

Commander's Call Topics



December 11, 2014

*"It is possible to fly without motors,
but not without knowledge and skill."*

Wilbur Wright
American inventor
(1867-1912)

It all began in earnest
111 years ago.
Catch a glimpse of some footage
of the original
Wright Brothers flight
in this [National Museum of the U.S. Air
Force clip](#)

Make Holiday Happiness Happen

"Happy Holidays!" We all say and hear the annual refrain so often that it borders on being automatic. And why not? This time of year there's much to celebrate — Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, even the winter solstice, when we begin the welcome rotation from the diminishing number of daylight hours to the gradual increase in the number of minutes of sunshine and warmth.

Keeping the holidays happy is not quite as reflexive, even though the wingman tradition helps all of us to be aware of ourselves and our fellow Airmen. No doubt: Safe holidays are happy holidays, and at this time of year, there are too many opportunities to forget or overlook basic safety either through forgetfulness or in a misguided attempt to save time. As the saying goes, "If you don't have time to do it right the first time, when are going to have time to do it over?"

Remembering a few safety basics about this special time of year and its unique customs can boost one's chances of having a safe holiday season. [Ready.gov](#) tells us how. Examples of these reminders follow.

Candles. Festivals and rituals often rely on candlepower at this dark time of year to supply brightness and cheer. As beautiful as they are, candles can also be surprisingly dangerous. Keep lit menorah and centerpiece candles at least 12 inches away from decorations and other things that burn. [Candle safety](#) is easy, inexpensive and basic.

[Disaster Kits](#). Whether you must shelter in your home or car because of a travel-stopping blizzard or a utility failure, it's essential to have a well-supplied disaster kit. The good news: Once you have assembled one for your home — complete with supplies for unique needs — it can be made transportable to take in the car when the family decides to go "over the mountain and through the woods."

Pet travel. If you've decided that [Christmas travel includes the four-legged members of the family](#), a safe and stress-free environment is not without forethought. Vaccinations, ID and being prepared for the possibility that your pet may not be welcome everywhere are all part of your preparedness plan for your pet.

Car trouble, personal injuries and weather-related delays can be part of any holiday. And so can coping with each. Fortunately, there's an app for that. Free, fun, useful and life-saving, [the American Red Cross](#) makes your state-of-the-art phone a state-of-the-art safety tool.

"Happy Holidays!"

► TRENDING...

"This is not just a military thing," [Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James](#) said at a conference sponsored by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, [referring to the air campaign against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant](#). "This has got to be a political solution, and ultimately, there needs to be various accommodations, particularly in Iraq."

► RESOURCES

Website access to the following resources can be gained by clicking on the name.

[AF.mil](#)

[Airman magazine](#)

[Military OneSource/HomeFront](#)

[Air Force Personnel Center](#)

[Air Reserve Personnel Center](#)

[Department of Defense News](#)

[Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

[TRICARE](#)

[U.S. Government Website](#)

[Air Force Association](#)

[Scholarships](#)

[Air Force Safety Center](#)

[Civil Service Employment Opportunities](#)

[NAF Employment Opportunities](#)

[Air Force Bands/Outreach](#)

► THIS WEEK IN AIR FORCE HISTORY

Dec 11, 1986 - The F-15E dual-role fighter made its first flight at St. Louis.

Dec. 12, 1944 - Maj. Richard I. Bong, 49th Fighter Group, 9th Fighter Squadron, with 38 aerial victories, received the Medal of Honor from General MacArthur in ceremonies at Tacloban in the Philippines.

Dec. 13, 1958 - Gordo, a one-pound squirrel monkey, survived a flight to a height of 300 miles in a Jupiter missile nose cone. The nose cone returned and landed in the Atlantic Ocean some 1,700 miles southeast of the Cape Canaveral launching site; however, Gordo died before the nose cone could be recovered.

Dec. 13, 1941 - In an executive order, President Franklin D. Roosevelt authorized the Secretary of War to take control of any civilian airline needed for the war effort. Contracts with the airlines permitted the purchase of aircraft and airline services.

Dec. 14, 1903 - Wilbur Wright made a first powered airplane flight at Kill Devil Hills, Kitty Hawk, N.C. Although he flew 105 feet in 3.5 seconds, the plane crashed, and this effort was not recognized as the first sustained or controlled flight.

Dec. 15, 2006 - An F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter took off for its first flight as part of system development testing in Fort Worth, Texas.

Dec. 16, 1958 - Launching operations began down the Pacific Missile Range with a successful Thor missile launch from Vandenberg AFB, Calif. This was the first ballistic missile flight over the Pacific Ocean.

Dec. 17, 1903 - Orville Wright made the first sustained, controlled power airplane flight in the Kill Devil Hills, near Kitty Hawk, N.C. In the fourth and longest flight of the day, the Wright Flyer flew 852 feet in 59 seconds.

► CURRENT ISSUES

"Open Door" with SecAF invites questions in advance

[Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James](#) will host an "Open Door" town hall discussion from the Defense Media Activity Broadcast Center, Tuesday, Dec. 16, and suggestions for questions/topics to be discussed can be sent directly to the Secretary's Facebook page, www.facebook.com/Deborah.Lee.James #SecAFchat.

[Air Force looks at innovative acquisition processes](#)

"Bending the Cost Curve" by partnering with industry to produce leaner, more innovative spending practices will support the Air Force in remaining the world's greatest air force and support the Air Force leadership in making responsible spending and cost-cutting initiatives.

► PERSONNEL ISSUES

[109 Airmen on December enlisted supplemental promotion list](#)

The supplemental promotion process, whereby Airmen tested outside of their required cycle because of an extended temporary duty assignment or deployment in support of a contingency, is based on overall promotion scores and has led to the selection of 109 Airmen for promotion.

► ENVIRONMENT, SPACE AND TECHNOLOGY

[Gen. Hyten: Future of AF is air, space, cyberspace integration](#)

The complexities of global space operations and the seamless integration of air, space and cyberspace into everyday life for all Americans -- military and civilian -- was the topic of a presentation by [Gen. John E. Hyten](#), the commander of the Air Force Space Command when he spoke during a breakfast at the Capitol Hill Club recently.

For more information on Air Force heritage, visit <http://www.airforcehistory.af.mil>

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