



**“THE USAFE-AFAFRICA WAY”**

**OPERATION GRIT  
IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE**

**1 Sep 2018**



**"Professional USAFE-AFAFRICA Airmen who  
embody the warrior ethos and AF core values"**

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## INTRODUCTION

Our extraordinary Airmen relentlessly do their job while dealing with the potential for prolonged stress, especially in today's time-compressed, dynamic, and dangerous operational environment. Service members and their families are also forced to manage other military-related stressors such as frequent relocations, long work hours, and the additional family separations associated with unaccompanied tours and domestic training exercises. Our Airmen are required to be multi-dimensional, striving to balance technical competence with strong leadership principals and maintain harmony within their work/life balance.

Our Air Force is the best in the world at developing technical experts, but just like technical expertise, leadership and professionalism doesn't just happen by chance—it must be deliberately engineered. Our goal is to have Airmen who embody our core values and demonstrate them through their behaviors. This will create the community and culture we all desire. We can't rely on waiting for annual training to think about these character traits and have deliberate, meaningful conversations. We have a commitment to lead and mentor our Airmen every moment of every day.

Our core values—integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do—are commitments Airmen internalize when they join the Air Force. **These values are the foundations for leadership, decision-making, and success**, no matter the level of an Airman's assignment, the difficulty of the task at hand, or the dangers presented by the mission.\*

In accordance with the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, we believe in revitalizing the squadrons in giving command teams the time and tools to foster a culture of professionalism. By relying on our core values and competencies of Airmanship, we strongly believe we will see second and third order effects of healthier choices, positive behaviors, stronger relationships, and reduction in destructive behaviors.

The USAFE-AFAFRICA Operation GRIT is our holistic approach to strengthen our resilience, reinforce our protective factors and reduce unwanted behaviors through deliberate and meaningful personal and professional development. Focusing on our core values, shared purpose, and strong connections will aid in assisting our most vital resource, our USAFE-AFAFRICA Airman Warriors (Total Force)!

This implementation guide provides Air Force leaders at all levels  
with the overall intent and background of Operation GRIT,  
steps through the “Check 6” professional development CONOPS,  
and provides additional resources to continue building professional Airman Warriors.

See Appendix A for background information, including details concerning the USAFE-AFAFRICA Rapid Improvement Event that started this grassroots effort.

\*[http://www.doctrine.af.mil/Portals/61/documents/Volume\\_2/V2-D05-Core-Values.pdf](http://www.doctrine.af.mil/Portals/61/documents/Volume_2/V2-D05-Core-Values.pdf)

## USAFE-AFAFRICA OPERATION GRIT

**GRIT is our C-MAJCOM's initiative to connect our Airmen to each other, to our USAFE-AFAFRICA heritage, and to the broader Air Force mission. We are investing in our collective success by providing the time, tools, and resources to enhance personal and professional performance and promote a shared responsibility of Airmen taking care of Airmen.**

The Commander of USAFE-AFAFRICA has laid out our priorities clearly: We are here to protect our Allies, build partner nations, and project the pure intent of America's might. USAFE-AFAFRICA Airmen are the 300 Spartans standing strong between any threat and our country. We are constantly working, traveling, building, and operating in the same locations where great leaders and warriors have stood throughout history. We are here for one ultimate mission – peace.

Operation GRIT is about building an Airmen culture of professional warriors who strive to do right, carry out the mission, and understand they are an integral part of the overall team. It's how we develop our Airman culture that focuses on the essential character traits: core values, perseverance, courage, resilience, and warrior ethos. It's our commitment to continually focus on developing our Airmen to this warrior mindset.

In order for this to work, Commanders and supervisors at every level must have active and sustained engagement with their people. Units will be returned time from previous, standardized trainings to be reinvested towards our mission and for our leaders to be more involved with their Airmen. Commanders and supervisors set the boundaries and expectations, while Airmen model behaviors of their leaders. Behaviors are the observable measures of our effectiveness... trust, effective communication, and demonstrating core values. Walking the talk!



Operation GRIT is a multi-faceted initiative integrating to sync a shared message across the command, while giving time and autonomy back to squadrons.



### **Integrated Resilience and Violence Prevention**

In collaboration with Commanders, Community Action Teams (specifically Community Support Coordinators and Violence Prevention Integrators) will continue to resource and focus on offering resilience and inter-personal and self-directed violence prevention initiatives and sustainment tools through a targeted approach and based on the needs of the squadrons. Commanders are encouraged to integrate these initiatives within the existing daily mission and not create an “additional check box.” GRIT is who we are and our culture. **Success will be measured by our observable behavior rather than time-intensive and low-result compliance accountability.** USAFE’s trust in leaders doing their duty and incorporating the GRIT initiatives are also observable by its results.

Incoming Airmen (military and civilian) who have never received bystander training (aka Green Dot) will still receive the foundational training. Check 6 will incorporate the “Ask, Care, and Escort” message as well as a sharp focus on suicide prevention protective factors (sense of belonging, shared purpose, strengthening relationships, etc.) and meets the requirement for annual suicide prevention training. Commander’s Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) talking points will meet the statutory training requirement (separate from Check 6 mentoring tools).

Commanders, at all levels, are responsible for Operation GRIT implementation. Consider establishing a Resilience/Prevention team within the squadron to focus on helping create strong connections and morale throughout the unit, as well as planning resilience events and community mobilizing initiatives; utilize already trained Master Resilience Trainers, Resilience Training Assistants, Green Dot Implementers and Early Adopters, Volunteer Victim Advocates and young Airmen to foster innovative ideas

### **COMUSAFE Mission Brief Video / Strategic Policy**

The COMUSAFE Mission Brief video will be distributed by Wing Commanders to Squadron Commanders in Sept 2018 as part of the initial roll out of Operation GRIT. Squadron Commanders will hold an all-call, play the video, and connect their squadron’s priorities to that of the Wing and Command.

Every Airmen, from every AFSC, will hear directly from the COMUSAFE that they matter and are important to the overall mission. The video will also be played at all subsequent Newcomers' Orientations.

### **Commander's Toolkit**

USAFE-AFAFRICA Operation GRIT SharePoint site is located at: <https://cs2.eis.af.mil/sites/13819> Click to request access. This toolkit includes Check 6 professional development worksheets as well as supporting videos and resources for facilitators. There is a comment area on the SharePoint site to post positive and/or constructive feedback so that USAFE-AFAFRICA can constantly be tweaking the initiative for the better.

### **Community Action Plans (CAP)**

The CAP is required by HAF to ensure commands and installations coordinate efforts to assist Airmen. USAFE-AFAFRICA Operation GRIT has been incorporated into the HQ USAFE-AFAFRICA and Installation CAPs as our united effort.

### **Daily AF Heritage**

USAFE-AFAFRICA will push AF Heritage notifications to all assigned Airmen. This daily message will provide a short synopsis of a significant event or operation that occurred on that specific day in our AF history. These snippets will serve as a reminder of our heritage and instill pride in our Air Force and USAFE-AFAFRICA. Emphasizing past accomplishments and highlighting team achievements motivates us to carry on the legacy of valor exemplified by Airmen throughout our history.

### **Monthly No Email/No Tasker Hour**

Each wing is highly encouraged to designate one hour a month as a "No email/No tasker hour". This hour is for commanders and supervisors to interact with their unit members and teams. Each wing should determine the best/most advantageous time for their wing and should ensure the day and time chosen empowers commanders to best meet the Commander's intent of strengthening trust throughout the unit. Consistently blocking this time at the wing-level conveys COMUSAFE's commitment to providing Commanders with the time and resources to continually connect with their Airmen and develop deeper levels of trust throughout their organizations.

### **Monthly "Check 6" Tool**

Supervisors at all levels will facilitate discussions, utilizing the "Check 6" tool. These discussions focus on deliberate and meaningful topics to be conducted in small groups. Each topic will instill and promote the warrior ethos and our AF core values. The MAJCOM monthly communication plan is designed to keep us focused on a synchronized message each month. However, commanders have flexibility to tailor the monthly message to best meet the needs of their organization.

Monthly Check 6 discussion worksheets are available on the USAFE-AFAFRICA SharePoint site: <https://cs2.eis.af.mil/sites/13819>. At their discretion, Commander's may conduct Check 6 discussions during existing meetings, such as staff meeting, roll call, guard mount, shift turnover, etc. or during a separate, dedicated meeting. Commanders, at all levels, are responsible for implementation and will ensure routine, timely execution and document accomplishment as they determine appropriate. The goal is to include all Airmen with the Check 6 discussions.

**By investing in the professional development of our most valuable resource – our Airmen, we will cultivate a culture of trust and teamwork across USAFE-AFAFRICA.**

## **CHECK 6 CONOPS**

### **“Developing Professional Airmen Warriors”**

Commanders are responsible for ensuring Airman development (AFI 1-2)

#### **I. Overview**

- A. Effective 1 September 2018, supervisors at all levels will facilitate discussions, utilizing the “Check 6” tool. These discussions focus on deliberate and meaningful topics to be conducted in small groups. Each month’s topic will instill and promote the Warrior Ethos and our AF Core Values to drive cultural change by investing in the professional development of our most valuable resource – our Airmen.
- B. Check 6 may be conducted during existing (staff meeting, roll call, guard mount, shift turnover, PT, etc.) or as separate monthly meetings, at the Commander’s discretion.
- C. Commanders, at all levels, are responsible for implementation and to collaborate with their Community Action Team to focus on resilience and inter-personal/self-directed violence prevention initiatives based on the needs of the squadron.
- D. Check 6 monthly discussions replace the requirement to conduct Green Dot Refresher Training and/or the AF Sustainability Toolkit (Tools to Create an Environment of Dignity, Respect, and Connectedness) from 1 Sep 2018 – 31 Dec 2019.
- E. Squadron commanders will continue to deliver the mandatory, annual AF SAPR Talking Points (POC is installation SARC).
- F. Incoming Airmen (military and civilian) will receive foundational bystander skills at their accession source and/or first duty assignment. Violence Prevention Integrators are the POC for Green Dot and will provide this training.
- G. The objective is for the maximum number of Airmen to receive Check 6 each month.

#### **II. Purpose - Check 6 will ensure:**

- A. Airmen will have the protective systems in place to fortify our integrity, talent and readiness
- B. An approach to synergize Resilience (a protective factor set of skills to cope with mission and life challenges) within existing Professional Development
- C. Topic-targeted mentoring and development of Airmen, within the guidance of USAFE-AFAFRICA, application at squadron commander discretion
- D. A reduction in the established 650k training hours (21 hours annually per Airman) to 93k (approx. 3 hours per Airmen), within existing monthly forums. This is a projected 86% reduction without losing the efficacy of the AF intent for training
- E. Our commitment to professional development and communication, as it is our responsibility

#### **III. Commander’s Tools:**

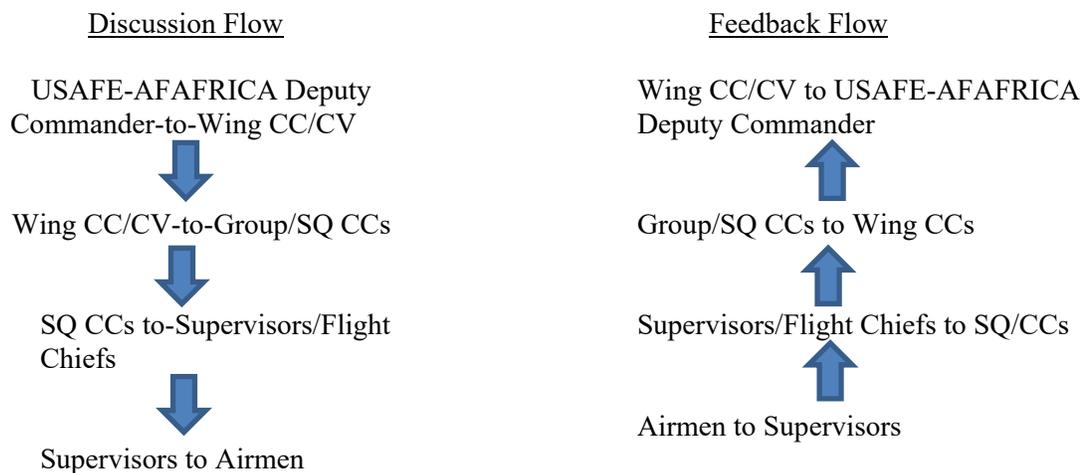
- A. Check 6 provides plug-n-play, adaptable mentoring tools for commanders and supervisors to support the professional development of their Airmen
  - i. Suggested talking points are provided and should be tailored to best meet the needs of the squadron
  - ii. Supervisor-led discussions will allow Airmen to address issues and solutions unique to their work centers
  - iii. Consistent reinforcement and application of the GRIT initiatives
- B. Commander’s Toolkit, including Check 6 annual implementation calendar and monthly worksheets, is available on the Operation GRIT SharePoint site:  
<https://cs2.eis.af.mil/sites/13819>

**IV. Central Messages:**

- A. INCREASED COMMUNICATION: encourage constructive feedback between all levels of the chain of command
- B. CONNECTION TO MISSION: ensure Airmen internalize their importance to the team, the mission, and Air Force
- C. PERSONAL PERFORMANCE: invests in our Airmen’s professional and individual development
- D. SENSE OF PURPOSE (ALIGNMENT) – strengthens our shared identity, goals and community
- E. WINGMANSHIP: develops trust in self, team and Air Force that will result in resilience, faith in the organization, willingness to seek help, and desire to help others

**V. General Format/Schedule:**

- A. Check 6 discussions will occur once per month, suggested 15-30 minutes
- B. Conduct during existing (staff meeting, roll call, guard mount, shift turnover, PT etc.) or as separate monthly meetings, at the Commander’s discretion
- C. Topics should be coordinated and delivered down the chain of command. Remember, this isn’t training. These are conversations replacing training, led by supervisors who know their Airmen best.



- D. Check 6 allows for adaptability but should reinforce the synchronized message at every level
- E. Utilize the core values and common language so that all Airman can instantly understand their application (tailor message to the audience)

**VI. Commanders:**

- A. Are responsible for implementation and completion
- B. This is not a compliance program to “check the box” – it’s a tool helping leaders facilitate better discussions
- C. Discuss your rules of engagement; actively role model living the core values, promoting respect with one another, and building relationships of trust
- D. Charge flight commanders and supervisors to take ownership in developing their own goals to ensure professional development conversations are happening; clearly define their solemn responsibility to lead not only Airmen, but human beings; let them know it is their duty to raise up their subordinates (and families)

## VII. Community Action Boards and Teams

Coordinate and collaborate to reinforce the messages and skills being developed

- Community Support Coordinator (CSC): Include and monitor Operation GRIT as part of the Wing’s Community Action Plan; offer on-going Check 6 facilitator training; offer Master Resilience Training for Airmen and families
- Violence Prevention Integrator (VPI): Offer ISDV primary prevention “Tools to Create an Environment of Dignity, Respect, and Connectedness” in collaboration with commanders; organize community mobilizing initiatives and provide supplemental reinforcement activities
- Equal Opportunity (EO): Assist commanders with identifying areas of focus utilizing the DEOCS survey and CC tools to ensure Operation GRIT efforts are targeted and effective
- Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC): Provide CCs with the Air Force SAPR Talking Points and provide additional training opportunities as requested
- Airman and Family Readiness (AFRC): Integrate Check 6 concepts into outreach and education efforts including Key Spouse quarterly training (this is an effective communication tool to connect families; consider using content for emails, newsletters and as conversation starters)
- Mental Health/Family Advocacy (MH/FAP): Provide targeted outreach and education opportunities in support of CCs
- Chaplains: Assist commanders with assessing spiritual strengths and overall well-being of the squadron

## VIII. Check 6 Implementation Calendar of Topics

MONTH	THEME	GOAL	CORE VALUE
SEP	COMUSAFE Mission Video	C	Service Before Self
OCT	The Airman Warrior	P	Service Before Self
NOV	The Courageous Warrior	C	Service Before Self
DEC	The In-Tune Warrior	C	Excellence
JAN	The Innovative Warrior	PP	Excellence
FEB	The Respectful Warrior	C	Integrity
MAR	The Warrior Family	C	Excellence
APR	The Accountable Warrior	C	Service Before Self
MAY	The Team-Minded Warrior	C	Integrity
JUN	The Confident Warrior	PP	Integrity
JUL	The Resilient Warrior	PP	Excellence
AUG	The Committed Warrior	P	Excellence
SEP	The Honorable Warrior	C	Integrity
OCT	The Caring Warrior	C	Excellence

C = Connection to Fellow Amn/Mission  
P = Sense of Purpose  
PP = Enhanced Personal Performance

## IX. Facilitator Delivery Preparation

The messenger matters! Check 6 is designed to be delivered by concerned and caring leaders; discussions will be most effective if leaders spend time understanding the intent of the topic and how best to deliver the message. Facilitator Tips:

- Be willing to share your personal stories, when appropriate. Airmen report hearing directly from their supervisors as the most effective form of communication. **They want to hear your why!**
- Be genuine... use this time as an opportunity for dialogue and mentorship
- Prepare for potential questions and how you'll respond; questions should generate productive discussion
- If a group is difficult to engage, you may want to consider pointedly asking certain members of the group for input on questions to aid the conversation
- Consider attending a Check 6 facilitator training for tips on how to lead a professional development discussion (Community Support Coordinators and/or Violence Prevention Integrators will provide on-going training opportunities)
- Check 6 topics will include optional videos; if possible, consider a group location where you can use a computer/projector to play the video (videos are located on the USAFE-AFRICA Operation GRIT SharePoint site and can be downloaded so that you do not have to play it using the internet)

**X. Every Airman's Responsibility**

- A. **Be a Leader** – Take a sense of ownership within your sphere of influence. Operation GRIT will succeed if you make it part of daily conversation.
- B. **Be a Wingman** – Get to know your Airmen around you and be their support through everything. One Team, One Fight.
- C. **Be a Warrior** – Persevere through challenges, improve physical fitness, innovate better methods, and develop a warrior mindset.
- D. **Grow Daily** – Use the resources, discussions, and other material to grow daily as a professional Airman and leader.
- E. **Accomplish the Mission** – Realize your part in accomplishing the mission and do it to the best of your ability. Push your teammates to set goals and work towards them.
- F. **Remember Who You Are** – Remember what you stand for, what your blessings are, and where you come from. Remind your Wingman.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Question:** USAFE-AFAFRICA Operation GRIT is a paradigm shift from how HAF has implemented annual violence prevention training for the past 3 years. Are we taking a risk doing something different?

**Answer:** Operation GRIT allows for multiple initiatives to work together towards success. The Check 6 monthly discussions 1) incorporate the behavior skills we want Airmen to learn and live by, 2) are efficient, 3) provide a professional development focus on protective factors for mission readiness and social interaction, and 4) gives freedom for installations to develop their own force multiplying solutions to the Check 6 message and their installation Community Action Plans, rather than just ensuring a standardized training box is checked.

**Question:** How will USAFE-AFAFRICA ensure accountability?

**Answer:** If the goal of primary prevention of interpersonal and self-directed violence is to ensure that a standardized message was delivered to all Airmen, then we have little accountability other than to take the word of the commander that he/she is doing what HQ USAFE-AFAFRICA senior leadership has asked them to do. If the goal of primary prevention is to develop Airmen to be the ideal employee, warrior, and member of community; then measuring compliance to putting eyes on a policy or message is the wrong way to measure change. We hold our Airmen accountable every day to their codes of behavior. What we must do is provide them skills for success, then hold them accountable. If a squadron finds itself with a "trend" then it is our job to focus our energy towards that squadron in need. That is not reactive, but providing the efforts for primary prevention skill building where needed most.

**Question:** How can focusing on professional development topics change destructive behaviors?

**Answer:** The focus of effort is in developing the observable skills of behavior that demonstrate our core values. This is different than awareness or focusing on specific program agendas. This is a skill building process to craft better people, who will naturally shift in attitude and behavior as those values are imbued and character created. This is a significant shift in approach from how we have done trainings in the past and how we tend to, mostly out of routine and habit, approach solutions.

**Question:** Squadron Commanders already have too many requirements... How will they have time to do this too?

**Answer:** Squadron commanders are overtaxed with many priority-one missions. Nevertheless, leaders -- at every level-- should always be setting their example for self-development and development of Airmen. This is the mission of every General to everyone under their command, to the Senior Airman put in charge of work detail. Again, we cannot make people embrace this concept if they truly want to subvert this essential part of military life. What we can do is provide them the opportunity to succeed, give them the tools to do it, and see the harvest of their efforts when they embrace personal and professional development. We know that investing in our Airmen engages them and teaches them by example. It is very possible that squadrons are so adept and natural at doing this, that a Check 6 may seem unnecessary, but a good leader will see it as a helpful tool and opportunity for mentoring.

**Question:** If squadrons don't participate in Check 6 monthly discussions, will USAFE-AFAFRICA be considered non-compliant with mandatory AF trainings?

**Answer:** On 4 May 2018, the Secretary of the Air Force provided guidance that commanders have discretion in providing ancillary training. In response, the USAFE-AFAFRICA Operation GRIT initiative is our command's commitment to focus on resilience and interpersonal and self-directed violence to meet the intent of these training requirements.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **BACKGROUND**

The Air Force defines resilience as “the ability to withstand, recover, and/or grow in the face of stressors and changing demands” - Air Force Instruction 90-506 (Comprehensive Airman Fitness). This definition encompasses a broad spectrum of what “resiliency” means and works hand-in-hand with the “Total Force Fitness for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” created under the direction of Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Intended on increasing Airman resiliency and decreasing negative behaviors, Congressional and DoD leadership, through directives issued by congressional mandates, DoD Instructions (DoDI), and Air Force Instruction (AFI), now require all airman (military and civilian) to complete annual resilience and violence prevention training. These requirements resulted in USAFE-AFAFRICA Airmen completing over 650K hours of training in 2017 (equivalent of approximately 16,500 Airman taking one 40-hour week off); however, to the dismay of leadership, the majority of negative behaviors continue to trend steadily rather than significantly decrease.

To that response, USAFE-AFAFRICA Community Action Board asked the following questions in November 2017, “Do we continue doing the same thing over and over and expect different results? Are we ok with accepting a baseline of negative behaviors because it trends alongside the public sector? How do we actually help Airman thrive?”

A few key indications led the Community Action Board to establish a Rapid Improvement Event to dig deeper and analyze our methods.

- Chief of Staff of the Air Force, Gen David L Goldfein, states, “Resilience begins and ends in the squadron” and we see a shift in focus to revitalize the squadrons
- 23 Jan 18, HAF/A1Z issued guidance to take a strategic pause with respect to Resilience and Wingman Days in order to determine the best way to move forward
- 4 May 18, Secretary of the AF, Heather Wilson, sends guidance that effectively immediately, commanders and supervisors are empowered to conduct nearly all mandatory ancillary training as they see fit

Under this guidance and authorization from HAF, USAFE-AFAFRICA senior leadership instructed the Community Action Team to develop a new way forward by compiling data from Airman across the command... of all AFSCs, ranks, positions, and levels of command and analyze the effectiveness of resilience and violence prevention training. A Rapid Improvement Event was held in Feb 18 with the guidance to breakdown the curriculum of each training, decipher what was working, what was not working, and what would possibly work better. In the end, this new USAFE-AFAFRICA way is a grassroots effort developed by Airmen, backed by leadership, and focuses on building and strengthening all USAFE-AFAFRICA members into professional Airman Warriors.

In order to connect with and motivate Airmen, leaders at all levels have to do things differently. The courage to professionally develop Airmen the USAFE-AFAFRICA way requires assuming an element of risk. However, we believe this initiative will strengthen Comprehensive Airman Fitness through professional development and put into action our promise to invest in and grow our Airmen.

### **RAPID IMPROVEMENT EVENT (RIE)**

The RIE, which included members from all USAFE-AFAFRICA installations, set the stage ensuring a new way forward generated a grassroots effort wholly taking into account the ideas, feedback, and desires from Airmen across the command. The purpose of the RIE was to explore new approaches to

strengthening Comprehensive Airman Fitness (CAF) while concurrently addressing feedback received from Senior Leadership at all echelons of command.

The group consisted of the USAFE-AFAFRICA Community Action Team (cross-functional representatives from across the HQ) as well as installation Squadron Commanders, subject matter experts (such as Community Support Coordinators, Violence Prevention Integrators, and Sexual Assault Response Coordinators), Airmen of all officer, enlisted, and civilian ranks, the AF Personnel Center's Resilience Operations, and the Profession of Arms Center of Excellence (PACE).

Taking the overarching guidance from leadership, the team developed the following problem statement as a starting point, "USAFE-AFAFRICA spends over 650K hours annually in training to reduce sexual assault, suicide attempts and completions and sexual harassment, yet we do not see a significant decline in self-defeating behaviors."

The 3-day event had three basic goals for the initial phase:

- Break down the curriculum for required training to identify similarities, differences, and advantages/disadvantages
- Determine the root causes for why training is not more effective
- Determine initial vision and mission statement for a new USAFE-AFAFRICA resiliency initiative

Several key observations were noted:

- A majority of Airman believe more emphasis is placed on technical competence than on Airmanship. Supervision/leadership is seen as a collateral duty resulting in Airman feeling they are "being fed to the wolves" instead of being fostered and developed
- Airman feel that leadership is more concerned with "compliance over collaboration" when it comes to professional development and training
- Leadership seems to always be in extreme reactionary mode when negative behaviors occur
- In order to get buy-in from Airman up and down the chain, the following must happen:
  - The new initiative must be a grassroots effort
  - Airman need to feel more connected to the mission and an integral part of an overall USAFE-AFAFRICA team (possible COA: create a C-MAJCOM-specific mission brief for all newcomers)
  - Commander and front-line supervisors must own the messages and lead the initiative
  - We need a common language and shared sense of purpose to make a true cultural change

Using the observations and the analysis performed, the team grouped all negative feedback into 2 root causes for the ineffectiveness of the current approach:

- An overly complicated system results in difficulty knowing which training has been completed and what messages were conveyed through the diluted/redundant delivery messages
- Lack of motivation to learn because Airmen don't connect to the message and/or the overall culture gives opposing messages

The RIE identified the problems with the current approach; however, it also established the overall desired end state of the initiative as "A Culture of Professional Airmen who embody the warrior ethos and AF core values". Moving forward, the team proposed using consistent professional development engagements, tailored discussions led by USAFE-AFAFRICA senior leadership down to the front-line supervisor, a synced, standardized message across the command, and a true "Airman First" mindset as the best way to accomplish our goals.

The consensus was a new USAFE-AFAFRICA initiative that personally and professionally develops Airmen Warriors while meeting the training requirements for resilience and violence prevention, thus reducing mandatory ancillary training.

## **AIRMEN FEEDBACK**

In order to ensure Operation GRIT took into account all Airmen feedback, we tested the concepts with Airmen from across the command. There was a lot of positive feedback, as well as some skepticism. The skeptic was taken into account and helped tweak the initiative. Allowing commanders to utilize the tools for how they see fit makes this effort seem less cumbersome than those in the past. As for commander buy-in, the PACE videos and Check 6 worksheets are there to help facilitate the conversations. As we do this more and more, it will become easier over time.

### Uncertain:

- Completely dependent on the Commander or Supervisor's buy-in and ability to facilitate a good discussion
- What incentivizes me to buy in to this approach versus all the others that have been presented?
- Won't work because leadership is only worried about metrics and numbers

### Positive:

- This is the first time I have been able to have a conversation with this new generation
- I was able to hear what my people were saying and do something
- I think this was one of the first real conversations I have had with my people
- Gives flexibility and program control back to the commanders!
- AFSC specific approach – I love it!
- Would truly make me feel like a member of a greater cause
- I can already feel myself getting more blue as I read about GRIT
- I really like the idea of the shorter monthly sessions and that leadership is responsible to roll these out and facilitate them
- I really like this! We're so technology driven, sometimes just having leadership take the time to say good morning to you face-to-face is a great morale boost."

Nebraska Coach, Scott Frost, was doing an interview and discussed how he was going about changing the culture of the program. One key quote stood out,

**"We need to train our leaders better. Once all the members of the team are holding each other accountable and the coaches don't have to do it, you've got a powerful team."**

**Imagine a culture like that within USAFE-AFAFRICA!**

