

# Commander's Call Topics



March 12, 2015

*"A mind is a terrible thing to waste."*

United Negro College Fund motto  
first adopted by UNCF 1972.

[U.S. Census Bureau Facts For Women's History Month](#)  
organizes women's occupations, earnings, military status and more by the numbers.

## The Incredible Brain

There's a lot of media focus on traumatic brain injury (TBI) in sports, and that's not to be discounted. TBI is a leading cause of disability and death in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control, there are 1.7 million occurrences of TBI every year, and approximately 5.3 million survivors who are enduring the resulting disabilities. Some will never get any better.

For the military, the Department of Defense (DOD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) define TBI as "any traumatically induced structural injury and/or physiological disruption of brain function as a result of an external force."

According to the VA, brain injury results from a variety of direct and indirect trauma: the head being struck by an object, the head striking an object, the brain undergoing an acceleration/deceleration movement without direct external trauma to the head, a foreign body penetrating the brain, force generated from events such as a blast or explosion, or other force.

While such trauma is not limited to war, TBI is much more prevalent among war veterans than among the general population.

How can this trauma be mitigated? There are three actions to take — any one of which will likely lessen the effects of head trauma. The opportunity for optimum results increases with their combination. 1) Learn how to recognize the incidence of TBI. 2) Know the symptoms and outward manifestations of TBI. 3) Know where to go for help.

First things first. Download the free app called [Concussion Coach](#), developed by the VA for veterans, servicemembers and others. It features education about the symptoms and the tools for screening and tracking them. While it's not meant to be a replacement for diagnosis, medical treatment or therapy, it is excellent support for that all-important first step.

Second, although only a health professional can effectively diagnose traumatic brain injury, everyone should be aware of the [symptoms](#), and everyone should know that not all the symptoms need to present themselves before a person is diagnosed with TBI.

Third, get help. Be aware of the Veterans Traumatic Brain Injury Care Improvement Act of 2014 and all its potential. Know, too, that the VA is a solid resource for [understanding TBI](#).

Concussions can occur miles from home on the battlefield, in the home, and at any point in between. To see all the regions of the brain that can be injured, the American Brain Injury Association (ABIA) has designed a site called the [Interactive Brain](#). It not only increases the viewer's knowledge of what can be distorted during a brain injury, it underscores why ABIA has designated March as Brain Injury Awareness month and adopted the biennial theme "Not alone."

*Martha J. Lockwood*  
Chief, Information Products, AFPRO

### ► TRENDING...

"There's simply no country in the world as widely diverse as the U.S.," said [Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James](#), keynoting at the [Center for a New American Security's "Women and Leadership in National Security" conference](#) in Washington. "Progress has been made, but we (the Air Force) can do better."

## ► 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

**March 12 - 14, 1980** - Two 410 BMW B-52Hs from K. I. Sawyer AFB, Michigan, flew 19,353 nautical miles around the world nonstop in 42 hours 30 minutes, averaging 488 MPH. Majors William H. Thurston and John M. Durham commanded the flight from Offutt AFB, Nebraska, across Canada, the North Atlantic, Europe, the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean, the Strait of Malacca, the South China Sea, and back to Offutt. They earned the Mackay Trophy for the flight.

**March 13, 2007** - The first MQ-9 Reaper, a newer, larger and stronger version of the MQ-1 Predator unmanned aerial vehicle, arrived at Creech AFB, Nevada. The 42nd Attack Squadron commander, Lt. Col. Jon Greene, flew the MQ-9 more than 250 miles in two hours to land there.

**March 14, 2001** - An Army CH-47 Chinook released the X-40A at 15,000 feet successfully for its first free flight and autonomous landing at Edwards AFB, California.

**March 15, 1956** - The Air Force issued a requirement for an air-to-surface missile for the B-52. This missile became the Hound Dog.

**March 16, 1926** - Dr. Robert H. Goddard test flew the world's first liquid-fueled rocket at Auburn, Massachusetts. It flew 184 feet in 2.5 seconds at about 70 MPH.

**March 17, 1967** - The U.S. and Thai governments announced that Air Force units in Thailand were flying missions against North Vietnam.

**March 18, 1977** - All 10 members in the first group of undergraduate women pilot students completed the Phase II Training program in the T-37 Tweet. They then started Phase III with the T-38 Talon.

## ► CURRENT ISSUES

[March marks Brain Injury Awareness Month](#)

TRICARE and the Military Health System offer support, tools and services to educate service members, their families, retirees and DOD civilians about the prevention and treatment of traumatic brain injury (TBI).

## ► FAMILY HEALTH AND SAFETY

[5 excuses for not quitting](#)

Quitting tobacco may be the most courageous act, but there are plenty of "reasons" for people to duck the issue.

## ► PERSONNEL ISSUES

[Civilian developmental webcasts slated for March, April](#)

March and April webcasts will help prepare civilian Airmen to apply for leadership development opportunities. Applications are due no later than May 1.

[Air Force waives renters insurance obligation in privatized housing](#)

Read the fine print on the BAH carefully. Renters insurance may no longer be a part of it.

## ► FAMILY HEALTH AND SAFETY

[US, South Korean air forces sharpen cyberspace defense](#)

U.S. military personnel from bases around South Korea and the U.S. and their South Korean counterparts gather at the South Korean Air Force Simulation Center to practice evolving elements of combat on a computer-based program.

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

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