Keeping Positive
By Bridget Ball

Keeping a positive outlook can be challenging. Being a young adult, full-time student, and ROTC cadet during a pandemic and other notable events, has presented even more challenges. Often, we get so caught up with just trying to stay afloat, that we forget to take into account ourselves, and self-care. We tend to put our needs to the side to ensure we are excelling in the other aspects of our lives. Being said, it is crucial to develop habits to protect your head space and develop a positive mindset.

Often when a difficult situation is presented upon me, I do not ask myself, “Why is this happening to me?” but, “What is the positive in this situation?” This allows me to keep an open mind and perspective on the situation.

Additionally, develop a routine and make daily to-do lists for yourself to provide a sense of control in your life. That way once your daily “tasks” are done, you feel a sense of accomplishment and relief.

That being said, know that bad days are inevitable. After all, you must have bad days to appreciate good days. On tougher days, treat yourself. Step away from what is stressing you out and DoorDash yourself some food and watch a movie (like I do). Go work out, get outdoors, paint, bake, take a bubble bath, talk with friends/family, ultimately do the things that you love.

Initially, bottling up emotions may seem like the right choice, but it tends to lead to additional stress on the mind and the body. Therefore, communication is key. It is important to communicate either to someone you trust or in a personal journal about your stressors. Sometimes just writing down or having someone to listen to you can help take some of the weight off your shoulders.

At the end of the day, maintaining a positive headspace can be something as simple as designating thirty minutes to an hour a day for YOU. (going for a walk, re-organizing/cleaning your room, finding new music, etc.)

As Forrest Gump says, “Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you’re gonna get”. Life is unpredictable, that is why it is important that we as wingmen must look out for one another. But we also must look out for ourselves. As my old cross-country coach used to put it “you help you for me, and I’ll help me for you”.

Mama always said life was like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get.

~Forrest Gump
Music I can relate to

By Angelo Weyer

To any instrument players reading this, have you ever felt something special whenever you play? For me, I’ve lately been having that feeling with my guitar. Coming back home, I spent my time listening to my favorite artists and songs, trying to find music that I can relate to. A lot of friends call me an artist, whether it’s through my sketchbook drawings or the songs that I play because they see that whatever I do, it ties back to my own life. I’d listen to Luke Combs, Scotty McCreery, or Thomas Rhett, but with Morgan Wallen’s new album, Dangerous, the tracks from that are what really hits close (minus the alcohol in his songs).

One of his new tracks is called “865”. I learned how to play it recently so I’m excited to show it to a friend that’s learning how to play and sing. The song is about a guy trying to wash out the memories of a girl, but it backfires since he sings that “this bottle tastes like 865 (409-1021)”. Wallen apologized to whoever owns that number as it may get a lot of calls, but luckily it didn’t directly trace back to anyone. As I said, I like songs that I can relate to and for me, I have a number that I’m tempted to call (again, minus the alcohol since I’ve never drunk before). Then again, that probably wouldn’t end well since I’m likely a ghost by now to the girl with that number. If you can relate to that situation, I’d like to think that you know what I mean.

Beyond those feelings, Wallen’s other songs get me into a mood that wants to rock out. I may not have much of a country singer’s voice, but I’d be a happy man if I got to show a side of me that liked to get lost in the crop fields, whether it was as a farmhand or as a boy looking for concealment when playing airsoft. Any song that brings out that side that I don’t show much is a song that you’d probably find me strumming to. Whether it expresses heartache or a love for the backroads, that music is what gives my guitar a special feeling. It’s a feeling of relief, as people can get to know who I am when they hear the ringing of a beat-up ol’ guitar.
Visit at the 169th ASOS

By Murad Basrawi

On 20 Jan 2021, I visited the 169th Air Support Operations Squadron to perform a Physical Ability Stamina Test (PAST) under the supervision of members from the Air Force’s Tactical Air Control Party. (TACP) In order to enter selection for a Battlefield Airman slot, (i.e. Combat Rescue Officer, Special Tactics Officer, enlisted Pararescue, etc.) applicants have to take this test and pass ALL components of it: 2 min push ups, 2 min sit-ups, 1 min pull-ups, 1.5mi run (3mi for officers), 500m swim (1500m for officers), and 2x 25m underwater swims. If the test-taker fails one component, the applicant does not pass. For three years I have been preparing to compete for Special Tactics Officer and I chose to drive three hours down to Peoria, IL to make sure I was not missing anything that was required for a PAST. Sure enough, I was wrong.

For cadets who are looking to enter a Battlefield Airman slot, understand this: adherence to the form of an exercise is critical and instructors will judge you with scrutiny. They do not select applicants who score the minimums; they want 20 repetitions or more than what is stated in the minimum. Basically, meeting the standard is the fastest way out the door. In a career that requests people to perform life-threatening duties in rough conditions, (whether it be through scorching heat, hunger, carrying heavy equipment, etc.) exceeding the standard will always be the standard. If you have any questions on how the PAST is conducted, feel free to reach out to my DM at 630-379-7828.

After performing the PAST, I was able to hang out with the TACPs who were either deployed or just passed selection. The best advice I heard is that as a new Lieutenant I will not know everything. It is up to me to seek the experienced enlisted for guidance. By enlisting or commissioning there is no wrong answer for leadership. In fact, officers and enlisted are evaluated together throughout selection. Moreover, they both train hard to be in teams of high caliber men and women who are prepared to give their lives for each other. Never join a team thinking you know everything.
Changing Goals

By RJ Cassem

As I began my first semester of college, and started the AFROTC program as an AS100, my heart was set on becoming a USAF flight doctor. Like many other pre-med students, I enrolled in classes such as chemistry, calculus, and psychology in order to prepare myself for the MCAT. I knew that I would have to score well and maintain a high GPA in order to qualify for a rating and be selected to pursue military medicine. However, my mindset has changed dramatically since, and I’m starting this semester with a new goal of becoming a fighter pilot!

So what has changed? During Winter Break, Colonel David Raymond of the 51st Operations Group (stationed on Osan AB) extended the offer of a lifetime to me: a personal tour of the flight line, complete with a go in a declassified A-10 simulator. Needless to say, I jumped on the opportunity! While I was aware of the hype about flying before, I have to admit that I had never truly understood it until I was “flying” myself. Even though it was little more than a glorified video game (granted, there were a lot more buttons), I felt a rush unlike anything Rainbow Six or Call of Duty ever gave me. The tour wasn’t just fun and games though, I also learned a lot about the group’s mission and capabilities and I was able to interview some of the pilots as well. After talking with them, I’ve decided that piloting is what I want to do and I’m more excited than ever about ROTC and the opportunities it offers me as a cadet.

As I work towards a pilot rating, I have a new set of milestones I’m looking to accomplish this calendar year. First off, I need to get LASIK this summer in order to be medically qualified for a slot. Of course, I also need to stay focused in both ROTC and my academic classes and be the best student/cadet I can be. Finally, I hope to start the path towards a private pilot’s license so that I can gain some experience in the air. Overall, my Winter Break was exciting and educational; it changed my perspective and career goals in ways that were totally unexpected!
Zoom Surprise Gone Wrong

By Megan Martinez

I was excited to end my first semester of college, but sad to say goodbye to my Nursing Transitions professor. She was an excellent teacher and provided beneficial advice for our careers. As a class, we wanted to show our appreciation for all the hard work she has put in. Unfortunately, being all online, we were struggling to find out what to do. It wasn't until one of our classmates sent us a Tik Tok of a class on zoom turning off all their cameras in the beginning class and all turning them on at the same time to show them holding a sign saying, "Thank you" or "We appreciate you". We were all so excited, and on the day of class, we were all prepared to show our sign. We made sure to let everybody know to turn off their cameras at the beginning of class and to listen for the phrase, "I am excited for the second semester but sad to leave. So, we wanted to say…" and that's when they know to turn on their cameras while holding their sign. Unfortunately, I had the privilege of saying this phrase. I was excited that I could cue everyone in, but that was before I knew what was going to happen next.

The class had started, and my teacher questioned why everyone's cameras were off (because they are usually all on). I said, "Hmm, I don't know why everyone's cameras are off, but before we start, I just wanted to say that I am so excited for the second semester but sad to leave." IT WAS TIME, I HAD JUST SAID THE PHRASE, AND THE TIME TO SURPRISE MY TEACHER HAD FINALLY COME. I quickly turned on my camera and held up my sign with excitement, but my excitement quickly faded when I noticed that only five of thirty-two students turned on their cameras. I was shocked and sat there, puzzled. I didn't know what to think or do. I thought to myself, "What happened to everyone? Where did they all go? Were they sleeping? Did they forget to make their sign? Did they trick me and just say they were going to participate, but did not and made me look like a fool?" While these questions were flooding through my head, I had forgotten entirely to see my teacher's reaction. You can tell that she was happy but sad because she thought that the rest of the twenty-seven students who didn't turn on their cameras didn't care. We proceeded with class, and throughout the entire time, those twenty-seven students never turned on their cameras. When class ended, I went on my phone to ask in the group chat what had happened. I was furious and confused as to what the issue was. I asked them, "Hey guys, uh, what the heck happened back there? You left me all hanging". They all responded with, "My camera wouldn't work". At that very moment, I suddenly understood what it felt like to be a teacher and to hear that lie.
Their camera didn't work. Did it not work or did the rest of the students just simply not care to participate? I may never know to this day, and poor Professor Raymond will always think that those twenty-seven students will never care. The moral of the story is make sure that everyone's camera works if you coordinate a special thank you to a teacher. Or simply just say forget the class and email the professor yourself to express your appreciation.

**Announcements:**

- There is no LLAB on 11 March! Enjoy the break!
- Stay safe, Stay healthy, Stay active & Stay ICE COLD