the first time to Cervia, AB, Italy. We had never heard of Cervia and had to reference a map to figure out where it was. F-15s had never deployed there previously. One of the first things that happens as rumors of an impending deployment start, is the pressure to stop flying training and begin generating the jets from a training to a combat configuration. It’s never as simple as the wing receiving a deployment order directing it to generate it’s aircraft and deploy to X location. It seems to be more of a guessing game based on the strategic situation as it is playing out. I believe for both times we deployed, in October 1998 and again in February 1999, the wing did not receive an official deployment order until after we had already begun the aircraft generation.⁴

Lt Col James Dennis had no outside indication that his F-15E squadron (335th FS) would deploy for OIF. His squadron’s task at the time was to help the other F-15E squadron in the wing generate and deploy. Then, everything changed, and he was notified that his squadron would be going also, and they would depart in four days. Fortunately, he had assumed nothing

(ref Giuliani quote in Ch 2) and had been preparing for possible deployment all along. He was a seasoned commander that had previously deployed for OEF with only two weeks notice.

Don't wait for the call. A commander and his squadron must be prepared to deploy at all times, both physically and mentally. You may not get the call right away, or you may not be the first squadron identified to deploy, but you must always have the squadron ready. This includes the families. Your mobility shop becomes absolutely vital in this process. Don't wait for an event to happen before you get serious about the possibility of deploying. Readiness is essential.

There is often an "us versus them" mentality between squadrons. Nothing can be more distracting or disruptive. If you are the one identified to deploy, then solicit the help of the other squadrons. If you are the one not identified to deploy, then offer assistance without asking. Learn from problems that occurred from previous squadron deployments and implement procedures to correct those problems—it will make your deployment go much smoother. Remember, it's a team effort and if you are not a part of the team, then you are providing a disservice to everyone involved.

Four days notice is barely enough time, even for a squadron that has looked ahead in anticipation of a potential deployment. The 335th was not identified on any deployment order prior to its deployment to OIF. The squadron was engaged in getting the 336th packed up and generated since they were the squadron identified to deploy. After the 336th was out the door, we started concentrating on making sure that all mobility requirements were met in the squadron. Points of contact were established within wing agencies in the event we needed to schedule pre-deployment briefings, and medical records were reviewed one final time. Each of the squadron shops reviewed their deployment equipment requirements. Each shop was required to identify what items needed to be packed, and they worked closely with mobility to establish a packing list to identify any short comings in pallets or Cadillac bins. Pallets and bins were moved into position at the first hint of a prepare to deploy order, and equipment that could be packed early was ready to be loaded into the bins. As luck would have it, the squadron received its deployment order on a Saturday morning with a deployment date of Tuesday. The squadron was recalled and was packed and ready to go within 24 hours. All necessary briefings and medical requirements, which were identified earlier, were scheduled for Sunday. That left Monday for the aircrew and support personnel to spend with their families.⁵

On the morning of 9-11-2001, I was at my desk at Mountain Home AFB, going through email and preparing for the normal Tuesday meeting day, when one of my IOCs came into the office and informed me that an aircraft had just struck the World Trade Center. Just like every

other Air Force wing with fighting capability, the 366th Wing set into motion an air defense alert posture, reporting to the North American Air Defense Command (through the Northeast Air Defense Sector). In addition, since we were the on call Air Expeditionary Wing at that time, we began generating aircraft for a potential AEF deployment. In that particular case, we prepared to deploy without official notification because we were the on call wing. You just never know what's going to happen on any given day.

Taking Care of Yourself

In the limited time available between AEF crisis action deployment notification and the first tasked combat mission or combat support mission, your responsibilities are many. In the case of the flying squadron commander, they include: direct the mobilization, monitor the aircraft generation and equipment packing/movement, prepare to move aircraft, people and equipment great distances to potentially unknown operating bases, prepare your warriors and their families for combat and family separation, and prepare yourself to lead the deployment flight and first combat mission. That is all best case—at some point early on, you may determine that doing all of those things is not possible. Obviously, once again, prior preparation is the key, and that includes having key folks ready to perform their piece of the orchestra. Penny Horgan of the National Security Agency, and a U. S. State Department Senior Seminar course mate has a great list of guiding principles that she used in the immediate aftermath of 9-11. This is what she advocates for the leader in a crisis situation:

- Make a plan early on, implement it, and stick with it, even if it is initially painful
- Make sure everyone knows their role in the plan
- Keep lanes in the road clear to avoid duplication
- Treat people fairly and listen to their fears and concerns
- Be more visible—the force needs to see their leader
- Stress can provoke aberrant behavior, so watch for it
- The little stuff will get you even when you don't see it coming...roll with it

- When you think it can't get any worse, it will, so learn to stop, think and breathe
- You are not the font of all knowledge and wisdom—seek help when you need it and try to be inclusive
- Everyone has leadership qualities—identify those qualities and nurture them
- Communicate, Communicate, communicate—if you don't get out the truth, something less healthy will leak.⁶

Leadership and Chain of Command

Leadership and Chain of Command are keys everywhere and at every time throughout a crisis situation. Who's calling the shots? What are the lines of coordination? How do you get what you need? Who has the key information that you need? What information do your bosses have? What information do your bosses want to know, and how often do they want to be informed? What are your boss's expectations? Who is authorized to make the decisions? Who can make decisions in your unit? If you are commanding a flying squadron, how will the maintenance personnel fit into the deployed organization—you may not know until you get to your deployed operating base. If your squadron will come together with elements (UTCs) of other units, how will you establish your operating chain of command, and integrate them into your game plan?

Your bosses. You can have the greatest plan going for your unit, but if it doesn't fit into the wing plan, or take in account other units on the base and all of the support agencies, it will be rife with short comings. First, are you tapped into your boss's leadership style, and what is the established level of trust? Almost everything you do must be supported by your wing, and will have an impact on the wing in one degree or another. If you have a good plan, and are able to communicate that plan effectively to your bosses (preparation), it will be much easier to keep the level of trust you need to work effectively. Expect that the wing commander will give his or her

commander's intent and guidance and will expect progress reports throughout the process. The following example provides a picture of a wing commander who provided calm and wise leadership on anything but a calm day on 9-11:

Three hours after the first airliner hit the World Trade Center (1145 MST), the 366th Wing had its first set of F-15Cs ready for immediate air defense scramble orders, just like many other fighter wings around the world. The 366th Wing had transitioned from a normal Tuesday preparing for a night flying schedule with its aircraft in a training configuration to a flight line of activity consisting of F-15Cs loaded with live missiles and four other fighter, bomber and tanker squadrons generating aircraft for on call AEW deployment readiness. Everything was in place and ready for the first F-15C pilots to step to their aircraft and standby for immediate scramble orders should they come. Air defense "smart packs" had been created—these contained the critical information needed to contact Western Air Defense sector controllers, authentication codes, and other key air defense mission data—and the jets had been "hot cocked," or readied for takeoff within five minutes. In the mind of BGen Irv Halter, 366th WG/CC, there was just one thing left to do—he wanted to personally talk to all of his wing aircrew that could be performing air defense alert missions. In a briefing room containing about 70 aircrew, he asked, how many had ever "sat" air defense alert. About five hands went up, guys that had served previous F-15C tours at Bitburg AB, Keflavik AS and Elmendorf AFB. The wing had practiced air defense alert during its Operational Readiness Exercises, but only that small handful had performed the mission operationally. He then proceeded to put into perspective what we were about to do and provided his expectations. After his talk, the first pilots were then ready to step to their aircraft. In his mind, there was urgency to what we were doing, but it was worth a few extra calm minutes to make sure we would do it right.

Yourself as leader. As you step into a crisis action situation, remember two things: be calm and be visible. The amount of planning, preparation and training you have done will determine how your Airmen respond, but their sustained performance will also be determined by how you act in their presence. Although you may have the best trained unit going, your troops will still have normal human responses. Even if it appears that they are efficiently moving toward a successful mobilization and deployment, your Airmen will be thinking about the effects on their families, pets, boy/girl friend, second job, school, bills, etc, and on themselves as the situation relates to these things. They will worry about the unknowns, where they are going, how long

they will be gone, potential dangers of combat. They will be outwardly focused and enthusiastic, but they will still harbor inner concerns. This is where a buddy system can help.

Lt Col Bryan Gallagher used a structured organizational approach within his civil engineering squadron to alleviate these types of issues and to “reduce intensities and uncertainties” going into a crisis situation. In his preparation phase, he organized his squadron into teams along functional lines so that he could utilize his lower level leaders as lines of communication and as front line sensors and first responders. His junior leaders knew their commander’s expectations and could readily head off any potential problems before they occurred or had an adverse affect on the mission. Another of his methods to reduce intensity and uncertainty was through his unrelenting focus on accomplishing intelligence preparation. He had his troops study all aspects of the AOR, the deployment base infrastructure, and previous lessons learned, using formal and informal sources (those who have been there before). His directive was always to “learn as much as you can about what you are going to do.” In just one of many examples, this attitude paid huge dividends while he was deployed to Oman. Taking the boss’s intelligence guidance to heart, one of his Lieutenants brought his USAF Academy engineering text books with him, and then used those textbooks to help him perform a soil salinity test “by the book” for a new runway project. He accomplished the task within 12 hours (including the textbook guidance to taste the dirt as one of the suggested tests), which would have taken an outside contractor two to three weeks to accomplish. In the end, his college-style calculations were spot-on.⁷ Now that is empowering people to excel.

In most squadrons you will see the First Sergeant and the top SNCOs out among the troops throughout a crisis situation. As the commander, you should also be as visible as you are able. Consider including in your AEF crisis action plan an intent to contact the base chaplain office or

your unit chaplain in the event of a crisis action situation. If you keep the chaplain office informed, they will be able to support in the best way they know how. Keep your leadership chain informed of key events to allow them the opportunity to be visible among your troops at the most useful and effective times.

Over the past few months, I have gathered numerous thoughts and principles on crisis leadership through my research of literature, through interviews and during the course of our Senior Seminar discussions. I have read and heard many personal accounts of leadership in crisis situations from fellow course mates and guest speakers. Perhaps unsurprisingly, there is much commonality among the words of the many. I believe Lt Gen Hanlon, Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command has an excellent list of guiding principles to keep in mind. For the leader:

- Rapidly establish priorities
- Keep things as simple as possible
- Be decisive
- Be proactive (leave nothing to chance)
- Rapid, clear, concise communications
- Go to proven performers
- One third, two thirds rule – give your people two thirds of the available time to plan

And what will your folks expect from you?

- Decisiveness
- Consistency
- Clear Guidance
- Setting the standard
- Access
- Fairness
- Freedom to do their job
- Trust⁸

Finally, don't forget that you probably don't know what you don't know, and if you are always talking, you will never learn what you don't know until it is too late. Good plans are made and executed with good information, and good information is found through good

questioning and listening. The leadership of Churchill during World War II “reveals as well the power of hard, intelligent questioning, based less on professional expertise than on wide reading and massive common sense—the quality that Carl Von Clausewitz described as the bedrock of military genius.”⁹

Decision Making

You know, in war you don't have to be nice, you only have to be right.

—Sir Charles Portal, chief of staff, Royal Air Force
Quoted in *Supreme Command*

Shula listens to advice, then makes a decision and moves forward to implement it, without looking back. The players respect a coach who's not wishy-washy. It gives them confidence to have a leader who has no doubt in his mind once a decision is made about which way he wants to go.

—Joe Greene
Quoted in *Everyone's A Coach*

Your troops will expect decisiveness from their leaders. I like Colin Powell's succinct advice for making decisions: “...dig up all the information you can, then go with your instincts.”¹⁰ In gathering information, a good technique is to formulate the important questions to ask, think about them, and then start asking. The first questions relating to a crisis action situation may be the following. What level will or should certain decisions be made? What decisions can be empowered down? If your plan is robust and already includes certain triggers and decisions, your folks will be able to act with your pre-established intent and expectations and will not be hamstrung waiting for you to call every shot. Referring again to the Morgan Stanley example in Appendix A: they executed their plan on a pre-established trigger, so when some

other agency tried to intervene and redirect, they were not affected—the plan execution was already on its way and people responded to what they had internalized.

Other questions to ask yourself include the following. What questions should be asked to your key experts, to your own leadership, and to higher headquarter or support agencies outside your unit and base? How will you communicate your decisions to your unit? How will you know that everyone is ready to go? How will you ensure your decisions are being carried out with your intent, including when your unit is spread across thousands of miles in multiple locations? Who are your key people? Do you have any rising stars that you need to coach and nurture right now, so they will be ready to act on their own when the time comes?

How much information do you need before you make a decision? Taking the advice of Colin Powell once again, he uses what he calls a timing formula. In his words, “P = 40 to 70, in which P stands for probability of success and the numbers indicate percentage of information acquired. I don’t act if I have only enough information to give me less than a 40 percent chance of being right. And I don’t wait until I have enough facts to be 100 percent sure of being right, because by then it’s almost always too late. I go with my gut feeling when I have acquired information somewhere in the range of 40 to 70 percent.”¹¹ Perry Smith also has an excellent checklist for decision making in his book, *Rules and Tools For Leaders*.¹²

Initial Actions

My right is penetrated, my left yields, all is well: I attack

—Ferdinand Foch
Quoted in *Supreme Command*

You have been notified that you must deploy your squadron within three to seven days. You have a good grip on yourself and your chain of command. You have a clear view of the desired

end state, a great planning process and crisis action plan that your unit has internalized, and you have prepared and trained your troops well. In this section, I will walk through the major pieces of the “Phase One” portion of an AEF crisis action deployment—notification through deployment.

In the Spring of 2000, the 366th Wing at Mountain Home AFB went through its final preparations prior to beginning its first AEW On Call period, which started on 1 June 2000. Almost every facet of the AEW deployment process was planned, table topped, rehearsed, and exercised prior to the final “graduation” exercise in April, which consisted of a challenging 10 day combined Phase One and Phase Two Operational Readiness Exercise, conducted under the critical eye of the wing commander and his wing XP staff. The final month prior to beginning the on call period was spent making sure the aircraft, equipment, and personnel throughout the wing were completely ready to go. The entire wing was focused on the ready date of 1 June 2000, to the extent that we were almost surprised and disappointed when we did not receive a call on that day to actually deploy.

That initial AEW On Call preparation marked the beginning of a three year period of rotating on call cycles with the 4th Fighter Wing at Seymour Johnson AFB. Every three, and then, four month cycle, the wing worked to ensure complete deployment readiness for AEW crisis action deployment. On the morning of 9-11-2001, the 366th Wing, on call at that time, executed its plan, and began preparations for a potential AEW deployment. Within the following three months (the first squadron deployed from Mountain Home AFB on 19 September—34th Bomb Squadron), three of the five flying squadrons deployed for OEF, along with approximately 1000 combat support personnel. It was amazing to watch, because although there were several friction points throughout the process, the deployment machine executed just as we had practiced

throughout the preceding years. The 34th Bomb Squadron commander, then Lt Col Tom Arko related:

The 366th Wing Support structure was superb. Regular practice over the previous 18 months had sharpened the blade. We were ready to go...knew how to pack up, and we beat all the timelines. We even had airlift rerouted to Mountain Home AFB because we were ready.¹³

The following pieces highlight things to think about and come from experiences of several past and present commanders over the course of operations dating from Operation Allied Force in 1999 to Operations Iraqi Freedom and Noble Eagle in 2003.

Unit Control Center (UCC). Your unit control center should be your squadron's focal point for all information and communication flow. This may be easier said than done, since you may have geographically separated functions, minimal or no secure communication capability, and a shortage of experienced personnel. Each of these issues can be overcome ahead of time through robust and focused planning, preparation and training. Putting first things first, make sure you have a strong leader for your UCC. This person should be the process owner, and should be able to tell you at any given time his or her plan of action in the event of a UCC call to stand up. Ensure you have a good back up to your UCC Chief and make sure both are trained—most wings have UCC functional experts, who can assist with UCC organization and training. Also ensure your UCC leaders understand your expectations by ensuring that you clearly communicate them.

In the event of a recall and order to stand up your UCC, you should always assume 24 hour operations immediately. In providing your expectations for your UCC, consider the following (some of this may be found in your wing operating instruction):

- Have a clear process for recall accounting and reporting of personnel

- Have a process for vetting and disseminating incoming information, including the information you need to know
- Have a way to document every piece of information that comes in and every event that occurs
- Have a good opening checklist – so whoever arrives first, even if not a UCC member, can start the process
- Consider using your UCC personnel to build your squadron battle staff briefings
- Make sure your folks are proactive, not reactive
 - o Always question higher UCCs for updated information and FPCON levels
 - o Always look for things that should be done, rather than waiting to be told
- Make sure you and your folks know what information and reports are required by higher agencies
- Common pitfalls:
 - o High potential for OPSEC/COMSEC violations
 - o High potential for mishandling classified information and equipment (SIPRNET, STU Phones)
 - o Missed communication between leaders operating on different shifts

During 24 hour operations, you will need a good process to pass information between key leaders. During one deployment for Operation NOBLE EAGLE, operating 24/7 for a month, I would sometimes go two days without seeing my deputy. We used a “Top 3” log to record all important information that needed to be passed to each of the operations supervisors and to the pilots as they stepped to fly their missions. It provided me a mechanism to write my intent in

certain instances, rather than rely on word of mouth. The log also became a record for writing daily situation reports and the after-action report.

Squadron Battle Staff. A squadron battle staff meeting, consisting of your key leaders and planners, along with chiefs of key functional areas, is a good way to transmit information you know (and may have received from a wing battle staff meeting) and to receive information that you do not know. First, determine who should be there and what information they should bring, and then have someone inform those people on the place, time, and required information. Outside agency representation should or may include: maintenance, logistics (IDO or a logistics planner), reps from other UTCs that will deploy with your unit, intelligence, personnel, communications, force protection, and other support functions depending on your mission.

After sending out the call for meeting participants, you should sit down alone or with one or two of your key leaders and think about the task ahead. Often, in a minimum time situation, you may have about three or four hours between the initial wing battle staff meeting and the next wing battle staff meeting, where you will be required to brief your wing leadership. You should divide the time accordingly, allowing time for your leaders and planners to satisfy your information requirements and time for you to prepare adequately for the next wing meeting. A technique is to have a set of generic power point slides that you can use as a guide for your thinking and for your battle staff meeting.

This meeting should focus on information gathering and providing your initial commander's intent and expectations. Write out or think of your questions prior to the meeting. Use questioning as a technique to gather information. Your objectives should include:

- To receive as much information as you can from your leaders and planners
- To learn as much as you can about the anticipated mission

- To provide your intent and expectations
- To create a time line of events
- To set into motion key tasks and milestones

Depending on the situation, you may not be able to accomplish all these objectives to the fullest degree, but your most important concerns are to learn as much as you can and to provide your intent and expectations for further action all the way up to the desired end state picture, if possible. As you go through your generic slides, lay all the issues on the table. Critical areas include anticipated deployment tasking, personnel accounting and reporting, aircraft/equipment status and generation, equipment packing, deployed base support plan, UTC/DRMD development/population, individual mobility requirements review, security and force protection issues, family plan execution, and OPSEC/COMSEC concerns. Allow your folks to think and speak freely so as not to miss any important detail. Previous experience in planning will help the process.

Other considerations include:

- Determine Advon team requirements, both within your unit and within supporting units
- How will you issue your commander's intent—written or verbal?
- You may consider activating your planning and action teams, or forming opportunity teams to think through potential options or brain storm ideas

Throughout the process, you must be a visible leader for your squadron, along with your deputies who may be working an opposite shift. If you have planned, prepared and trained well, your lower level leaders should be able to work all the details, allowing you to think ahead and to make your presence known.

The best way to reduce rumors is to brief your folks early in an open and honest way. There may be some situations when you cannot tell everything you know, but if you inform them of that fact, they will understand, and will not begin a non-trusting attitude that the leadership is hiding something. If you are able, call a meeting of all squadron personnel. If you cannot get everyone together, you should use your established chain of command to get the word to the lowest level. In the meeting, you should tell them:

- what is known, that can be said
- what actions they can and should take to prepare themselves
- what they can and cannot say publicly and to their families
- emphasize OPSEC/COMSEC at every meeting and briefing, providing specific examples of how information can be compromised

Getting info. The way to know your key sources of info is to build relationships throughout your wing and with your functionals at the MAJCOM level. All formal coordination must go through your chain of command, but those informal relationships will help you when time is short—remember to keep your bosses informed. A good system for getting info is through your planning teams. If they have developed both a good understanding of your expectations and a seasoned knowledge base through their planning efforts, they should be able to satisfy your need for specific information.

One idea is to designate a junior officer or NCO to be your recorder and information sifter. Their job would be to gather all important information that comes into the UCC or other areas, sort through it, and arrange it in a way that is easy for you to assimilate. A second function for this person is to record everything that occurs during this crisis action time. He or she should take notes in meetings, keep a file of all important documents, carry a digital camera to take

pictures of events and people (possibly even a video camera), and record observations. The end result would be a complete record of the mission that can be used for after action reporting, lessons learned, and historical documentation, as well as data for decision making.

Leading and Communicating. Lt Col Gallagher issued his commander's intent as a statement on paper, setting boundaries and time lines. Since he had built so much trust in the squadron during the planning, preparation and training phase, he was able to then step back and let his people work the issues. It was his version of "distributed decision making"—using a process of monitor and correct, rather than monitor and direct.¹⁴

While you must maintain sight of the bigger picture, don't forget to "check the small things." As a technique, write down all the critical things that need checking and let your subordinates know what your expectations are in reporting those things. One of Colin Powell's key tenets is to always check the small things, a habit which achieves two purposes: revealing the true state of readiness and letting everyone know their important role in mission accomplishment.¹⁵ Also, go in with the wisdom that people will make mistakes, despite all of your detailed preparations and practice. Under the pressure of the situation, don't automatically assume stupidity or malice on the part of your subordinates when something does not go right. Expect mistakes. Correct the mistaken action, teach and continue to monitor for correct performance.

Squadron Schedule of Events (SOE). The IDO will probably build a master SOE for the wing deployment effort. It may be helpful to have your Unit Deployment Manager build a squadron SOE to help you manage and oversee the activity. This will help you identify conflicts and friction points well before they become an issue. You should review the SOE to ensure it makes sense and that it supports all mission requirements, to include movement of personnel and

equipment, in-theater arrival/in-processing, and anticipated employment or combat support tasks. Your key leaders can use the squadron SOE to monitor key events, such as personnel and equipment processing.

DRMD process. An absolutely key process is the DRMD build. Your Unit Deployment Manager should receive a DRMD shell (UTC, level 4 visibility) from the wing personnel folks, who most likely received it from the AEF Center Requirements Division. This DRMD is your tasking for the personnel you must deploy. If you have prepared ahead of time, you should already have a deployment ready DRMD, and you will only have to tweak it depending on the tasked mission. Ensure that you review all of the requirements of the DRMD, including line remarks that the gaining component commander is directing. In some rare cases, you may be able to dictate your own DRMD, so instead of receiving a personnel tasking, you will build the personnel package that you desire.

Since you may have many other agencies or units supporting your squadron on the deployment, you will receive inputs from those agencies or units in the form of separate UTCs. In the case of a flying squadron, the DRMD may consist of UTCs from the flying squadron, the aircraft maintenance squadron, other maintenance squadrons for back shop support, and possibly UTCs from other support units. If rainbowing units to form one deployed squadron, make sure that good coordination occurs at all levels with key information funneling back to you. In this case, it would be prudent to name one POC for rainbow coordination.

A very key point is that the deploying squadron commander must have visibility into the DRMD build every step of the way. The DRMD should not be sent to the Deployment Control Center (DCC) or any outside agency without **deploying squadron commander approval**. The squadron commander is responsible and accountable for meeting the requirements of the

deployment order, and shortfalls and AFSC mismatches must be coordinated as required by the AEF Center and gaining component commander. In reviewing the DRMD before it is sent back to the AEF Center, the deploying commander needs to be satisfied that all component commander requirements are met and that he or she can accomplish the mission with no degradation—always plan for 24/7 ops.

The completed DRMD must be returned ASAP, and definitely within the AEF Center suspense—you will most likely have a Wing suspense. Your wing deployment support agencies require your completed DRMD to complete their deployment actions—deployment orders, passenger scheduling, billeting arrangements, airline tickets, and final review before it is sent back up the chain. You should have a system for tracking changes and/or inputs from other units. Keep your First Sergeant involved, so he or she can plan a smooth bed down. Give a copy to your Advon team. Once again, make sure you or a trusted deputy has last eyes on before it is sent out. Once the DRMD is locked down by the MAJCOM, all changes must be staffed through the AEF Center.

Common to deployment taskings is the commander that has his or her view of how things should be. While this may be a good starting point, you should not be completely rigid. You will not have all the information that the AEF Center has and may not know all the reasons behind certain taskings. In crisis action, events change rapidly, and information flow may not keep up. If you have questions, call the AEF Center or your MAJCOM crisis action team. Make sure you have proper authorization before you send folks out—your IDO should know when it is OK to move.¹⁶ During OIF, one unit's sense of urgency influenced them to start traveling to their intended deployed base prior to receiving a formal deployment order. When they were well

on their way, they learned that their orders had changed to a base on the opposite side of the globe.

What's the bottom line for the DRMD? Complete it early; ensure it meets your combat requirements and the supported component commander's requirements; scrub it well; make sure everyone on the list has been screened and meets all deployment requirements (training, medical, etc.) and is deployment ready. *DRMD management is probably the single most important task for the deploying commander*—if you do not have the right people when you arrive, you will fight the personnel battle the entire time you are deployed—but it can be the simplest task, if you plan, prepare and train ahead of time.

Packing to Deploy. This process is similar to the DRMD process. The deploying commander must ensure that he or she brings the right equipment. There is much trust involved here, because a commander will not be able to inventory everything that is packed. You should take a big picture approach, while deciding on your comfort level. Much of the trust is built during your pre-crisis phase planning, preparation and training. You also need to ensure that you have the proper equipment in which to pack your gear (pallets, ISUs, etc.), and that your folks have the proper training to pack the gear and complete the required documentation. Commander level concerns during initial actions include: addressing AOR-specific equipment needs and issues, getting your pallets to the float yard on time with the correct documentation, awareness of hazardous materials being shipped, customs requirements, and maintaining points of contact so you can keep track of where your equipment is along the way. Ensure that your Unit Deployment Manager is able to contact you or your designated representative at all times in the case of a frustrated cargo situation.

Do not assume that certain required equipment will be available at the deployed base or that you will have adequate storage for your equipment and war fighting material. Make sure you know who your accountable officer is for all equipment and provide him or her with your expectations, making sure there is a clear understanding of theater requirements and mission requirements. Considerations include:

- Shortfalls and limitations – identify them early
- Coordination with units and UTCs who will join with you or support you – do they know what your mission is and what you desire to do while deployed?
- Hazardous cargo requirements
- Customs requirements
- Find out first-hand what is already in theater and the condition/availability of that equipment—make sure the answer comes from the right person
- Will there be a regional repair center? What equipment will be sent there for repair?
- Know what your equipment and weapon storage capabilities are—facilities, security, required certifications, AFSC-specific personnel requirements, etc.
- Are there any issues with enroute stops (especially with weapons)

Personnel processing. Ensure all personnel requirements are known early. For example, some theater deployments may require personal equipment such as sleeping bags. Have your planners work closely with the IDO to ensure no deployment requirements are missed. The IDO should inform you of all requirements, but in the spirit of “don’t make assumptions,” remember that the IDO stays home, while the deploying commander must deal with shortfalls once in theater, which could be mission impacting.

Ensure that all personnel mobility folders are reviewed one last time, to include personnel not currently on the list to deploy. All mobility-qualified personnel should understand that they are subject to deployment throughout the deployment period. It is not rare for someone to be pulled from a deployment last minute, and someone else substituted in their place.

Advon. Your Advon team is your advance party. The success of your deployment hinges on their work. You must have the right people—reliable, responsible, and knowledgeable. Determine who your Advon commander will be, and make sure he or she understands what it means to be an Advon commander. Before you send them out, make sure that they understand your expectations, for both behavior and mission. If you have time, brief the entire team together; otherwise, express your intent and expectations to the team chief. Provide them with objectives also, which may include:

- establishing or understanding the force protection plan
- establishing communications
- establishing the services (to include shelter, food and hygiene) plan
- establishing a mission support plan (facilities and infrastructure, communications, data processing, command and control)
- establishing ground transportation
- establishing facilities for secure ops
- establishing your personnel and equipment reception plan
- establishing your operations plan

The first four objectives should be your order of priority if you deploy into a bare base situation.¹⁷ Have your team send back daily situation reports if able. If time and environment allows, the Advon team should perform dry runs of all functions, processes and communications,

to include links with higher headquarters (CAOC, etc.). By performing dry runs, they will be able to discover any problems or friction points, and they will be able to ease the transition for everyone else. In addition, the Advon team members should establish relationships with their host base counterparts and any units that are already established at the base. The team chief should schedule a meeting with the host base commander or representative—your team chief is your representative until you arrive. Any good will established early and good first impressions will go a long way to assisting in the resolution of future problems. Obtain the host base operating procedures, policies, and force protection plans.

Hopefully, the Advon team will be able to arrive at the deployed location anywhere from three days to ten days prior to the main deployment. If your deployment notice is extremely short, make all the travel preparations that you can (through the logistics function in your wing), and then get them on the road as soon as you receive your actual deployment order, verbal or otherwise.

Another word to the wise is: tell them you are coming.¹⁸ There is nothing like person to person contact and you should ensure someone in your chain communicates with someone high in the deployed location chain. If there are no coalition forces at the deployed location, ensure there has been adequate coordination at the air force component level—don't assume anything.

Schedule for the First Week. Appoint one of your planners to build the schedule for the first week in theater. This will both guide your deployment preparations, since it will force you to think about what you will be doing that first week, and it will prepare for your transition to your deployed battle rhythm and help you to visualize potential pitfalls.

Personnel Deployment and Arrival Briefings. The deploying commander should provide a pre-deployment briefing, if time permits, to all personnel, whether deploying or not. The briefing should include as a minimum:

- Overview of the mission
- Command relationships
- OPSEC/COMSEC responsibilities
- Overview of the deployed location
- Standards of conduct and discipline
- Safety issues
- Commander's expectations, keeping with the guiding squadron credo
- Other briefers to consider:
 - o First Sergeant
 - o Flight Surgeon, or other medical personnel
 - o Intelligence personnel
 - o Force Protection and OSI personnel
 - o Chaplain
 - o Wing leadership

If time is sufficient prior to departing home station, schedule a commander's call to include briefings from additional base agencies such as family support, legal office, etc.

Once in theater, if possible, meet each arriving aircraft and welcome your troops—this is another opportunity to express your expectations and to be visible. You should schedule an all hands briefing or commander's call at first opportunity. If shift duties prevent getting everyone together at one time, multiple briefings should be planned. Be prepared to schedule your folks

for orientation briefings from the deployed Wing or Group leadership. In addition, use your lower level leaders at every opportunity to brief your message.

Mission Prep. Prepare for potential missions early. At first hint of a potential deployment, my weapons/intel shop personnel would build a theater specific “war room,” which contained regional maps, intelligence data, theater information, and several read files containing AOR SPINS, lessons learned, and other relevant readings. The war room was a place to study, discuss tactics, focus on planning, provide training scenarios, and foster new ideas for new problems. On 9-11, the weapons/intel shop officers and NCOs built the room for the air defense mission. After the air defense alert mission settled down following 9-11, the shop transitioned the war room for potential conflict in Afghanistan. The Captains and Lieutenants initiated a study of potential operating bases in neighboring countries and even figured out how we could fly missions from bases in the Gulf region.

Implementing the Family Plan

In a very short-notice crisis action deployment situation, the best you can do is to execute your pre-established family plan. You should provide your updated expectations to your family plan team chief, whether that is your First Shirt, your stay behind acting commander, or someone else in the chain. If time allows, you should schedule a deployment briefing for the families and invite the key base support agencies (family support, OSI, legal, Red Cross, etc.). Such a briefing will do well to ease concerns, since the information they receive will be from you directly.

Even if time is short, try to find a bit of time for everyone to spend with their own families prior to departing. In January 2003, we received short-notice deployment orders for Operation NOBLE EAGLE on a Friday morning. Once the wing commander saw our plan early that

Friday afternoon, he felt comfortable in telling us to let the deploying personnel stay at home on Sunday with their families—that was tremendous.

In one of your initial situation briefings, you and your First Shirt should suggest how the limited time should be spent and what your folks can and cannot say to their loved ones. As mentioned in the chapter on planning, you should ensure it is your words that are out there. Information will flow, whether it is correct or not. The way to build trust and comfort is to provide whatever information you can and to be frank about what you cannot disclose.

Col Dave Goldfein had a unique situation when he commanded the 555th Fighter Squadron in Aviano, Italy during Operation ALLIED FORCE (OAF). All of his families were in the local area, and the local area was where they were launching the bulk of all missions to the AOR.

In the weeks approaching OAF, we had many things going on that kept the families stressed. Local Italian groups were protesting the American involvement on their soil with everything from rallies and threats to an actual car bombing in the local town. We managed this stress at all levels from wing through squadron and flight. Several spouse calls were held in order to ensure communication continued to flow in the weeks preceding the beginning of the air campaign. An item of significant interest was the timing of the first mission – obviously classified information not to be shared with family.

As squadron commander, I told my wife she and other spouses would not be told when the first missions would take off. However, we prepped the squadron for a no-notice pot luck at our casa once we learned any information we might be able to share. Once the decision was made to launch, we did a spouse recall for a pot luck dinner. All the spouses were thus gathered together at our house when the first jets launched for OAF. By luck, the departure corridor took the aircraft directly over the house so the wives were able to be a part of that historic first night. Most important – no spouse had to endure that stressful first night alone in their homes scattered around the local area (there was no base housing at Aviano). This first gathering set the tone for the entire air campaign.

Keeping a constant communication flow throughout the 79 day air campaign was a significant command challenge. However, keeping the stress at controlled levels so pilots could concentrate on their missions was critical to success.¹⁹

Deployment

Command and Control. Deployment command and control within the wing normally occurs at the wing command post and/or battle staff. You should ensure that you know what your wing commander's expectations are for command and control throughout the deployment and keep all of the wing leadership informed on your squadron schedule of events. You should also have command and control structure and mechanisms for every deployment area, including transition areas. There should always be someone in charge of each group movement and location, and it needs to be the right person. Have a plan for who will be in charge in the event you do not make it to the deployed base as scheduled.

Contingencies. During your pre-crisis phase planning and within the crisis action phase, you should be active in thinking of potential contingencies that could occur during the deployment of troops, aircraft, and equipment. You cannot plan for everything that could happen, but by thorough planning, you and your subordinates will be better equipped to handle the unexpected. When Lt Col Tom Arko led his squadron of B-1Bs to Oman in support of Exercise Accurate Test/Initial Link in the Spring of 2001 (first time B-1Bs had been to Oman), his route of flight took him past the country of Yemen. He expertly handled an unexpected situation by utilizing his experts and his vast experience.

During the preparation phase for the exercise, 34 BS personnel received little in the way of assistance regarding diplomatic clearances and route planning. I had established a plans shop within the squadron and these folks (Lts and Capts) hunted down all the requirements except for clearance into Saudi Arabia. Therefore...a route of flight along the FIRs in the Red Sea in international airspace was planned.

The first leg of the journey into England was uneventful. The next day we launched and proceeded uneventfully until we reached Cairo control. We were flying two, 2-ship formations separated by 10 minutes and under IFR control. As we flew towards the Suez Canal, Cairo control attempted to pass us to Jeddah control at which point I informed them that we did not have country clearance

into Saudi airspace. The controller then asked us what type of aircraft we were flying. I responded, two B-1s and from that point on could not elicit a response from Air Traffic Control. It was approaching midnight and I could hear aircraft transiting the Red Sea and flying into King Kahlid airport in Saudi Arabia. At this point...we operated Due Regard and I closed the formation up to 1/2 mile trail for the remaining 3 B-1s and took control as flight lead for a 4-ship standard formation. We continued to try to raise ATC to no avail and also started providing periodic position reports on VHF and UHF frequencies...to include guard frequencies. I figured this would help us in keeping clear of other commercial traffic. As we approached Yemen...the ATC controller (SANAA Control) began telling us that we were headed towards their airspace and gave us vectors to the southwest...towards Djibouti. We responded that we were in international airspace and exercising our right to navigation. This conversation went on for several minutes and included the controller threatening to shoot us down if we did not change course. (Of note...there is a contested piece of land in the Red Sea that Yemen lays claim to, and the ATC folks had just upgraded their radar to give them greater range so they now could see into the Red Sea area) As we tried our best to placate Sanaa Control and now the Djibouti controllers...our WSOs started getting electronic indications that someone was "Painting" our formation with threatening radar signals, and we also could make out the operating lights of what appeared to be an aircraft. (We spent the next several minutes trying to ascertain who was interested in us and deciphering whether Yemen had launched fighters for an intercept. We continued to get electronic hits from radars outside our formation and eventually turned the corner and headed east. Our final "radar lock" indication occurred just as we turned east and we extended for a high speed dash to put distance between us and Yemen and Djibouti. Again...we found out after the fact that there were foreign pilots in Djibouti performing as best as can be explained "a training role". We really never found out exactly who lit us up, but the State Department had several discussions with the Yemeni government, and we were assured a smoother flight back to England following the exercise.

Having crew members who are experts in flying in international airspace, as well as using all the resources in the formation, allowed me to work through each challenge as it occurred.²⁰

One technique is to engage your planning teams as "opportunity teams" to brain storm possible contingency situations and to devise prevention measures. Using teams to do this thinking frees you to maintain the bigger picture and to prepare yourself for your own personal deployment issues and to think ahead to the employment phase. These teams can be used to brain storm all phases, including the various employment phases and the redeployment phase. In

the case of a limited-notice AEF deployment, the teams should activate upon initial deployment warning or notification. Provide them your commander intent, feed them information from the UCC, intelligence sources, previous lessons learned reports and other support agencies, and let them think away. Depending on their experience level, you may need to provide some coaching to get them to think openly and completely.

Potential Pitfalls

Planning, preparation and training will help you avoid a host of potential pitfalls that can occur during a time-limited mobilization and deployment. The following are just a couple of examples.

Pit fall example #1. I was a fairly new DO and the stay at home acting commander when a portion of our squadron deployed to Turkey for Operation Northern Watch. The main body of personnel was scheduled to launch on a Sunday morning and the F-15Cs were set to launch early Monday morning. The commander gave me his squadron cell phone on Friday afternoon, but since he was not leaving until Monday morning, I felt no need to carry it until Monday. When I returned home from church on Sunday morning, there were several messages on my answering machine. The immediate message was to get over to the passenger terminal right away. As I walked into the terminal, I saw the Operations Group Commander, the Logistics Group Commander, and a cast of several others. The situation was that one of our young airmen had refused to board the aircraft to go to Turkey—my first personnel situation as acting commander. The major lessons I learned from that experience include:

- As commander, brief your stay behind leadership on your expectations
- Ensure that someone in your stay behind leadership chain is present at each departure of personnel

- Not everyone is gung ho about deploying or even following orders, especially when personal and emotional issues are present
- Assume nothing

Pit fall example #2. Don't allow the standards and expectations you have established to deteriorate while deployed. Professional relationships and behavior should not change because the unit is deployed or away from home. Married folks are still married and all the rules and regulations apply wherever you are. As commander, you should make this clear from the first day.²¹

Notes

¹ Thomas Grubb, Robert Lamb, and William Case, "Action Champions: M&A Crisis Leadership: Lessons From Rudolph Guiliani," n.p., on-line, Internet, 13 March 2004, available from http://www.pmboulevard.com/expert_column/archives/reg/action_champion_grubbs.pdf

² Francis Hesselbein, "Crisis Management: A Leadership Imperative," *Leader to Leader*, Fall 2002, n.p., on-line, Internet, February 2004, available from <http://www.pfdf.org/leaderbooks/L2L/fall2002/fh.html>

³ Headquarters AFDC/DR, *Air Force Doctrine Document 2, Organization and Employment of Aerospace Power*, 17 February 2000, 160, on-line, Internet, 13 March 2004, available from <http://www.e-publishing.af.mil/pubfiles/af/dd/afdd2/afdd2.pdf>.

⁴ Col Bill MacLure, USAF, interviewed by author, February 2004.

⁵ Lt Col James Dennis, USAF, interviewed by author, February 2004.

⁶ Penny Horgan, lecture at the Senior Seminar, U.S. State Department Foreign Service Institute, 7 January 2004.

⁷ Lt Col Bryan Gallagher, USAF, interviewed by author, February 2004.

Notes

⁸ Lt Gen Hanlon, USMC, lecture at the Senior Seminar, U.S. State Department Foreign Service Institute, 1 December 2003.

⁹ Eliot A. Cohen, *Supreme Command* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 2002), 130-131.

¹⁰ Colin L. Powell with Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York, NY: Random House, 1995), 393.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 393.

¹² Perry M. Smith, *Rules and Tools for Leaders* (New York, NY: The Berkley Publishing Group, 2002), 80-88. For additional guidance on crisis action leadership, Perry Smith's chapter on Leading During Crisis and Change is outstanding, and also includes an excellent Crisis Leadership Checklist.

¹³ Lt Col Thomas Arko, USAF, interviewed by author, February 2004.

¹⁴ Gallagher interview.

¹⁵ Powell, 446.

¹⁶ TSgt Travis Turner, USAF, interviewed by author, February 2004.

¹⁷ Col Tod Wolters, USAF, interviewed by author, February 2004. Col Wolters led the first party on the ground at Tabuk AB, Saudi Arabia. He stressed the importance of doing first things first—force protection, comm link, services (food and shelter), and then the operations piece. He also acknowledged that he received this key advice from the OIF CFACC, Lt Gen Mosley.

¹⁸ Lt Col Steve Soroka, USAF, interviewed by author, January 2004. He related how units arrived at deployed locations during OIF, with no knowledge by the host base that they were coming.

¹⁹ Col David Goldfein, USAF, interviewed by author, February 2004.

²⁰ Arko interview.

²¹ Lt Col Donald Bacon, USAF, interviewed by author, February 2004.

Chapter 4

Contingency Operation Execution Phase

If not me, who? If not now, when?

—Hillel
Rabbinical Scholar

Well, it should be getting much easier by this point. If you have a good plan that everyone in the unit has internalized, and you have practiced and practiced, and you have a solid set of values that your unit lives by, there is not much that you cannot face and handle with good results. But we all know what Clausewitz said about the fog of war.

In the flying business, we know that the success of the mission can very much depend on how the first radio check-in goes. If the first check on the radios is not on time and crisp, but is disjointed and off, it becomes something to correct immediately, and it may be a warning that not everyone in the formation is completely focused on the task at hand. In like manner, the success of your first combat or combat support missions can very well depend on how your unit starts off, both during the mobilization and deployment phase, and also at the deployed location. Your job is to create the environment to start off right and to enable key people and mechanisms to immediately make corrections *before* things go off track.

There will be many friction points along the way, but through sound leadership and the fortitude to execute the way you have planned and trained, the friction points become inconsequential. As the commander, you are expected to use your best military judgment and to

have the fortitude to act in situations that require your leadership. If it is more appropriate to keep a decision at a lower level, you should be willing to support your subordinate leaders. Just as you desire to be informed of non-standard events and decisions, you should keep your bosses informed.¹ Always consider writing and keeping a Memo For Record on any decisions that are out of the ordinary and could be of interest to higher levels of command later.

Much of what has been discussed previously also applies to the deployed execution phase. As before, I will highlight areas to think about, and provide experiences from commanders who have been there.

Ensuring Success on the First Missions

Lt Col James Dennis' description of "hitting the ground and running" after responding to short-notice deployment orders and deploying his squadron to combat:

In the case of both deployments, there was minimal time to get set up before flying AOR sorties. I had guys flying in the AOR (in two AORs in the case of OEF and OSW) within 24 hours of (F-15E) arrival. The thing that helped us the most was the prior coordination with the units already in place prior to deploying. Our "Smart Packs" were already built to the maximum extent possible and it took very little time to finish them when we arrived. There are numerous briefings that you must attend before flying, and jet lag is always an issue. I sent the best Advon team I could think of to make sure everything was in order and scheduled. The Advon team consisted of higher ranking ADOs and weapons officers along with maintenance and commander support staff representation. The Advon team aircrew were able to get an orientation flight with the other units prior to our arrival. The crews that arrived on airlift first were the crews that flew the first missions with the Advon crews. I also energized the flight doc and deployed him with the enroute support team to take care of any medical issues when the personnel arrived. The key—have everything set up because there is no time to waste. Let the Advon team know exactly what you expect of them. Being prepared made both deployments smooth.²

Establishing a Battle Rhythm

The key to doing is: knowing what you want to do. The hard part is making sure everyone else knows what they should each be doing and when they should be doing it. The following is

an account from an Operation Noble Eagle (ONE) deployment that we conducted in February 2002 and some lessons learned about getting started in the right way.

Initial notification to aircraft launch (12 F-15Cs and one passenger aircraft) was five days, and the first tasked mission was 41 hours later. All in all, that was enough time to get everything to the deployed location and to prepare for the first mission, especially since we had previous experience with ONE. During the first couple of days of missions, everything was fairly smooth. After that, however, we started experiencing problems with aircraft availability. Jets were breaking, like they normally do, but they were not being fixed within a comfortable amount of time. Before we got to what I considered a critical point where I became concerned about mission accomplishment in the near future, I sat down with the senior maintenance officer and the maintenance superintendent (a Chief Master Sergeant) to discuss the situation. During the discussion, the Chief related that we had one non-mission capable aircraft that had not been looked at for 24 hours. We were conducting 24/7 flying operations, so each of the three maintenance shifts was involved with pre-flying and servicing aircraft, launching aircraft, recovering aircraft, and fixing aircraft that had maintenance discrepancies. In addition, some maintenance actions took longer than normal because of the live weapon loads on the aircraft. After much discussion, we realized that the maintenance section was operating on the same schedule they used for a two-go flying training schedule at home station. Basically, the first shift primarily launches and recovers aircraft, the second shift primarily fixes aircraft, and the third shift is primarily a small servicing crew that prepares the aircraft for the next day. The shifts are normally manned with different experience levels, with the more experienced maintainers on the second, or fixing shift. During 24/7 ONE operations we had to launch, recover, and fix all at the same time with no breaks, but we had not structured the organization or provided the appropriate guidance to senior maintenance supervisors to handle the operational pace. Additionally, I had seen much frustration among many of the flight line maintenance personnel, both because of the high number of broke aircraft and because of a lack of clear direction from the leadership. In effect, we had not adjusted the maintenance processes to the operational *battle rhythm* of the mission. Once we recognized that fact, the maintenance leadership made appropriate adjustments, and aircraft availability was never an issue again. In addition, each maintainer on the flight line had a better sense of how to keep things going.

The reason for that story is to demonstrate the importance of establishing an operational *battle rhythm* early. That is not to say that we do not train the way we fight, or that you need to change the way you do things once you get to a combat employment situation. The main point here is that you must have an understanding of the forces that will be working against you as you

transition your squadron from its normal home station operations to accomplishing your mission at your deployed location. In addition, you may receive UTCs from other units that you must meld into the operation.

You must ensure that your key leaders have a complete understanding of your unit's mission, tasks and objectives, and of your expectations. This is not as easy as it may sound. For example, if a fighter unit will be tasked to fly 6 – 10 hour missions on a 24/7 operations tempo, does the maintenance organization have a plan to support that tempo and the accompanied increase in the number of aircraft phase inspections that must be accomplished? Or, in the case of a combat support unit, is there a clear understanding of how many personnel the base will have to in-process, bed, feed, protect and provide mission support? Has there been thought for a short-notice doubling or even quadrupling in base population from the original plan? Your leaders must know how to achieve success, while being guided by the unit values, vision, and by your expectations. Finally, you and they need to have a way to continuously monitor events, and be ready to adjust if necessary.

It is your job to provide your vision and expectations for effective battle rhythm, and then to monitor that battle rhythm throughout the operation. Lt Col James Dennis faced great challenges when he engaged his F-15E squadron in support of OEF and OIF.

Both OEF and OIF ops tempo were incredible. During OEF in 2002, the missions involved flying in Iraq and Afghanistan. It was a scheduling nightmare since the Afghanistan missions typically lasted anywhere from 10.5 to 12.5 hours. A crew would fly an Afghanistan mission one day, take the next day off, and then fly an Operation SOUTHERN WATCH mission the next day, then the cycle would start all over again. Once Operation ANACONDA began, there were no days off for the aircrew. You have to have a plan; otherwise the ops tempo becomes unworkable. The same goes for the jets. A poor plan will result in the majority of your aircraft reaching maintenance phase inspection time at the same time. During OIF in 2003, the situation was similar. The squadron was flying 48 sorties a day with 24 jets. That meant that every aircrew was flying once a day for 7 to 9

hours. Fortunately, we were able to handle it because of lessons learned during OEF.

Maximum performance that you require in high tempo combat ops does not come from individuals—it comes from the entire team working together. When everyone is working at their top level and the whole team is moving in the right direction, synergy kicks in, force multiplying the effects of all the individuals.³

Doing the J-o-b.

As mentioned in the previous section on battle rhythm, you cannot neglect the importance of performing your mission as you do in training. All of us are taught that there is no reason to change the way we do business just because we are in a combat environment. As you plan for your deployment, you should ensure everyone understands that they will have the same responsibilities while deployed as they do at home, in most cases. The key to getting things going in the right direction is to pick the right people for the job and to provide **your** expectations to them.

Lt Col Tom Lawhead deployed his F-16CJ squadron to a “bare base” in October 2001 to support OEF. He has a great talent for putting the right people in place, training them correctly, and providing them with his visionary expectations. His leadership provided the environment that precipitated almost seamless transitions from peacetime ops to wartime ops.

I found the key to deployed success (in particular in an austere environment) was to stick to what works at home, making necessary changes to accommodate the deployed location. The squadron was functionally organized, and I kept those functions up and running while deployed. Good intel and weapons officers plugged into their functional lines to determine what the mission required. Scheduling, training, stan/eval and others worked their normal issues to ensure we had the bases covered. When we arrived, we discovered there were no standard departure or recovery procedures for the base, so using our functional expertise, we developed high threat departure and recovery procedures, SFO patterns, normal traffic patterns, lights out procedures, standard routing and filing

procedures, training range locations and procedures and ground operations procedures that were compatible between heavy and fighter aircraft. My stan/eval officer, Capt Zipper Robison created an In-flight Guide, and the deployed Expeditionary Operations Center coordinated with each unit to ensure this necessary product served all users of the base.⁴

Lt Col Bryan Gallagher established his unit's combat battle rhythm and ability to effectively operate by utilizing his team concept that he had established at home station. This was very important to him, since he had UTCs from several bases in his deployed squadron.⁵

Establishing Relationships.

The need to establish relationships outside the unit should not be a secret, but units fail to do this, usually to their detriment. Your objective as the commander is to establish good relations with: other unit commanders at the deployed base, host base commanders and officials, and with key folks in outside agencies, such as the CAOC, commanders at other deployed locations, etc. Also, find out who the experts are. If you actively pursue relationships, your key leaders will follow your example and do the same with their counterparts. The sight picture here is establishing formal and informal mechanisms to maintain effective communication flow and overall understanding. Take some of your unit mementos with you, such as coins, T Shirts, mugs, etc. to present to organizations and individuals that helped you to achieve mission success.

Col Rico Rodriguez related a story about the importance of knowing the chain of command and learning who is on the other end of the phone. He deployed to Cervia, Italy to support OAF in 1999.

72 hours prior to an execution order, we received a phone call from the Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) master attack planning cell tasking us to be prepared to execute several missions for which we were not trained nor prepared to conduct. It was at this point that we realized that we had no insight as to who we were working with or for at the CAOC. Thanks to our proximity to the CAOC we were able to drive to their location and meet with the USAF A-3 and his staff

to clarify our roles and missions and to better understand the relationship we would play in the execution of air superiority. It was also at this point that we recognized that our taskings would not be general knowledge with all of the CAOC staff due to the dual role of the US/NATO Air Tasking Order format. Knowing in advance my position in the various chains of command became a priority for me as I prepared myself for Group Command in OIF in 2003.⁶

Gain an understanding of every mandatory reporting item that each echelon of command requires. A good technique for this is to assign a process owner.⁷

Soon after Lt Col Bryan Gallagher arrived at his deployed base in Oman with his civil engineering squadron, he set out to build a good relationship with the Omani base commander and other key officials (the “movers and the shakers”). Because of these relationships, his circle of influence became significant, and he was able to accomplish several mission enhancing projects with little or no impacting resistance. Other deployed commanders at the base recognized his influence and sought him for help on their piece of the mission. Some deployed commanders would tell him, “I cannot work with these people,” whereas he had found a simply normal way to work. Other advantages to his inter-cultural relationships included, having help when things did not go as planned or “when things went bad” and realizing a more effective and integrated force protection system for the base. His influence became so effective that he became a key representative during negotiations between coalition forces and the #2 in the Omani Ministry of Defense.⁸

Establishing relationships with higher headquarters, especially in a deployed situation is highly important. With a good relationship, information flow becomes smoother and problems are resolved easier.

The Bare Base

During the planning phase, you should have considered deploying into a bare base. Deploying to bare bases is a reality in the Air Force's AEF concept. Basing arrangements may not even be known until up to the "last moment," and you should always prepare for the worst case scenario. The 1st Fighter Wing (FW) deployed forces into Tabuk AB, Saudi Arabia to support OIF in 2003. Previous to their deployment, there had been no U.S. forces at Tabuk since Operation Desert Storm. In addition, because of political sensitivities and force protection concerns, they were forced to operate with absolute minimal infrastructure. Nonetheless, 1st FW leaders were able to build up from a bare base situation to flying combat missions within 17 days, doing so with less than half the normal contingent of civil engineering troops. Lt Col Chris Nowland was first on the ground as part of a team of eleven personnel and oversaw efforts to build the area into an operating base. In one related experience he discussed what it was like starting from a bare base. On his second day at Tabuk, he and the 10 other personnel with him went out to "walk the terrain." He said,

Forty-five minutes later we arrived at our desired location...it was a flat piece of desert that bordered an abandoned junk yard. There were some wild dogs about 150 yards away and several dead animals in some of the abandoned buildings. The engineers and security force troops were just ecstatic. 'Look at this great ground, good access, great visibility...it's perfect.' I looked at it and said, 'you've got to be joking...it's a trash heap.' Out of this trash heap, we built our tent city.

His keys to success were:

- Build a picture in your mind with the correct priorities (*relates to knowing how the ideal end state should look*).
- Set control limits to the end state picture and to specific milestones along the way, because you may not be able to control all the variables in between.

- Control limits should be set to bracket the minimum acceptable state and the maximum realistically achievable state, or maximum desired state.
- Know what all your capabilities are, i.e., what each organization and person can do.
- Take a good contracting officer (*relates to having the right people*).

In the beginning of the build up, the wing was accepting personnel faster than they could erect tents to house them. It became clear to the wing leadership that tent building as a priority was higher than operational preparations, so folks were pulled from other important functions to supplement the tent building teams. Lt Col Nowland created a key indicator he called the “tent erection rate versus the population growth rate.” He said,

It was a funny name, but a serious problem. Initially we were accepting people much faster than we could house and lodge them. We had to stay ahead of the curve. As long as we could keep the tents and associated cots ahead of the C-17s bringing in people, we were ok. However, to do this we all had to pull tent erection duty. That meant operators, logisticians, medics and maintainers who may have never built a tent before pulled together and got the job done. We set our high water mark of erecting 45 tents in one day. Those 540 spaces gave you options. They allowed you to attempt to group units together and minimize follow on moves and associated turbulence when we needed to generate combat power.⁹

Establishing a battle rhythm at a bare base can be very difficult, especially when combining units from many different bases and commands. Lt Col J. Bryan Bearden, who commanded the 363rd Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron at Prince Sultan AB during OIF related that establishing a battle rhythm among many moving parts throughout the wing took coordination of all of the wing leadership and the Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC). He witnessed and supported the largest combat wing in the AOR. He said that many units would roll in thinking they were the only game in town, but most soon realized that they needed to share spaces and responsibilities.¹⁰

Putting the Pieces Together to Make a Whole

In some operations, several UTCs will come together from disparate bases to form one deployed squadron. As the deployed commander, you must use your leadership skills to make it an effective and synergistic whole. When then Lt Col Bill MacLure deployed his F-15C squadron to Operation ALLIED FORCE (OAF) in the Spring of 1999, he encountered some interesting challenges.

During the lead up to our deployment to Cervia, Italy our training situation became more and more of an issue due to a lack of aircraft. We looked at farming guys out to other F-15C squadrons around the CAF, which is what the F-15E squadrons did, but instead our wing commander worked out a deal to have the Elmendorf folks help us out. The 54 FS deployed 6 jets, and 10 pilots, all instructors and 4-ship flight leads, along with their maintenance folks. They thought they were going to Cervia to join the fight. They took off out of Elmendorf and flew the polar route direct to Lakenheath, all of them chomping at the bit to get into the fight. We initially thought we would bring all of them down to Cervia but as we looked at it more closely, it became apparent that integrating their maintenance and their jets into one squadron would be very difficult. You run into a whole lot of problems with supply accounts, aircraft forms, jet ownership, and bean counting when you mix two different units' aircraft into one. The only good way to get them all to Cervia was to stand up a second and separate F-15C Expeditionary Fighter Squadron. The wing commander eventually decided to keep the Elmendorf jets at Lakenheath to conduct training there. The 54FS pilots deployed to Cervia and integrated into our combat operation there. I sent my Operations Officer, Lt Col Mark "Fitz" Fitzgerald back to Lakenheath with a small cadre of instructors to run the squadron back home (they all loved that...not). Elmendorf had deployed their Operations Officer, Lt Col "Pee Wee" Crain. Pee Wee became my Operations Officer down in Cervia. The Elmendorf jets and maintainers stayed at Lakenheath (they also loved that...again not). This allowed us to keep the two MX operations separated. The 493 FS squadron jets stayed in Cervia and flew the combat missions and the 54 FS jets stayed at Lakenheath and flew training sorties. The pilots from Elmendorf quickly integrated into our operation. One thing about the fighter community is we have done a very good job of standardizing how we fly and fight so it is pretty easy to bring guys in from other units. There are always minor differences in a few areas but these can be easily worked out. The 54th guys were all night vision goggle (NVG) qualified and we had not spun up with NVGs yet, but it was not a big problem. We attempted to pair up the 54th guys together so they could use their NVGs, and that seemed to work out pretty well. Making Pee Wee my Operations Officer also worked out very well, and any issues I had with the Elmendorf guys he quickly took care of. Overall I think we melded into a very

cohesive unit and after a while the 493rd Grim Reapers and the 54th Leopards became just the Grim Leopards. The Elmendorf maintenance folks back at Lakenheath were not quite so happy. The Elmendorf maintainers really thought they would end up in Italy, and when it became clear they were staying in England they were not very pleased. They actually did stand up as the 54 EFS and their MX officer, a captain was the "commander." I think they had close to 100 MX folks and these guys just integrated into our squadron back at Lakenheath. Eventually they got used to the idea and from my perspective it worked OK. We did not deploy all of our maintenance folks to Cervia, and we still had quite a few at Lakenheath to primarily take care of the huge phase dock that stood up. We were putting so many hours on the jets we were having to do a phase on all our jets about every two weeks. Our jets flew hard at Cervia and then continuously rotated back to Lakenheath for phase so we could always have 18 FMC jets at our deployed location, and the Elmendorf jets could stay at Lakenheath flying training sorties. Obviously being within one hop of your deployed location has huge advantages. Overall it worked out great. We were able to rotate instructors and not-yet-qualified pilots back to Lakenheath and keep them flying while at the same time keep 18 jets in the fight. I think the first guy we sent back for his mission qualification training was able to finish and get back to Cervia and fly a few combat sorties before the war was over. It also helped us out big time after we got back. Our two sister squadrons at Lakenheath had a huge training backlog and were in a huge hole whereas we were able to reconstitute very quickly inside of a month.¹¹

Sustaining Operations

If you have planned, prepared and trained successfully, deployed successfully, and prepared for combat and combat support operations successfully in the AOR, things should be looking good. As everyone knows, however, you can never stop being alert. As the commander, you must continue to view the big picture and to think into the future. Your teams must continue to function and also to think and plan. If the tempo is high, you and your supervisors must constantly manage and preserve a functioning operating environment and keep your sensors alert to needed adjustments.

Even if the tempo is not high, you must maintain the same effective operating environment to prevent complacency and lack of proper focus. You may deploy into a situation where forces are preparing for combat, but combat may not begin for several weeks or months. Or, the

situation may be a post-combat phase or transition to steady state operations. The issues should be the same in any case, and you and your unit should maintain its center on your unit values and mission (vision), not on the activity or crisis of the moment. Be proactive, not reactive. In this section, I provide examples of how units kept their folks focused on the mission in the face of steady state or sustained operations. The commanders profiled did not employ busy work schemes, rather, they maintained an environment of skill honing and mission enhancement centered on their overarching vision.

When Lt Col Bryan Gallagher deployed his unit to Oman in late summer of 2002, his primary tasked mission was air base maintenance. The base supported continued OEF missions, but there was the potential for supporting missions over Iraq in a future conflict. He knew that if war with Iraq occurred, the base population would probably double in size. Prior to deploying he had his personnel learn everything they could about the base ahead of time, leaving no stone unturned (his emphasis on intel, mentioned previously in Chapter 2). He learned that the current infrastructure was in need of much improvement. Combining his needs to keep his unit focused, to give them a noble goal to work toward, and the need for improved base facilities, he channelized the energy of a talented civil engineering squadron, first in coming up with project plans, then with completing those plans. He fought some inertia in his troops at first, but he maintained his primary sight picture on providing an improved quality of life on the base and getting the base ready for high tempo combat ops. The realized side benefits included high morale (they were tired, but they were proud of their work) and no discipline problems (too tired to get into trouble). He took on projects that seemed impossible to others. For example, they built a dining facility that a civil engineering squadron “wasn’t supposed to be able to build.” The projects themselves built teamwork and esprit de corps among folks from disparate stateside

units, helping to unite the squadron. In addition, they did so much as a team that when faced with a contingency or crisis situation, they were equipped to respond as a team. He also kept his troops tuned into the mission they were supporting by briefing them daily on aircraft sorties flown, aircraft mission capable rates, and other key indicators of the flying mission. He wanted his folks to know that everything they did as civil engineers was important to accomplishing the Air Force mission.¹²

It is important to monitor the health of your folks at all times. Things that appear well on the surface may not be so well underneath. Employing a buddy system and using all levels of your chain of command should help to keep everyone in the circle. You will need a system to monitor overall morale and health and one that does not allow any one person to fall through the crack. Don't leave out those folks that have been attached to your unit from other organizations—keep them and their families involved.

Once the mission is tracking, most of your big issues will be people issues. Again, it is important to have good and open lines of communication at both the deployed location and at home station. If one of your deployed troops is experiencing a family problem, he or she may be more likely to remain silent about it while deployed, but the home family member may be more willing to talk. It is always important to learn about these problems that may affect the individual and the mission accomplishment.

Finally, be prepared for the “get-home-itis” that is inevitable as the end of the deployment comes into sight. People will do stupid and crazy things that you would never otherwise expect.¹³ Keep the communication open and continue to stress the mission. Use every level of your chain of command. Every commander I spoke with on this subject said they allowed no

toleration for premature talk about going home. Planning for the re-deployment is one thing, but speculation and rumors are unhealthy both at the deployed location and back at home station.

Notes

- ¹ Col Tod Wolters, USAF, interviewed by author, February 2004.
- ² Lt Col James Dennis, USAF, interviewed by author, February 2004.
- ³ Don Shula and Ken Blanchard, *Everyone's A Coach* (New York, NY: Harper Business, 1995), 74.
- ⁴ Lt Col Thomas Lawhead, USAF, interviewed by author, January 2004.
- ⁵ Lt Col Bryan Gallagher, USAF, interviewed by author, February 2004.
- ⁶ Col Rico Rodriguez, USAF, interviewed by author, February 2004.
- ⁷ Wolters interview.
- ⁸ Gallagher interview.
- ⁹ Lt Col Chris Nowland, USAF, interviewed by author, February 2004.
- ¹⁰ Lt Col J. Bryan Bearden, USAF, interviewed by author, February 2004.
- ¹¹ Col Bill MacLure, USAF, interviewed by author, February 2004.
- ¹² Gallagher interview.
- ¹³ Wolters interview.

Chapter 5

What To Do When Things Don't Go Right

We can't control every event, but we can control our response to it.

- Ken Blanchard
Everyone's A Coach

In this final chapter before the summary, I will briefly discuss situations regarding what to do when things don't go right. That subject can obviously cover a lot of ground, and this discussion is limited to short thinking points to prepare for tragic incidents such as death, injury, capture and catastrophic accidents/events. Once again, the key to this as in everything contained in the book is thorough planning, preparation and training. Other concepts, discussed throughout the book, that are key to this section, include:

- having a credo philosophy or set of values that you and your squadron centers on
- having the right people in the right places
- making sure everyone has a clear understanding of your expectations
- providing calm, sure, and visible leadership

Having good communication and feedback loops is valuable to resolving and dealing with bad situations. You must have a mechanism to get information from all levels of your command and to provide information. This is the only sure way to deal with the rise of rumors, bad feelings and accompanied anxieties.¹

In Chapter 2, I included Col Tod Wolter's advice for planning teams, one of which was a Mortuary Affairs planning team. There needs to be one person in the unit who is the process owner for Mortuary Affairs. Even assuming that you have a good Mortuary Affairs plan already, what will you do if a tragedy occurs as you are preparing to leave for the AOR, enroute to the AOR, or leading a combat or combat support mission? Your planning team and process owner should prepare for any type of incident, occurring during any phase and in any location. You should ensure that your stay behind acting commander understands the process also (he or she may even be your process owner).

Lt Col Dennis James had the unfortunate experience of losing aircraft during combat in OIF. He provides his thoughts and convictions for you to use as a guide in your thinking and planning.

The worst thing that can possibly happen to a flying squadron commander in a war is to get a call in the middle of the night from the command post or the OG and have them say the words, "you need to come to the command post, you have a jet down". The first thing that goes through your mind is, did the crew make it out and have they been picked up. Your first action is to get dressed and find out all the facts before you start making any decisions. The actions that you take immediately are no different in war than they are in peace, especially when it comes to the squadron personnel. The first thing I did in this situation was to stop by the squadron and have the Operations Officer run the mishap checklist. There was no doubt in my mind that this would hit the news before any of the families back home became aware that we lost a jet. I had one other huge problem with the crew that was missing, the pilot's wife (an intelligence officer) was deployed with our sister squadron. She was in bed and had no idea that her husband's jet had gone down.

I went immediately to the command post to get the latest information on the downed aircraft. All the information I received in the first hour was about 75% inaccurate! The pilot's wife was notified and escorted to the command post to get the latest information which was as basic as the phone call that I had received two hours earlier. The jet was down, we don't know if it was shot down or what, and we had not heard from the crew. There were air assets on the scene and the weather was getting bad. My next action was to meet and debrief the flight lead of the two ship. Believe me, first hand information is far more accurate than relayed information. My first concern was the mental state of the flight lead and his WSO. There can be no harder radio call to make on the way home than checking in with the squadron and the command post with the words, "as fragged minus one." I sat down and had a long talk with them about the expectations of

combat and all that goes with it. I knew that the fate of the aircrew would take a long time to be resolved, especially when our forces can't even come close to getting to the site. I took the information that I had to the squadron and called all the available personnel together to let them know what was going on. I had to do this in shifts since we were still flying 24 hour operations. As you can imagine the emotions ran the entire spectrum. Not flying combat sorties because of emotions was not feasible. First and foremost I couldn't show any emotion. They look to the commander for guidance and leadership in this situation and it is absolutely critical that you show LEADERSHIP! You can deal with your own emotions later out of sight of everyone else but never in front of them. The fate of the crew was not made official until some time after the jet went down. One of the hardest things to deal with is taking care of all the necessary legal aspects of the crews (which don't change in combat), writing letters to the families, making phone calls to the families, and going through two memorial services in the AOR. Each time you do one of these it opens old wounds but you have to deal with it. I don't want to sound hard-hearted but the operation and the mental and physical health of your squadron is more important than the fact that you lost a jet. Not handling the situation right is an invitation to disaster in combat.

So what prepared me for this situation? First, I hope that this never happens to any other squadron commander but I can guarantee you that it will happen to one of you out there! I can say with just about 99.99% confidence that there will be aircraft lost in peace and in combat in the future. It is a given. It is the nature of our business and you need to be prepared. Let's hope that you are not prepared because you have experience in dealing with the same situation. Chances are that you have never been in this situation before and you can only learn from those that have. Having the families prepared before you deploy is critical. Have the families fill out a work sheet as soon as they arrive in the squadron. This will help you whether you lose a jet in peace or in combat. The last thing the families need is having to worry about where the insurance papers are and where the individual wants to be buried. Make sure your aircrew and squadron support personnel know the seriousness of their business. It is extremely hard to stand up in front of your squadron just before the deployment or just before the first sorties kick off and say, "I expect you to do the job that you were trained to do and yes there is a possibility that you may land and see an empty parking spot next to you that will never be filled." The idea is not to scare them but to let them know that war and combat is a serious business and people die. It's not the individual that loses his life in combat that you have to worry about, it's those that have to deal with the loss and continue doing the job. The bottom line, however you in your own way do it, you need to prepare your squadron for the situation. It is a pretty confident commander that thinks he will never lose a jet in peace or in combat. I have been a deployed commander in one war and the commander in two other wars and I always had it in the back of my mind that something bad can happen. It is always a great feeling of relief when you get everyone home but if you do it long enough, sooner or later the odds will catch up to you. There is one person that you can always count on and that is your spouse. How are you going to tell her what happened and what she needs to do? Are you just going to dump it in

her lap over the phone and say, "we lost a jet today and you need to get with the spouse and make sure she is o.k." or have you talked to your spouse about what may happen in this situation. Every spouse fears that phone call in the middle of the night or the knock on the door by the Wing CC and the Chaplain. You may be hard-hearted but I can guarantee you that your spouse is not. It is just as much your responsibility to take care of the families. I can honestly say that my wife is the one that I turned to. It was a conversation that she and I had and no one else will ever know how she helped me. I am not trying to tell you what to tell your spouse or how to prepare your spouse. Only you understand your relationship with your spouse. What I am trying to tell you is to prepare yourself and your spouse for the situation.²

Suicides are an issue in peacetime at home station, and they can be an even bigger issue when deployed in a combat situation. The U.S. Army reported that soldiers committed suicide at a higher-than-usual rate during the initial phases of OIF.³ Although the rate was still lower than the national average, the Army's concern is understandable. Suicide prevention requires proactive thinking—know the pulse of the morale, utilize a buddy system, keep supervisors closely engaged, watch for signs. Utilize your base support organizations for additional information; make this a focus of your planning teams; conduct discussions with your unit supervisors.

Acts of terrorism, sabotage, accidents, illness, etc.: all of these things and many others can adversely affect mission accomplishment, and can have long term effects on members of your unit. Actively work for their prevention and prepare and train your Airmen in both prevention and response. Make yourself aware of the responsible agencies that deal with each of these issues. Practice and exercise with seriousness. Do not assume anything.

Chapter 7

Summary

The focus on this book is to provide insightful and experiential information that can help Air Force commanders achieve success during a limited-notice AEF combat deployment. Although I began this project with my view of a particular end state picture, that picture changed slightly throughout both the research and writing process. The research gave me additional insight on the importance of knowing yourself (your character), knowing what you stand for (your values), and infusing your values into your unit's values. Interestingly, I received those insights from both the reading that I did and from the interviews of present and former commanders.

The views of the former commanders were valuable because they have had time to deeply reflect on their past experiences. I heard about many specific issues that each commander faced during each phase of their missions. Every situation cannot and should not be covered in this book, but a good thinking and planning process should enable you to handle any crisis situation that may occur. As long as you remain proactive and centered on your values, you will have better control over situations which may occur.

The process of writing provided me an avenue to reflect also, and I perceived many common themes appearing over and over. So, the final desired end state picture for the book is one that contains those common themes that lead to true success, true excellence and lasting impact. It is

one that brings those themes to view with real-life examples from those who were thrust into situations they had planned, prepared, and trained for, but had little idea that they would face.

To summarize the themes, they are:

- know yourself thoroughly and anchor yourself with a good set of values, integrity being first (personal credo or mission statement and vision)
- keep yourself fit and balanced physically, mentally, spiritually, socially (your unit will follow your lead)
- anchor your unit with a good set of values (unit credo or mission statement and vision; set the bar high, don't compromise those values)
- know what your desired end state looks like
- plan, prepare, and train thoroughly and realistically (do the things most people don't want to do)
- Train up your subordinate leaders (prepare them for a future crisis and prepare them for future command)

In the end, it comes down to who you are and what you desire to do. Jeff Bowman is Fire Chief, San Diego Fire and Rescue; he led the fire response to the infamous wild fires around San Diego in 2003. He stands by four priorities—his 4Fs—Faith, Family, Friends, Fire Department, and he “drinks a bottle of patience every morning.”⁴

Someone has said that a river without banks is a puddle. When I apply that saying to human interactions, it reminds me of the job of a coach. Like those riverbanks, a good coach provides the direction and concentration for performers' energies, helping channel all their efforts toward a single desired outcome. Without that critical influence, the best achievements of the most

talented performers can lack the momentum and drive that make a group of individuals into champions.

-- Don Shula, former Head Coach, Miami Dolphins
Everyone's A Coach

Notes

¹ Perry M. Smith, *Rules and Tools for Leaders* (New York, NY: The Berkley Publishing Group, 2002), 116-117.

² Lt Col James Dennis, USAF, interviewed by the author, March 2004.

³ Dave Moniz and Steven Komarow, "Study: Army Must do More to Prevent Suicides," *USA Today*, 25 March 2004, 8A

⁴ Jeff Bowman, Chief, San Diego Fire and Rescue, lecture to The Senior Seminar, San Diego CA, 8 December 2003.

Appendix A

Morgan Stanley Story

Morgan Stanley is an international financial brokerage firm with 700 offices throughout the United States and in 28 countries around the world. They employ over 63,000 people. Morgan Stanley was the largest tenant in the World Trade Center. Their offices filled the floors from 43 to 74 in the south tower, where 2700 of their people worked every day. Another 1000 people worked in number 5 World Trade Center, just adjacent to the towers.

Brett Galloway, Morgan Stanley's Vice President of Corporate Communications, told me that Morgan Stanley developed a "contingency plan" at the time of the Gulf War in 1991. Because of bomb threats at that time, the question was posed, "What if the office was gone?" the thinking was that access to the office might be denied due to bomb threats. In response to this potential crisis the decision was made to develop a contingency back-up site. Suitable space was identified on Varick Street, not far from the twin towers and 400 computer work stations were installed. Aside from the workstations and basic furniture, the site was completely empty. Nobody worked there.

In 1993 when the first World Trade Center bomb incident occurred some of Morgan Stanley's people literally walked from the trade center offices over to Varick Street and went back to work. That attack occurred on a Friday. The following Monday, Morgan Stanley's operation was up and running at the Varick Street location.

Even more basic to the Morgan Stanley "contingency plan" was their evacuation plan. This was revamped and redesigned in the aftermath of the 1993 bombing when, "Smoke was coming up from the stairwells like a chimney." The crux of the plan was to get all their people out immediately. Floor wardens were designated on each floor. It was their responsibility to assure that everyone got out of the office immediately in the event of an emergency. No records or equipment were to be removed, people just needed to get out of the building. A video was made and circulated throughout the company to raise the awareness of all employees regarding the plans for reacting to emergencies. The plan and periodic updates was communicated and distributed to employees on a regular, ongoing basis.

All financial records were automatically backed up on a regular basis and stored at several sites around the country and the world. This redundancy insured that Morgan Stanley and its clients would not lose vital records in the event of a catastrophe.

At 8:45 a.m. eastern standard time on September 11, 2001 workers heard an explosion and could see flames and smoke coming from the adjacent north tower. Shortly thereafter an official announcement from the New York Port Authority came over the public address system in the south tower. "This building is secure. Please return to your office." Officials, fearing that

people would be hit by falling debris from the north tower, felt it would be safer for everyone to stay inside.

Despite the official announcement Morgan Stanley's decision had already been made. It was right in their plan. They would evacuate immediately. During the crucial next 18 minutes employees headed for the stairwells and started the long descent down the tower. Elevators were to be avoided because of the potential for becoming trapped due to a power failure or mechanical difficulties. At 9:03 a.m. eastern time, when the second Boeing 767 jet crashed into the south tower, right into the upper floors of Morgan Stanley's offices, floors 43 to 74 were essentially empty of workers. Morgan Stanley personnel were already far down the stairwells headed out of the building. When the plane hit people said they could feel the building sway from the impact. It took on average 30 to 60 minutes to complete the descent down the stairs. The stairwells became increasingly crowded as more and more people joined the exodus, yet there was little evidence of panic or hysteria during the evacuation.

Rick Rescorla, head of security for Morgan Stanley was stationed in the stairwell with a megaphone. His calm demeanor helped to quell any sense of panic. He gave instructions, suggesting women take off their high-heeled shoes and generally projected a sense of controlled urgency. In the 1993 bombing incident he had been the final Morgan Stanley employee to leave the building. He was last seen in the stairwell giving instructions. Rick Rescorla is listed as missing and will be remembered as one of the heroes of September 11.

In the immediate aftermath of the tragedy, Morgan Stanley faced the challenge of trying to account for all of the 3700 people working at the Trade Center. They **pulled out all the stops**, initiating an around the clock effort utilizing staff at their Discover Card call centers to field over 50,000 calls from people seeking or providing information. They **communicated** with their employees in New York and throughout the world via the company web-site where specific information was posted for World Trade Center employees as well as general messages to the whole company and its customers.

By September 13, Morgan Stanley had accounted for all but 40 of their people. The final toll, of those missing and presumed dead, stands at 6. While even 6 deaths is a terrible tragedy, it could have been much worse.

From a business perspective the company didn't miss a beat. Operations were not interrupted. No records were lost. The next day people went to work at the Varick Street "contingency" site. An additional 500 computers were ordered immediately to accommodate employees. Another contingency backup site across the Hudson River in Jersey City, New Jersey was likewise activated. Employees were instructed to call their clients and reassure them that Morgan Stanley was sound and that no records or client funds had been affected.¹

Notes

¹ Mark, Friedman, M.D., *Everyday Crisis Management* (Naperville, IL: First Decision Press, 2002), 209-213.

Appendix B

Recommended Reading List

Everyday Crisis Management, by Mark Friedman, M.D.

The author outlines the importance of being prepared for crisis situations ranging from personal injury to national disaster. He provides lessons in crisis prevention, management, and response. He provides easy to use checklists that you can use for your family and at your work and simple exercises that help you to understand crisis management.

Everyone's A Coach, by Don Shula and Ken Blanchard

Outstanding discussion of leadership principles and practices and the importance of character over talent.

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, by Steven R. Covey

This is not a quick fix leadership book. Covey explains how to transform yourself into an effective person in every role of your life. Very good, even if you do not think you need transforming.

Rules and Tools For Leaders, by Major General Perry M. Smith, Ph.D., USAF (retired)

One of the best books out there for someone newly taking charge.

Sharing Success—Owning Failure, by David L. Goldfein, Colonel, USAF

Best think piece for someone about ready to take command of an Air Force squadron.

My American Journey, by Colin Powell

A great read and a superb story in leadership development and action.

Any book by John C. Maxwell or Ken Blanchard

Books by people who have been under fire.

Glossary

| | |
|--------|-------------------------------------|
| ADO | Assistant Operations Officer |
| AEF | Air and Space Expeditionary Force |
| AEG | Air Expeditionary Group |
| AEW | Air Expeditionary Wing |
| AFI | Air Force Instruction |
| AFM | Air Force Manual |
| AFPD | Air Force Policy Directive |
| AFSC | Air Force Specialty Code |
| AOR | Area of Responsibility |
| ART | AEF Reporting Tool |
| CAF | Combat Air Forces |
| COMSEC | Communications Security |
| CSAF | Chief of Staff of the Air Force |
| DO | Operations Officer |
| DOC | Designated Operational Capabilities |
| DOD | Department of Defense |
| DRMD | Deployed Required Manning Document |
| FW | Fighter Wing |
| IDO | Installation Deployment Officer |
| IFR | Instrument Flight Rules |
| MAJCOM | Major Command |
| OAF | Operation ALLIED FORCE |
| OEF | Operation ENDURING FREEDOM |
| OIF | Operation IRAQI FREEDOM |
| OPSEC | Operations Security |
| PCA | Permanent Change of Assignment |
| PDF | Personnel Deployment Function |
| POC | Point of Contact |
| SNCO | Senior Noncommissioned Officer |
| SPINS | Special Instructions |

| | |
|-------|----------------------------------|
| TALCE | Tactical Airlift Control Element |
| UCC | Unit Control Center |
| UTC | Unit Task Code |
| WSO | Weapons System Operator |

sortie. An aircraft flight, takeoff to landing.

weapons system operator. An aircrew member who is trained to operate the offensive and/or defensive aircraft weapons systems.

radar. A method of detecting distant objects and determining their position, velocity, or other characteristics by analysis of very high frequency radio waves reflected from their surfaces.

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