

# WARRIOR



**GUIDELINES FOR MOTORCYCLE SAFETY PG. 8**

**Getting to 100:**

# Finding fuel for an empty tank

By Capt. Kasie L. Hummel, Ph.D.  
509th Medical Operations Squadron

Many times throughout our lives, we find ourselves flying on autopilot, going through the daily motions of life.

This cruise control often starts when we are stressed, neglecting ourselves and not functioning at 100 percent. For some, this may be a short-lived experience. For others, it may be a long-term rut.

Let's think about it like this: Your brain is like a gas tank. If we wake up in the morning with an already empty or daringly low level of fuel, what do we have to propel us through the day? When vehicles are forced to go through difficult terrain, gas mileage takes a hit as the engine uses more fuel. Our brains are similar. When we are confronted with challenges, we need more fuel to effectively navigate the path ahead. However, how do we acquire this fuel for life? Mental fitness.

Life is more mental than it is physical. Mental fitness comprises a set of exercises, coping tools or behaviors that we consistently do in an effort to improve our mental performance. We are essentially ensuring our tank is replenished regularly. If done consistently, this can serve as a prevention to mental problems from normal fatigue to lasting burn-out.

Professional athletes have long known this to be true. This is why individuals like LeBron James, Arthur Ashe, Joe Namath and Barry Zito cite mental fitness as the key to their successes.

Nevertheless, this level of elite functioning is not just reserved for athletic superstars. Special operators all over the world incorporate mental fitness into their mission preparation. One important thing to keep in mind is that these people are not special. The "right stuff" is not something with which you are born. They have just figured out how to incorporate this "fuel for life" into their training, which in turn makes them elite performers. This strategy can also be used by the everyday Airman.

**Dispelling the myths**

So how do you go about finding fuel in your empty gas tank when all your "go-to" coping tools are insufficient? Call in the cavalry. There are many agencies on base that can assist with filling up your tank, including Whiteman's mental health team. Now, before you go running for the hills after hearing the words "mental health," let's clarify a few misunderstandings.

First, let's talk numbers. One common myth is that if you seek mental health services, your career is over, done. This is false. In 2017, the Whiteman AFB Mental Health Clinic supported 372 new active-duty patients and only about 10 percent of those patients were formally restricted in some manner or had their status suspended for a period of time during treatment.

Moreover, out of the roughly 1,100 members who received mental health care at the clinic in 2017, only 2 percent were administratively separated or medically retired due to their psychiatric medical condition. More importantly, not one of those surveyed expressed unhappiness or disappointment with this outcome, as they received the care they needed.

These data reinforce that the mental health myth mentioned above is false. Whiteman's Mental Health clinic is here to return the warrior to the fight. All Airmen receive training on suicide prevention. Yet, we need to remove the

stigma surrounding mental health care as the primary obstacle to members seeking the help they need.

The fundamental basis of preventing mental health issues from manifesting is seeking help early. If our Airmen were more inclined to tackle problems early on, we would have fewer people functioning at suboptimal levels and more members functioning at that elite, LeBron James level.

A second common myth regarding mental health is that providers break patient confidentiality frequently and without regard. This is also false. A fundamental principle of our professional ethics codes requires us to maintain confidentiality. Thus, there are very few instances where we are required to break confidentiality, these include:

- **Potential harm to yourself, another person or government property**, usually commanders are contacted (and local authorities, if necessary) and advised what the threat is, what they should do to keep you safe, and what level of treatment healthcare providers are recommending;
- **Abuse, neglect, maltreatment of children, elders or others** in order to safeguard those involved;
- **Criminal actions**, including Uniform Code of Military Justice violations;
- **Potential risks to the mission**, including the inability to safeguard information or perform duties.

Mental health providers strive to be transparent with you about what information is shared, and they will take your opinion into consideration when determining the necessary course of action.

The third and final myth I will address in this commentary is the idea that a psychiatric condition is something that an individual chooses to have and this choice is completely under one's control. The notion that someone can just choose to no longer be depressed, for example, only contributes to the stigma of seeking help. What if we treated every illness the way we treat mental illness?

**Ask for help filling your tank**

So why allow yourself to function at less than capacity? With only one life to live, seek mental health services offered on base and get back to 100 percent. Our mental and behavioral health experts can help you address many aspects of your life, including career progression, goal setting, grief/loss, sleep enhancement, obstructive sleep apnea, interpersonal relationship skills, family system strengthening, mood changes, coping skills, academic performance, pain management, personality difficulties, stress management, parenting, smoking cessation, substance abuse and traumatic experiences.

Our health care providers will tailor your care to your personality, learning style, unique issues, background and preference. An elite level of functioning is not out of your reach if you are willing to fuel up by giving proper attention to your mental fitness.

**To seek mental health services at  
Whiteman Air Force Base,  
call (660) 687-4341.**

**THE WARRIOR**

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The deadline for article submissions to the Warrior is noon Friday. If a holiday falls on Friday, the deadline then becomes 4 p.m. Thursday. Articles will be published on a space-available basis. Submissions do not guarantee publication.

For more information, call the Warrior office at 660-687-5727, email 509th.bw.pa@us.af.mil, fax 660-687-7948, or write to us at Whiteman Warrior, 509th Bomb Wing, 509th Spirit Blvd. Suite 116, Whiteman AFB, Mo., 65305.

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**IRRATIONAL THOUGHT** *replace with* **RATIONAL THOUGHT**

**I have to be perfect all the time**

**I would like to be perfect all the time, but it is alright to make mistakes**



**1. IDENTIFY YOUR THOUGHT**  
Can you see recurring thoughts or themes?



**2. CHALLENGE THE THOUGHT**  
Evaluate the thought and look for evidence for or against it.



**3. REPLACEMENT**  
Replace the thought with something more reality based.

## On the cover

U.S. Air Force illustration by Senior Airman Jovan Banks

Little over half-way through the year, more than 494 people have been killed on the state's roadway, according to recent Missouri Department of Transportation data. With motorcyclists facing particularly high risk, base leaders also announced a comprehensive review of the motorcycle safety procedures and the upcoming launch of a rider mentorship program facilitating a relationship with motorcycle experts.

NEWS BRIEFS



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**WEATHER**

<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>
Sunny	Sunny
Hi 93	Hi 91
Lo 67	Lo 69

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Monday</b>
Mostly Sunny	Mostly Sunny
Hi 91	Hi 92
Lo 71	Lo 73

# WWII hero visits Whiteman, sees 'completely different' type of bomber

By **Brye Steeves**  
509th Bomb Wing Public Affairs

After spending most of his life on military bomber airplanes, 96-year-old Walter Olmsted Jr. recently got his first up-close look at the Air Force's youngest bomber: the B-2 Spirit.

Olmsted traveled from his Arizona home to Whiteman Air Force Base to visit family. His trip left him awestruck, and also feeling nostalgic about his time in various bombers.

In his 25-year military career, Olmsted logged more than 200 combat hours in World War II as a tail gunner of the B-17 Flying Fortress. He has also flown in the B-26, B-29 and B-50, among others, and was later part of the B-52's maintenance crew.

The B-2, however, is not like the other bombers, Olmsted said. During his visit to Whiteman AFB, Olmsted was able to see the B-2 on display as well as talk with some of the Airmen who maintain it. He also met Brig. Gen. John Nichols, commander of the 509th Bomb Wing, and Chief Master Sgt. James Lyda, the command chief of the 509th Bomb Wing, who thanked him for his service and commended his experience with military bomber planes.

Aside from its unique batwing shape and its two pilots' close quarters – "I couldn't get over how small the cockpit is" – Olmsted was most awed by the B-2's electrical system. "The whole inside is covered with instruments," he said. "It's completely different" from the bombers of his Air Force career.

It's a career that was nearly cut short by war, but, as luck would have it, ultimately included many bomber assignments and ended with a long list of military honors.

"I had a good life in the service," the veteran said.

**Leaving the farm**

Olmsted was born in upstate New York on Sept. 22, 1922, and grew up on a dairy farm. He graduated high school just before Imperial Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941 and the U.S. entered the war. He was 19.

"I enlisted to avoid being drafted," he said.

Olmsted was sent to Fort Dix, New Jersey, and put on kitchen duty, until one day, scrubbing out trash cans in the mess hall, "this little guy, a little lieutenant, ran in shouting, 'Olmsted, Olmsted! You're in the Army Air Corps!'"

After being shuffled around various bases



Photo courtesy of Walter Olmsted Jr.

for training, the newly-minted Airman was stationed in England as part of a 10-person B-17 crew. He was "the eyes and ears" tracking the aircraft behind theirs, Olmsted Jr. said.

He flew more than 40 missions over Europe from 1943-45. His plane – named Dearly Beloved – came under fire during one of those missions. Olmsted Jr. was sitting in his "office," as he referred to his spot in the airplane's tail, when Dearly Beloved was hit and he was struck in his hip by a bullet.

Olmsted Jr. recovered with 14 stitches and

still has part of the bullet that was removed.

"I was lucky on that deal," he said. "It never flew again after that, it had so many holes in it."

After a brief military hiatus, Olmsted Jr. reenlisted in 1948 and was part of bomber flying missions during the Cold War. He eventually transitioned to a maintenance for B-52s until he retired as a chief master sergeant in 1970.

Olmsted Jr. was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, a Purple Heart, and numerous air medals and accolades, including the Meritorious Service Medal at his retirement.

**Air Force family tradition**

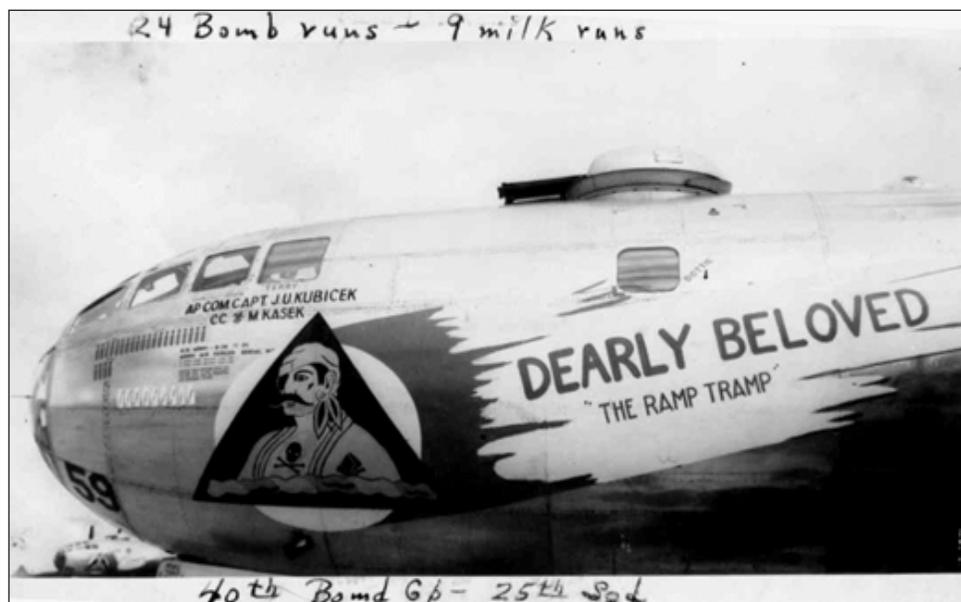
Olmsted knows, as evidenced by an aircraft like the B-2 Spirit when compared to the Dearly Beloved B-17, that the Air Force today is different from the Air Force he knew.

Still, he couldn't be more proud of his family's tradition of service, he said. His brother also served in the military, as did his son, Walter Olmstead III, who accompanied him on his recent visit to Whiteman AFB along with two of his three daughters.

Walter served in the Air Force for 26 years. His oldest daughter is an Air Force major and the other two are civilian employees at Air Force bases – including Lorena Olmsted, who is part of Team Whiteman.

It's a family legacy that lives on.

"I was in the Air Force for 25 years and I wouldn't change it for the world."



Courtesy photo



U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Andy Kin

**Retired Chief Master Sgt. Walter Olmstead Jr., a World War II veteran, visited Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri and got a chance to see how U.S. Air Force bombers have evolved since his time in the service. In his 25-year military career, Olmsted logged more than 200 combat hours in World War II as a tail gunner of the B-17 Flying Fortress. He has also flown in the B-26, B-29 and B-50, among others, and was later part of the B-52's maintenance crew.**

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# Airman posthumously receives Medal of Honor

By Staff Sgt. Ryan Conroy

24th Special Operations Wing Public Affairs

**HURLBURT FIELD, Fla. (AFNS) --** The White House announced July 27, 2018, that Air Force Tech. Sgt. John Chapman will be posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor Aug. 22, for his extraordinary heroism during the Battle of Takur Ghar, Afghanistan, in March 2002.

According to the Medal of Honor nomination, Chapman distinguished himself on the battlefield through “conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity,” sacrificing his life to preserve those of his teammates.

## Making it look easy

Chapman enlisted in the Air Force Sept. 27, 1985, as an information systems operator, but felt called to be part of Air Force special operations. In 1989, he cross-trained to become an Air Force combat controller.

According to friends and family, Chapman had a tendency to make the difficult look effortless, and consistently sought new challenges. Dating back to his high school days, he made the varsity soccer squad as a freshman. Also an avid muscle-car enthusiast, he rebuilt and maintained an old Pontiac GTO.

Combat control would prove to be another instance of “making it look easy.”

Combat control training is more than two years long and amongst the most rigorous in the U.S. military. Only about one in ten Airmen who start the program graduate.

From months of rigorous physical fitness training to multiple joint schools – including military SCUBA, Army static-line and freefall, air traffic control, and combat control schools – Chapman is remembered as someone who could do anything put in front of him.

“One remembers two types of students – the sharp ones and the really dull ones – and Chapman was in the sharp category,” said Ron Childress, a former Combat Control School instructor.

Combat Control School is one of the most difficult points of a combat controller’s training program, from completing arduous tasks without sleeping for days, to running miles with weighted rucksacks and a gas mask.

“During one of his first days at Combat Control School, I noticed a slight smirk on his face like [the training] was too simple for him...and it was,” said Childress.

Following Combat Control School, Chapman served with the 1721st Combat Control Squadron at Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina, where he met his wife, Valerie, in 1992. They had two daughters, who were the center of Chapman’s world even when he was away from home – which was common in the combat control career field.

“He would come home from a long trip and immediately have on his father hat – feeding, bathing, reading and getting his girls ready for bed,” said Chief Master Sgt. Michael West, who served with Chapman through Combat Control School, a three-year tour in Okinawa, Japan, and at Pope AFB. “They were his life and he was proud of them...to the Air Force he was a great hero...what I saw was a great father.”

## The Battle of Takur Ghar

In conjunction with Operation Anaconda in March 2002, small reconnaissance teams were tasked to establish observation posts in strategic locations in Afghanistan, and when able,



**Air Force Tech. Sgt. John A. Chapman, a combat controller, was killed during a fierce battle against al-Qaida fighters in Takur Ghar, Afghanistan, March 4, 2002. He will be posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for “conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty.”**

direct U.S. air power to destroy enemy targets. The mountain of Takur Ghar was an ideal spot for such an observation post, with excellent visibility to key locations.

For Chapman and his joint special operations teammates, the mission on the night of March 3 was to establish a reconnaissance position on Takur Ghar and report al-Qaida movement in the Sahi-Kowt area.

“This was very high profile, no-fail job, and we picked John,” said retired Air Force Col. Ken Rodriguez, Chapman’s commander at the time. “In a very high-caliber career field, with the highest quality of men – even then – John stood out as our guy.”

During the initial insertion onto Afghanistan’s Takur Ghar mountaintop on March 4, the MH-47 “Chinook” helicopter carrying Chapman and the joint special operations reconnaissance team was ambushed. A rocket propelled grenade struck the helicopter and bullets ripped through the fuselage. The blast ripped through the left side of the Chinook, throwing Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Neil Roberts off the ramp of the helicopter onto the enemy-infested mountaintop below.

The severely damaged aircraft was unable to return for Roberts, and performed a controlled crash landing a few miles from the mountaintop. Thus began the chain of events that led to unparalleled acts of valor by numerous joint special operations forces, the deaths of seven

U.S. servicemen and now, 16 years later, posthumous award of the Medal of Honor to

Chapman.

Alone, against the elements and separated from his team with enemy personnel closing in, Roberts was in desperate need of support. The remaining joint special operations team members, fully aware of his precarious situation, immediately began planning a daring rescue attempt that included returning to the top of Takur Ghar where they had just taken heavy enemy fire.

As the team returned to Roberts’ last-known position, now on a second MH-47, the entrenched enemy forces immediately engaged the approaching helicopter with heavy fire.

Miraculously, the helicopter, although heavily damaged, was able to successfully offload the remaining special operations team members and return to base. Chapman, upon exiting the helicopter, immediately charged uphill through the snow toward enemy positions while under heavy fire from three directions.

Once on the ground, the team assessed the situation and moved quickly to the high ground. The most prominent cover and concealment on the hilltop were a large rock and tree. As they approached the tree, Chapman received fire from two enemy personnel in a fortified position. He returned fire, charged the enemy position and took out the enemy combatants within.

Almost immediately, the team began taking machine gun fire from another fortified enemy position only 12 meters away. Chapman

deliberately moved into the open to engage the new enemy position. As he heroically engaged the enemy, he was struck by a burst of gunfire and became critically injured.

Chapman regained his faculties and continued to fight relentlessly despite his severe wounds. He sustained a violent engagement with multiple enemy fighters, for over an hour through the arrival of the quick reaction force before paying the ultimate sacrifice. In performance of these remarkably heroic actions, Chapman is credited with saving the lives of his teammates.

## The upgrade to MOH

“John was always selfless – it didn’t just emerge on Takur Ghar – he had always been selfless and highly competent, and thank God for all those qualities,” said Rodriguez. “He could have hunkered down in the bunker and waited for the (Quick Reaction Force) and (Combat Search and Rescue) team to come in, but he assessed the situation and selflessly gave his life for them.”

Chapman was originally awarded the Air Force Cross for his actions; however, following a review of Air Force Cross and Silver Star recipients directed by then-Secretary of Defense Ash Carter, the secretary of the Air Force recommended Chapman’s Air Force Cross be upgraded to the Medal of Honor.

In accordance with Air Force policy whereby Medal of Honor recipients are automatically promoted one grade on the first day of the month following the award, Chapman will be posthumously promoted to the rank of master sergeant on Sept. 1, 2018.

Although Chapman will be awarded the Medal of Honor, family and friends have expressed his humility and how he would react today, if he were here.

“If John were to find out he received the Medal of Honor, he would be very humbled and honored,” said Chief Master Sergeant West. “He was just doing his job, and that’s what he would say at this moment.”

His widow, Valerie Nessel, has always known her husband was capable of such greatness, but asserts that John wouldn’t be anxious to be in the spotlight.

“[John] would want to recognize the other men that lost their lives,” said Valerie. “Even though he did something he was awarded the Medal of Honor for, he would not want the other guys to be forgotten – that they were part of the team together.”

“I think he would say that his Medal of Honor was not just for him, but for all of the guys who were lost,” she added.

In total, seven service members lost their lives during the Battle of Takur Ghar:

Petty Officer 1st Class Neil Roberts – U.S. Navy SEAL

Tech. Sgt. John Chapman – U.S. Air Force combat control

Senior Airman Jason Cunningham – U.S. Air Force pararescue

Cpl. Matthew Commons – U.S. Army Ranger

Sgt. Bradley Crose – U.S. Army Ranger

Spc. Marc Anderson – U.S. Army Ranger

Sgt. Philip Svitak – U.S. Army 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment

“John would have, so I’ll say it for him. Every American who set foot on that mountaintop acted with great courage and selflessness, and deserves all of our praise and admiration for the sacrifices they made,” said Rodriguez.



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**C:** controls

**C:** chassis

**L:** lights

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### **TOWN HALL MEETING**



Professional Development Center  
Aug. 6 12:00 – 2:00 p.m.

**OR**

**LIVE** on AFMS-Whiteman-509th-  
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