



The Freedom Flyer

Supplement to the Altus Times, Altus, Oklahoma



Friday, March 18, 2011

Altus AFB gets new perspective about PTSD

by Airman 1st Class
Kenneth W. Norman
97th Air Mobility Wing

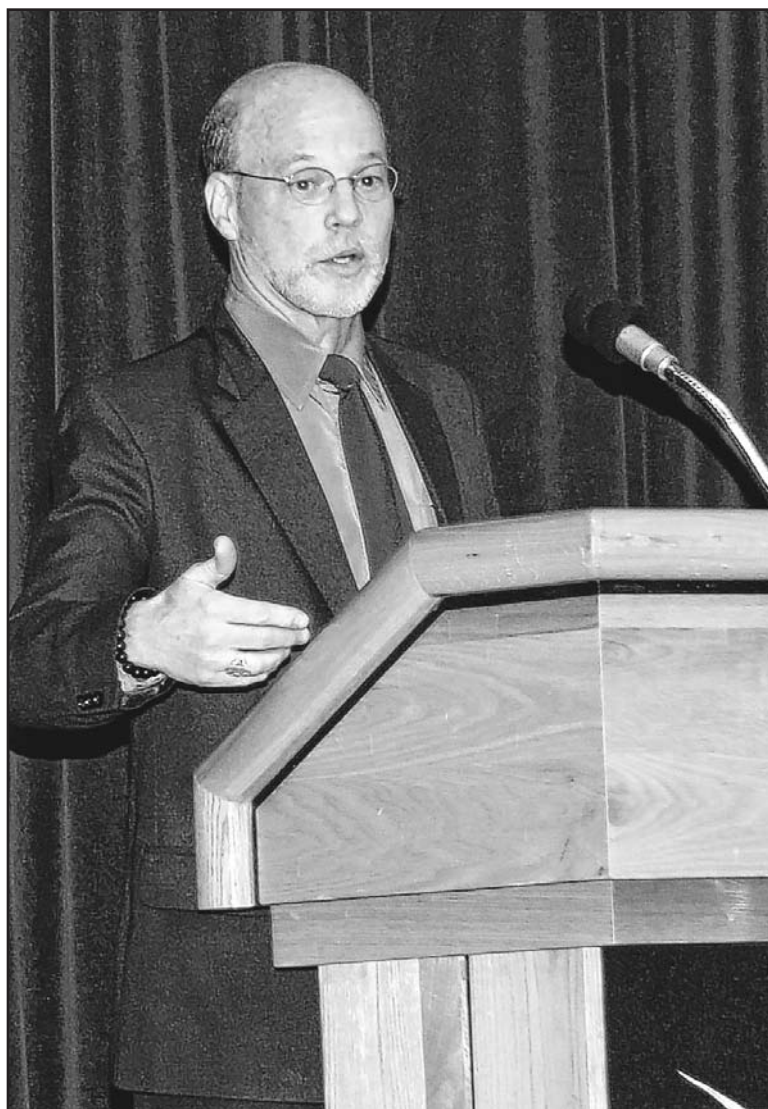
about how to tend to our troops upon return, so these invisible wounds don't become chronic."

PTSD is a psychiatric disorder affecting both adults and children that can occur following the experience or witnessing of life-threatening events such as military combat, natural disasters, terrorist incidents, serious accidents, and physical or sexual assault.

"What we now believe about PTSD is that it is the universal form of breakdown that any conscious being, human or animal, will go through when they have been exposed to enough life-threatening violence," Dr. Tick said.

Dr. Tick has been working with veterans and PTSD sufferers for three decades. He and his partner, Kate Dahlstedt, founded Soldier's Heart in 2006. The organization offers hope to veterans with a new perception of PTSD as a "soul wound" and an

See PTSD page 5



Dr. Edward Tick, Soldier's Heart director and author of "War and the Soul: Healing Our Nation's Veterans from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder," gives a presentation at the Freedom Community Center here Mar. 10. Dr. Tick spoke about helping those with post-traumatic stress disorder, which affects 30 percent of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. The luncheon was sponsored by the YMCA here. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Kenneth W. Norman/ Released 97th Air Mobility Wing Public Affairs.)

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Community assessment extended

by *Air Force News Service*

SAN ANTONIO (AFNS) -- Officials are extending the opportunity to participate in the 2011 Air Force Community Assessment through April 3.

More than 350,000 active-duty members, reservists and spouses as well as all appropriated fund civilian employees were randomly selected to participate in the anonymous survey. Those selected began receiving an e-

mail invitation Jan. 30 to participate in the survey. Spouses were mailed a postcard.

Officials said the secure notice is being sent from the consulting firm ICF International and addressed from AFCASurvey@icfi.com.

To date, more than 70,000 participants have completed the assessment, which provides an opportunity to contribute to community action plans for programs at all levels of the Air Force.

The assessment is

designed to assist chaplains and people working in installation-level Airman and family readiness centers, family advocacy programs, health and wellness centers, mental health clinics and child and youth programs to better meet the needs of service members and their families.

Officials hope to capture experiences and opinions in the voluntary survey to help improve life for families in the Air Force. The survey takes approximately 30-45 minutes to complete.

For more information on

the survey, call 800-506-0098 or e-mail afcasurvey@icfi.com.

Freedom Flyer

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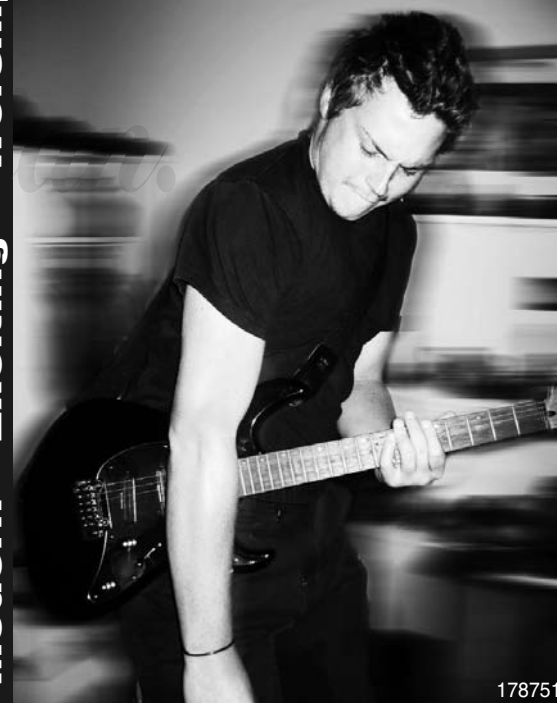
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Misawa AB recovering from historic

by Tech. Sgt. Phillip Butterfield
35th Fighter Wing
Public Affairs

MISAWA AIR BASE, Japan (AFNS) -- Misawa Air Base was shaken March 11 by the 8.9 magnitude earthquake that struck Japan but sustained only minor damage with no injuries or loss of life.

"Our focus is on the recovery of the base and assisting our Japanese allies," said Col. Michael

Rothstein, the 35th Fighter Wing commander. "We will do whatever it takes to get us both on our feet again, and I believe we have the best people on the job for this task."

Further aiding in base recovery were the Airmen here supporting and establishing command and control operations, said Lt. Col. Dwayne Robison, the 35th Civil Engineer Squadron commander.

"Our Airmen and family members aided in recovery

efforts almost immediately after the earthquake," he said. "The earthquake struck the region when the base was in the middle of an operational readiness exercise. So we already had our emergency operations center and our unit control centers (up and running). This enabled people to call in immediately with reports of damages, and we had no delay with responding to their needs."

Emergency crews responded to small fires,

broken waterlines and steam lines, and a host of other issues, officials said.

The base wasn't effected by the tsunami that swept ashore afterwards and devastated large tracts of land in Myagi Prefecture, south of the base.

Now Airmen here are concentrating on two missions. The first is to recover operations here and the second is to act as a logistical hub for humanitarian relief and rescue workers, officials said.

Rescue teams from around the world have sent, and will continue to send, convoys to the locations most affected by the tsunami to start recovery opera-

tions.

"We hope to provide as much assistance as possible," said Alan Downes, a United Kingdom Search and Rescue team member.

"As soon as we complete the search and rescue portion of this operation, we will start turning our focus to the humanitarian relief side of the situation."

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C-17 Training

ALTUS AIR FORCE BASE, Okla. — Airmen from the 97th Logistics Readiness Squadron and the 97th Civil Engineer Squadron here, load a P-23 Fire Truck onto a C-17 Globemaster III March 12. The truck was flown to Fort Sill to provide fire emergency support for a month-long C-17 training taking place there (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Christopher Toon/97th Air Mobility Wing-

Commentary: When opportunity knocks

by Lt. Col.
Sally Kelly-Rank
Commander, 97th
Medical Support
Squadron

ALTUS AIR FORCE BASE, Okla. -- How many times have you answered the phone and someone on the other end has said, "Hey, have I got an opportunity for you?" It happened to me the other day when the Air Force Personnel Center called and had an opportunity for one of my lieutenants. The question that came to my mind was, "How the lieutenant would react to the news; would he take the opportunity?"

There are many defining moments in life. These are moments

where you have a choice with only seconds to act before the opportunity is lost. It can be putting your hand up when the boss asks for a volunteer, signing up for that college course or accepting the assignment that has just been pushed your way. Whatever the opportunity, these moments pass quickly.

What is it that keeps people from jumping at opportunities? Opportunities can be anywhere at any time and come in all forms and yet so few people take them. Not everyone is able to recognize an opportunity because most do not come clearly defined. All too often we do not seek out opportu-

nities simply because we are afraid of failure. After all, the decision to move forward and to welcome new opportunities takes courage and it can have a huge impact on the rest of your life. And yet, having opportunities alone is not useful. You have to be able to grab opportunities and make the best of them and it's not always easy to know how to do that.

So how can you prepare yourself when opportunity knocks? Begin by having a great mentor; someone who can provide you direction and to bounce ideas off of. You can't grab every opportunity that comes your way. There may be a time when an

opportunity presents itself and looks very appealing but shouldn't be taken. You have to understand what the costs, risks, and rewards are before you do anything and then determine if you can live with your decision. Also, keep an open mind. Just because something doesn't seem like a great opportunity doesn't mean that it isn't. The greatest opportunities come from the most unlikely sources and often, those opportunities are disguised in the form of hardship. By keeping an open mind you will be able to objectively decide which opportunities to take and which ones not to.

What is the cost of a

missed opportunity? It's impossible to know at the time the opportunity is missed. Although daunting, seizing life's opportunities can be rewarding. Whether the opportunity turns out well or not, it's an experience and all experiences are valuable. No matter who you are or what you do, life brings opportunities - the key to living a rich life is to take advantage of them. Learn how to recognize these chances and utilize them to the fullest. Look past the challenges; stop waiting for the perfect day.

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PTSD

Continued from pg 1

identity disorder, which could be healed by nurturing a positive warrior identity.

"We call it an invisible wound of war, and as long it stays invisible it is going to be insidious and get worse and worse," Dr. Tick said. "We are working to help alter military culture so that it is alright for any servicemember to say 'I'm in spiritual or emotional pain.' The most important step is admitting that we are disturbed, we have been carrying it in secret and we are reaching out for help."

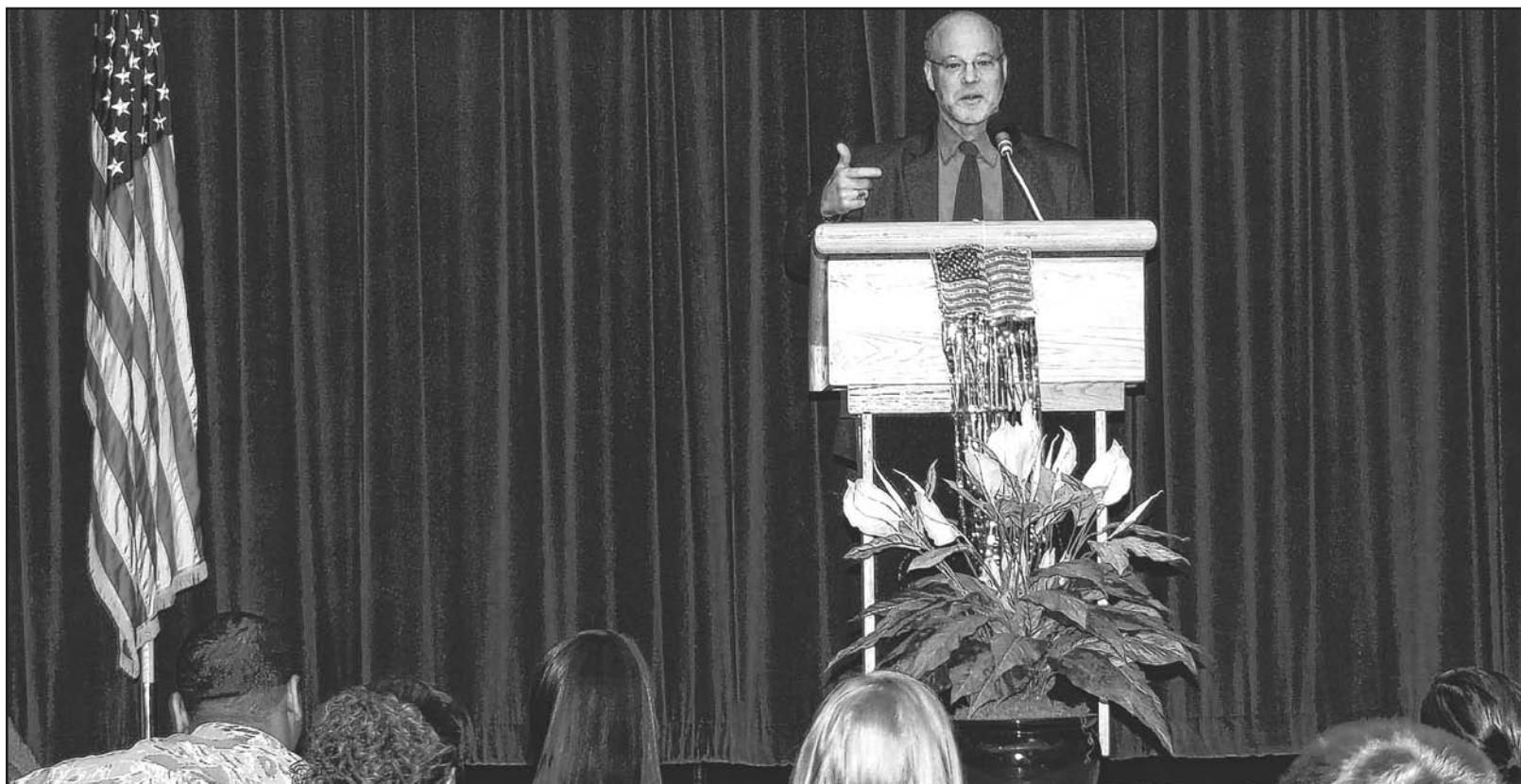
There was no diagnosis for PTSD until 1980.

"Until 1980 there was no name for the psychological wounds from war," Dr. Tick said.

"Vietnam vets advocated fiercely that we pay attention to their pain and suffering and they really helped the mental health field learn about and create the diagnosis."

According to Dr. Tick, PTSD cases have increased in percentage and severity.

"The symptoms or nature of the wound has not changed, but the severity, frequency and intensity have gotten much worse," Dr. Tick said. "I say this because ... we know of more than 80 names for this condition that different cultures have had since



Dr. Edward Tick gives a presentation at the Freedom Community Center here Mar. 10. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Kenneth W. Norman/ Released 97th Air Mobility Wing Public Affairs.)

ancient times till present. We can read descriptions of people with PTSD in the bible, ancient Greek and Roman literature and those PTSD sufferers look just like ours. They had the same symptoms of rage, loss of morality, acting out in violence and anger, taking out their anger on the wrong people, losing trust in authority - all of this is found in ancient stories that are thousands of years old."

Dr. Tick spent an hour and a half speaking to both servicemembers and civilians about PTSD. He then had a short question and answer session for the audience.

"Thank you to Altus Air Force Base for inviting me. From what I have seen over the past few

days, this is a community that is working very hard to provide a full family and community environment for everyone - the troops, the families and the children," Dr. Tick said. "And [the base] seems to be in solidarity with the surrounding civilian community, so I honor and thank the entire Altus community for that."

For more information about the Soldier's Heart organization, visit www.soldiersheart.net.

If you or someone you know is suffering from PTSD symptoms you can contact the Base Chapel at 580-481-7458 or Mental Health at 580-481-5376



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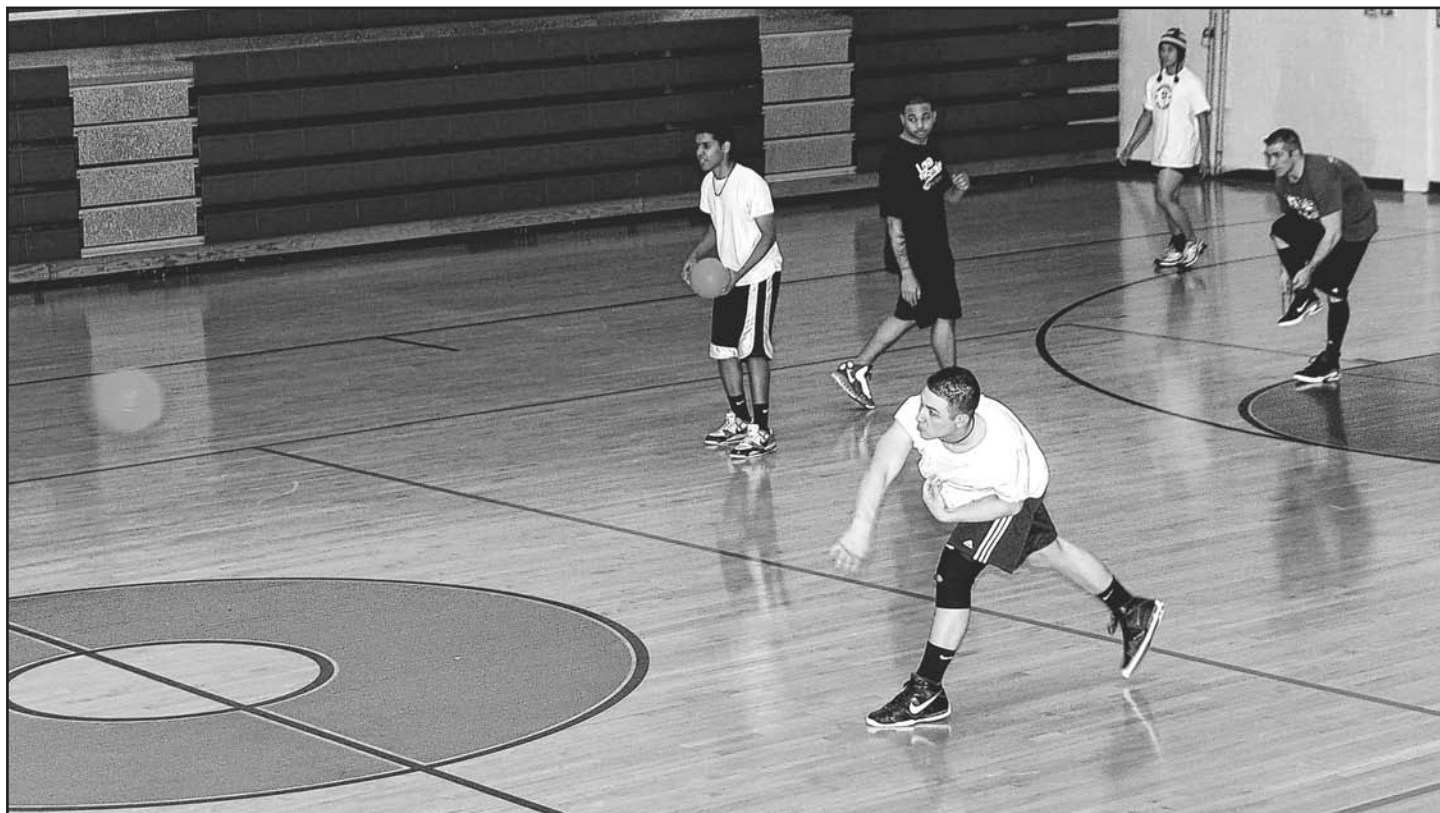
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Dodge Ball

ALTUS AIR FORCE BASE, Okla. — Airman 1st Class Vance Franco, team Monkey Chunk, throws a dodge ball towards the opposing team during a dodge ball tournament at the Fitness Center here Mar. 7. The dodge ball tournament was a double elimination tournament. Team Monkey Chunk won the tournament. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Kenneth W. Norman/ Released 97th Air Mobility Wing)

Commentary: Your own 'Gotta Do's'

by Maj. Olga Acosta
Commander, 97th
Comptroller Squadron

ALTUS AIR FORCE BASE, Okla. -- Balancing work, family, time, and money are challenges we all face, no matter what we do. I read the book "Life Matters" by Stephen Covey and he lays out three "gotta do's" to help you find the right balance to fit your situation. The "gotta do's" are to validate expectations, optimize effort, and develop "navigational intelligence". I will share, in my terms, what they mean to me.

First, to validate expectations simply means to accept the way things really are in our lives and then make decisions based on reality. Sure, we would like

to think we can do anything we set out to do in life, but some things are just not realistic. With well planned and attainable expectations, we set ourselves up for future success in the different areas of our life. With success comes the feeling of happiness. Who doesn't enjoy that?

Second, optimizing effort refers to focusing your actions toward meeting your established expectations. The things you choose to do on any particular day should be driven by one of your expectations. There never seems to be enough hours in the day to take care of all our responsibilities. With our expectations in mind, we can figure out how to best spend each moment of our day or week in order to

reach those expectations.

Finally developing "navigational intelligence" is probably the most difficult to do because every day in life can be so unpredictable. This "gotta do" refers to having the flexibility to adjust to the unexpected and still manage to focus our efforts towards our expectations. The unforeseen can be something as simple as a last-minute request to eat out with

friends when you are in the middle of completing a not-so exciting project for home or work. It is easy to get side-tracked by the little things in life, but if we have what Stephen Covey refers to as "the gift of discernment," we will know how to make the right choice for this situation as well as larger more important issues. This is a skill that starts with small things and must be practiced and

developed in order to make it second nature for all things.

If you take each of the "gotta do's" and ask yourself, "Is what I'm doing contributing to my life balance goal?" you will be much more successful at achieving your focused goals. No doubt you are already juggling all these things and making them work for you and your family, but ask yourself, "Can I

do anything, something, or everything better?" I recommend reading this book for some helpful hints that are easy to apply.

In the book there is a quote by Lin Yutang which sums all this up: "Besides the noble art of getting things done, there is the noble art of leaving things undone. The wisdom of life consists in the elimination of nonessentials."

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