

Dear Reader,

It is with great solemnity that we present this spring special focus issue of *Air & Space Operations Review (ASOR)*, dedicated to a topic that affects not only the Department of the Air Force and the Department of Defense but also society as a whole.

For decades, the prevalence of suicide has weighed heavily on our communities. For service members, military service introduces additional layers of complexity to the demands of everyday life. Suicide has claimed more Airmen, Guardians, Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines than actual combat or combat training. Addressing this crisis requires more than fulfilling annual training requirements or checking a box—it demands meaningful engagement and proactive solutions. Our hope is that this issue of *ASOR* provides frontline supervisors, mentors, friends, coworkers, and healthcare professionals with valuable insights and tools to help fight the scourge of suicide within our ranks.

The issue begins with the **Suicide Prevention and Postvention** forum. John Hinck, Steven Davis, Alexandra Hinck, and Mary Bartlett lead the forum by exploring how Air Force leaders can foster meaningful conversations about suicide postvention. They offer effective ways to support Airmen and Guardians following a suicide attempt or death.

We then turn to Robert Redziniak, Philip Stewart, and Lucia MacPherson, who argue that by addressing the underlying causes of suicidal behavior and implementing organizational changes, the department can establish more effective prevention programs. Elisha Pippin concludes the forum with her analysis of suicide postvention support for mental health professionals. She contends that while the Air Force acknowledges the importance of postvention in suicide prevention, additional resources must be made available to mental healthcare providers to reduce adverse outcomes and enhance force effectiveness.

In the **Spirituality and Resilience** forum, Charles Seligman introduces a framework that positions spirituality as a crucial meaning-making activity for warfighter readiness. Finally, Kimberly Dickman challenges conventional discussions of resilience, cautioning that unrealistic expectations of healing may inadvertently cause harm rather than foster true resilience.

While we have previously published individual articles on suicide prevention, this is the first time we have dedicated an entire issue to the subject. For this, we are grateful to have received much support from Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force David Flosi and Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Button, the Department of the Air Force suicide prevention program manager. Team *ASOR* would also like to acknowledge the issue's guest editor, Mary Bartlett, for her instrumental role in bringing this issue to publication and for her unwavering dedication to our Airmen and Guardians. We also extend our sincere appreciation to the peer reviewers who volunteered their time and expertise, as well as to the authors and healthcare professionals whose work—often difficult and underappreciated—provides critical support to service members in times of desperate need.

Each service member represents an irreplaceable part of our collective mission to defend this nation. This is not a Hollywood production—there are no extras among us, and no one is expendable in our story. Military service, by its very nature, involves the application of

violence, but the psychological toll of suicide loss on service members, their families and friends, their unit, and the clinicians who care for them can be profound. It is Team *ASOR*'s sincere hope that the articles in this issue serve as a vital resource in the ongoing effort to support our Airmen, Guardians, and Joint Force teammates in their journey to mental well-being, so we remain the most combat ready and lethal military force in the world.

~ The Editor

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