

Liberty Press Weekly

Feb. 28, 2011, Vol. 3, No. 9

512th Airlift Wing, Dover Air Force Base, Del.

A way out: Journey from the brink of suicide

Maj. Karry Gladden

Air Force Network Integration
Center Squadron commander

I recently celebrated two important anniversaries. On Jan. 30, 2010, I decided when and how I was going to end my life.

The night before, I went to bed and slept for two hours, as I had for the previous nine or so months.

Once I was sure my wife was asleep, I got out my laptop and researched how long it would take to bleed out from a femoral artery injury. This bit of information helped me narrow down the when and how. It also took away the last stumbling block.

It had to look like an accident, primarily to ensure my sweetheart didn't spend the rest of her life wondering why I committed suicide or blamed herself.

It is important to know that I got to the brink of suicide the same way most people do -- a series of stressors in my life built up until they simply got the better of me.

To make matters worse I had chronic back pain, which had been increasing since an injury a year ago, resulted in less and less exercise -- an important way to relieve stress.

And although I made sure members of my family received counseling for the major life events we were all facing, I just "manned up."

Through it all, I continued my duties as a flight commander at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, and later, as an executive officer at Scott Air Force Base.

Here are signs I ignored:

- On the way home from work one day, a truck veered into my lane. I made no effort to move and was disappointed when it didn't hit me.

- I was sleeping less and less, lying awake with racing thoughts, only falling asleep when exhausted.

- I wasn't eating. Ironically though, I gained

**WINGMAN
PROJECT**

**Citizen Airmen...
Never leave their Wingman.**

Ask Have the courage to ask directly; "Are you thinking of killing yourself?"

Care Intervene. Stay calm. Control the situation. Actively listen. Remove any means for self-injury.

Escort Get the person to a primary care provider, chaplain or other healthcare professional. Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline or 911.

US Air Force Graphic

a lot of weight.

- I went through the motions of life; I went to work because I had a responsibility to my family and the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Jan. 31, 2010, is the other anniversary, the day I decided to live.

It was a Sunday morning. During church I realized that normal people do not stay awake at night researching how to die.

At home, I took my wife aside and told her everything. I also asked her to remove our firearms from the house, not to leave me alone and take me to the emergency room or mental health first thing in the morning.

Just telling that one person, the most important person in my life, paid big dividends.

For the full commentary, visit <http://www.512aw.afrc.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123244191>.

Mission Support Group to welcome new commander

Lt. Col. Gretchen Wiltse will assume command of the 512th Mission Support Group while wearing Mission-Oriented Protective Posture gear during a ceremony at the Landings, at 11 a.m. March 6.

The assumption of command will take place in MOPP 4, which means all protective gear will be worn.

For more information, please call (302) 677-3489.

Employer nominations due

The 512th Airlift Wing Employer Appreciation Day is scheduled for April 22. Civilian bosses will be treated to a flight on a C-17 or C-5 and experience other Liberty Wing mission-oriented attractions. Deadline for submissions is March 6. Download the nomination form at <http://www.512aw.afrc.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-110104-007.pdf>.

Tickets available for Senior NCO Induction

The Senior NCO Induction Ceremony is scheduled for 6 p.m., April 2 at the Duncan Center in Dover. Tickets cost \$35. The guest speaker is Chief Master Sgt. (Retired) Fred Traute, a former member of the 512th Airlift Wing. Tickets can be purchased at the 512th Airlift Wing Public Affairs Office, Bldg. 520, Rm. 203.

DEPEX scheduled March 4-5

A deployment exercise will be held March 4-5 for 512th Airlift Wing members participating in the Operation Readiness Inspection scheduled for Dec. 7-13. Visit the 436th Enterprise Information Management website for the schedule of ORI events.

LRF now a squadron

The 512th Mission Support Group has a new squadron. On Feb. 11, the 512th Logistics Readiness Flight was renamed the 512th Logistics Readiness Squadron.