

Combat Edge

Spring 2023

Air Combat Command's Safety Magazine



ARE YOUR INSPECTIONS
SUPERFICIAL?



You don't drive drunk. Don't drive distracted.
Distracted driving is just as dangerous as drunk driving. Never drive distracted.
Always keep your eyes on the road. It's that simple.

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COVER PHOTO BY A1C LAUREN CLEVENGER

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Safety ... Know Your Role



Kenneth E. Walker
Interim Director of Safety

SAFETY is a word acknowledged and understood worldwide, regardless of country, language, or cultural background. It has played a key role in every conflict, battle, and war, significantly contributing to the outcome. It's embedded in our daily lives at home, during recreational events, and while performing work operations. As our forces transition to CAFFORGEN, Agile Combat Employment, and Total Force Integration, Safety and Risk Management will remain a vital part of mission completion. It's true that mishaps will continue to occur, which can be expected as our processes and operations shift. Our task is to limit the occurrences of these mishaps while continuing to operate at a high rate of success. What we do well we must do better, as adversaries' threats become more prevalent, and move closer to our hemisphere. Whether by aerial balloons, cyber software attacks, or in space, our adversary will use every method to affect our way of life, and we must meet them with technological advances, Air and Space dominance, and a professional and ready force that strikes fear deep within their core.

As you read the articles in this edition of *The Combat Edge*, I ask that you reflect on your role in upholding Safety in your off-duty activities and on-duty work tasks. Have you been a maven for safety, willing to speak-up when something doesn't seem quite right, and ensuring risk management decisions are made at the appropriate level, or have you resigned to remain silent in hopes that others will act instead? As Airmen, we must continue to be visionaries and forward thinkers, ready to do our part in mishap prevention through job knowledge, real-world training scenarios, and taking calculated risks when appropriate. We must not aid our adversaries by injuring ourselves, not following proven processes, or careless use of resources. I challenge you to embrace the authority and responsibility assigned to you, and to execute it with precision, as the decisions you make today are vital to the success of our Air Force and Space Force Mission. So, I ask, do you know your role in SAFETY, and have you performed it well? Your Nation is counting on YOU!

A Pocketful of Skittles

BY TSGT ROBERT T. SUMMERVILLE

When I was a Senior Airman, I was stationed in Great Britain, where I was a KC-135 aircraft hydraulics specialist. I loved what I did, and I enjoyed the Airmen with whom I worked. Yes, there were many days that were harder than others, just like any job. We worked 12- to 14-hour shifts, including many weekends.

One Friday morning, as I ended my mid-shift at around 0800 after a long week on the line, my Flight Chief said I needed to go home, get a few hours of rest, and report back to work in 8 hours with my go-bag. I was told to pack light, but to be prepared for cold weather. I quickly went home, packed, and tried to get some shuteye.

When I arrived at work, ready to go, I was teamed up with a Staff Sergeant. Neither of us knew what we would be tasked to do. We soon got word that we were heading to Germany, to fix a KC-135 that belonged to a stateside squadron. I was pumped! I loved the challenge of fixing our own aircraft but fixing someone else's – thrilling!



“There were many risks associated with this story, and every one of them should have been mitigated and/or halted. We took the risks because we believed the mission required it.”

I checked the weather forecast for our soon-to-be adventure. It showed very cold temperatures—around five degrees. There was a snowstorm approaching, and it was projected to hit shortly after we landed. When I mentioned it to my fellow maintainer, he said “Great” in a monotone voice that let me know he was not as enthused as I was.

The task was to replace the left anti-skid valve, which was leaking hydraulic fluid profusely. The anti-skid valve is like a car’s anti-lock braking system. It prevents the wheels from locking up when the brakes are applied. In warmer climates, a KC-135 can land without the anti-skid activated; however, in this case, the aircraft was flying home to Delaware, where conditions would not permit landing without it.

The clock was ticking when we arrived in Germany. For missions of this type, maintainers are authorized 16-hours of work for the first day, and 12-hours every day after, until the mission is completed. We had about 12-hours remaining once we arrived on location. The Flight Commander met with us for a brief rundown of the issue. His last words changed everything: He said there were fallen Airmen onboard, and they needed to be transported home to their families. Immediately, my co-worker and I were overcome with both emotion and determination. We looked at each other without saying a word, knowing the importance of what we had to do.

The weather was already cold, but about one hour into the job, the snow and wind really

started to pick up. The wind chill went into the negatives. We proceeded to keep our heads down and stay the course. We were so focused on the task that we lost track of time. At one point I looked at my watch, and saw we were close to our 16-hour mark. We hadn’t stopped for breaks, water, or food, and all I had to eat were the Skittles in my pocket.

The SSgt said we needed to start cleaning up to end our shift. I convinced him to keep working, since we were close to finishing the job. He reluctantly agreed. We grabbed some water, and I reached my frozen fingers into my pocket for more Skittles, hoping the sugar would help me fight the fatigue. “We must continue for these Airmen and their families,” I said to myself.



Photo by Nimai/Shutterstock.com

Finally, we finished all operational checks, cleaned up the area, and reported to the Flight Commander that the aircraft was greened up and ready to fly. We ended our shift after 23 hours. This was, by far, the hardest mission I ever had done. Between the cold, the sideways-blowing snow, and the long hours, we were exhausted.

We then had to rent a car and drive to our hotel. I offered to drive, because the SSgt was experiencing worse effects of fatigue than I was. Still, he brushed it off and said: “I’m fine.” We both felt a bit leery about driving after what we had been through, but we decided to go ahead.

We finally got our rental, mapped out our rather short 10-minute drive, and proceeded to our hotel. Neither of us spoke. We didn’t even want the noise of the radio—just solitude. All I

could think about was how warm and cozy the bed that awaited me would be. About four minutes into the drive, I noticed I was dosing off as my stomach growled. Then I remembered I had a few Skittles left in my pocket.

While digging for the remaining Skittles, I looked over at my co-worker, and saw that he was asleep at the wheel. I panicked and yelled his name. He awoke with a start as we headed into oncoming traffic. He yanked the wheel to get back on course, avoiding a head-on collision with a semi-truck. He overcorrected, and we crossed over our lane and slid into a snowy embankment off the road. After stopping, we looked at each other, as our hearts practically beat out of our chests. We were fine, with no injuries, but were ashamed for not acting to prevent the accident.

There were many risks associated with this story, and every one of them should have been mitigated and/or halted. We took the risks because we believed the mission required it. It was an amazing feeling when we saw the aircraft launch and head home; however, we eventually would have fixed the jet, even if it had taken another day. We could have died in the car accident. We could have been sent home in the same fashion as the fallen Airmen aboard the KC-135.

We should never create unnecessary risks by pushing the boundaries of a mission. We must assess the risks we take every day, and hold the line, not crossing any safety thresholds that are in place. We must hold each other accountable, no matter the rank, and thereby ensure we all go home to our loved ones the only way we should go—with pride. ✈



Photo by SrA Bahja Jones



Who Sank My Truck?

BY SSGT JIMMY S. FINLEY

Typhoon season in South Korea is notoriously destructive. In July 2012, Tropical Storm Khunan was the first storm to make impact on the peninsula that year, bringing with it torrential rains, and powerful wind gusts of up to 60 mph. The storm caused major flooding and power outages to Kunsan AB. Fresh out of technical school, and two months into my first assignment as an A1C, I was tasked with escorting Civil Engineering (CE) to Precision Guided Munitions (PGM). According to my mid-shift supervisor, PGM had slight water damage and needed to be sandbagged.

Slight water damage?

"The Precision-Guided Munitions section is underwater. We have missiles underwater and containers are floating. Water is up to our chests. We are evacuating, but we need CE to get the flooding under control." After Munitions Control received the call, they contacted CE and relayed the information, then notified Conventional Munitions Maintenance (CMM)—the entrance and highest point of the (Munitions Storage Area) MSA—that they needed to send someone to escort CE to PGM.

Getting the keys to a Ford Ranger—a vehicle I'd never seen before at the MSA—I headed out to the entry control point to begin my escort. As I drove toward PGM, I saw that the main road was flooded. Still new in my career and assignment at the time, and reluctant to disobey my TSgt's demand, I pushed ahead. By roughly 0200L, all power on base was out, and torrential rain was crashing down. Water came up to the headlights of my vehicle, and was seeping into the cabin, leading me to the realization that I wasn't going to make it to PGM.

As I attempted an alternate route, I started to panic as the water continued to rise. Even as I floored it, the vehicle struggled against the rising waters, and I realized I wasn't going to make it out that way, either. With the weather reducing visibility to near-zero, the road disappeared. As I attempted to make a U-turn, my vehicle tipped and slammed into a benjo ditch. The vehicle was instantly submerged, and the pressure of the water on the doors trapped me inside. As water rushed into the interior, I forced myself to take a few breaths in order to calm down and regain awareness of my situation. I rolled the window down, waited for the cabin to fill, and swam out. I reached the road and stood up in water that was nearly chest deep.

With my immediate situation under control, I had to chuckle at the absurdity of it all, such as the fact I was lucky enough to be standing in chest-deep water. Was this simply an Act of God, or the result of poor planning and execution? With no way to get to PGM, I escorted CE back out of MSA, and briefed both Quality Assurance and my Section Chief on the accident. The excitement wasn't over, though, as the day ended with the Ammo Chief storming into the office and screaming "*WHO SANK MY TRUCK?*"

"Glad you're okay," he grumbled as he walked out.

In hindsight, this entire ordeal begs the question: What could we have done better? Was it necessary for the Airmen in the munitions flight to be working during such a severe tropical storm? The site plan had taken into account all the safety measures involved in standing

up the new PGM building, but did it plan for flooding, especially so severe? With limited real estate for the base, there was only so much they could do when setting up according to safety regulations. If we protected against every Act of God, it is unlikely that anything would get done swiftly or successfully. Disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, typhoons, tornados, hailstorms, and lightning strikes are not probable, but are always possible.

That being said, having been active duty for over 10 years now, going through this experience so early in my career has given me the benefit of perspective where worst-case-scenarios are involved. Act of God or not, there always needs to be a Plan A, B, & C, with those in leadership positions like myself ready to guide the troops through the toughest of challenges while still keeping the mission in mind.✈



Photo by SrA Marcus Morris



Photo by NASA. Tropical Storm Khanun on July 18, 2012 at peak intensity.



Firefighter for a Day



BY
TSGT FRANKIE L. HEARN II

In June last year, five Airmen became firefighters for a day. That day will be remembered by the members of Strike Aircraft Maintenance Unit as the day a burning aircraft was saved. The

event tested the mental, physical, and emotional resilience of the Airmen on what they had assumed would be a normal day at Nellis Air Force Base. The mishap could have resulted in severe life-threatening injuries or death, had the Airmen failed to utilize the skills that had been drilled into them. Their training enabled them to keep their composure while responding to a high-stress situation. Ultimately, they were able to prevent loss of life, and minimized the damage to an F-15E Strike Eagle aircraft.

This is their story: On 29 June 2022, at approximately 1100 hours, the pilot of Aircraft 90-239 of the 17th Weapons School was

performing the starting procedures for an instructor certification flight at Strike Aircraft Maintenance Unit. After initial startup, the left engine had to be shut down for Red Ball maintenance. *Red Ball* addresses a malfunction during an aircraft's start-up procedure, and requires a specific system specialist to quickly analyze and correct the problem.

After maintenance, the pilot reinitiated engine start procedures. At that point, a leak developed in the Jet Fuel Starter (JFS). The high heat from the engine immediately ignited the fuel, and a fire started in the JFS compartment, located in the underbelly of the aircraft. SrA Eric Johnson, Ground Crew

Fireguard, noticed the fire and immediately alerted SrA Andrew Loraditch. SrA Loraditch signaled for the pilot to initiate emergency aircraft shutdown procedures and exit the aircraft.

TSgt Tyler Adams, Flight Line Expediter, noticed smoke pouring from the top of the aircraft. Together, TSgt Adams and SSgt Joseph Scarmack directed the ground crew and all other personnel in the vicinity to exit the area and position themselves upwind of the fire, in order to minimize exposure to any hazardous agents from the blaze. At the same time, SrA Malik Dawson readied the halon fire extinguisher. TSgt Adams grabbed the extinguisher nozzle

and successfully put out the fire. The courage of ground crew members, combined with their training proficiency and rapid response, minimized the damage to the JFS and the aircraft.

Following the incident, inspectors determined the severity of aircraft damages, and concluded the affected components could be repaired with a few minor parts and support from a local agency. The only items requiring replacement were two flex fuel lines and the JFS wire harness. The harness was manufactured locally by the Electrical and Environmental back shop, which helped minimize replacement costs for the Air Force.

There comes a time in every Airman's military career when they are called upon to utilize the skills they have developed. It takes years of training to reach the proficiency that these five Airmen displayed during this event. Their expert response prevented potential injuries to aircrew and ground personnel, and preserved a vital 32 million-dollar F-15E aircraft. They displayed true bravery, and exemplified the Air Force Core Values, proving they are truly superior in their fields. We are honored to have them serving here as members of Strike AMU.

"Strike Hard, Strike First, No Mercy!"— Cobra Kai 🗡️

No Atheists in Amnesty Bins

BY MR. OUSHAN A. HOSEIN

As a new Technical Sergeant, I was deployed as a Senior Munitions Inspector to the Transit Center at Manas (formerly Manas Air Base), Kyrgyzstan, in 2011. All U.S. forces vacated the base in early June 2014, but while it was operational it served an important function in holding cargo and personnel that were either redeploying or forward deploying to combat zones. Manas was unique in that its customs agents were all active-duty Army non-commissioned officers. It was their job to ensure that no contraband, weapons, or other illegal substances made it into the

United States with units as they returned home.

Customs agents meticulously searched all the bags and luggage of homebound units to ensure that no one violated this requirement. The customs office had set-up several “amnesty bins” on the installation, to provide units the opportunity to quickly dispose of unauthorized items without question. The bins look similar to the blue Post Office mailboxes you see in any city, with a narrow opening to insert packages and items, and a lock on the access panel. It was in one of these amnesty bins that I would have my skills as a Munitions Inspector pushed to the max.

It was the responsibility of an Air Force Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Staff Sergeant and me to retrieve the contents of these amnesty bins twice each week. We’d unlock the bins and give a cursory look around inside to ensure we weren’t in any immediate danger. We then transferred the contents of the bins into M548 ammo cans, which we took to the Munitions Storage Area for a thorough inspection. This was easily my favorite part of the day. The items we ran across in the bins blew my mind (excuse the pun).

The bins were regularly filled with 105 mm brass beer mugs with 30 mm brass handles, ninja stars, 40 mm grenades, switch

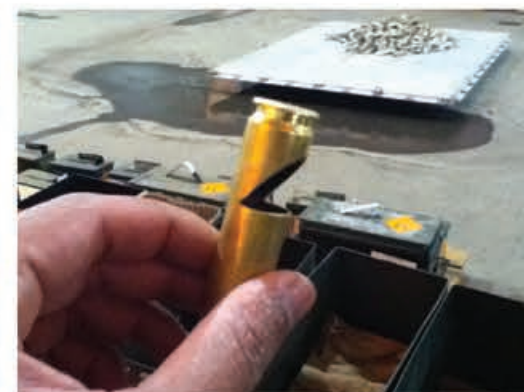
blades, DVDs, magazines, hand-held flares, foreign ordnance, AK-47s, a Russian Draganov sniper rifle (so sweet!), and every caliber and color of small arms rounds imaginable. Ever seen an infrared parachute 40 mm cartridge? How about a red/silver-tipped .50-caliber armor-piercing incendiary tracer? It also became clear some units were hunting local wildlife in these forward deployed locations ... and these guys-n-gals were quite the talented taxidermists. Asiatic black bear pelts, snow fox fur hats with bedazzled eyes, and other indistinguishable fur-bearing animal hides were something to behold.

The job was fascinating, and I was making an immediate weapons-safety impact on my installation. We turned over the contraband to customs and shipped the amnesty ammo to Afghanistan to be blown up. I was proud that we had a functioning, safe system for disposing of these items. Then, one day, during a routine bin-clearing run with my EOD brethren ... things got REAL.

As we began to clear the last bin on our route, we noticed a dark cord attached to something that looked like a white bar of soap. We quickly realized that the little alabaster gem was a small block of C4, complete with a time fuse and blasting cap. That’s right: We had a bomb in our bin.

We quickly called the lead EOD technician, who organized an emergency blow (detonation) locally on our sited range. Fortunately, we were authorized to perform small, non-fragment-producing blows on the installation. Everything went smoothly. Crisis averted.

I’ve reflected on this experience many times over the last ten years. “That could have been bad” is putting it mildly. To this day, the experience serves as a reminder to stay focused. It’s easy to become complacent when the job becomes routine. Don’t just look and listen. Take the time to analyze and interpret what you see and hear, stay engaged, and, as always ... stay classy, WSMs! 🦋



ARE YOUR INSPECTIONS SUPERFICIAL?

BY CMSGT JAKOB Q. KURTZ

Think back on your inspections. What did you examine? What did you find? Are your reports filled with easy-to-spot items such as outdated fire extinguishers, daisy-chained extension cords, and burned-out exit signs? Do your spot inspections routinely show no discrepancies? As you have matured and gained experience in the career field, have your inspections matured, or are you looking at the same things year after year?

The Air Force safety career field is a challenging one. Not only are there numerous units and programs to monitor, but there also is a host of regulations to learn and communicate. We are tasked with conducting inspections, investigations, and training, as well as with continually educating ourselves. In addition to all these, we are expected to be the subject-matter experts in matters related to OSHA, Air Force, ANSI, NFPA, and other safety regulatory entities. This takes time—it has to. No new safety technician can be expected to master the career field even in five years. For some, it takes a decade or more of learning and field experience.

Unfortunately, we tend to continue in habits and routines we learned in 3-level training. We neglect to look at the complexity of why mishaps occur. Some of us still conduct inspections and investigations the same way we did five or ten years ago. This is a problem, especially if our earlier inspections consisted only of looking at cords, extinguishers, exit signs, and housekeeping. It isn't helpful to fill our databases with "no discrepancies found." It also is not helpful for organizations like Civil Engineering to have no discrepancies year after year for major programs like confined spaces. This doesn't serve them well, and ultimately leaves our personnel vulnerable to fatalities.



Photo by SSgt Magen M. Reeves

There are many reasons why many Air Force spot inspections show no discrepancies, and why program assessments remain superficial and similar from year to year. Here are a few:



Photos by TSgt Nicholas Rau

1. **The path of least resistance.** The most obvious answer is that it's easier. Given the sheer number of inspections, coupled with training and investigations, it is easier to file a simple, quick report than a complex one. Add the opening of a recommendation, and what could have been a simple report becomes a year-long endeavor.
2. **Enterprise focus.** Most enterprises consider quantity because it's easier to measure and program. This is why most safety offices require a given number of spot inspections in a month. When personnel inspect wing-level safety programs, what do they examine? Do they ask if spot inspections and assessments were thorough, with hazards identified, or do they ask if reports were finished within ten days? The result is that safety technicians tend to focus on meeting timelines and deadlines *versus* taking additional time to identify hazards and capture them in reports.
3. **Tools.** The safety career field has a number of tools for processing and storing work. The Air Force Safety Automated System (AFSAS) is the main one; however, some of its elements actually

have increased the time it takes to perform work. Part of the issue is that AFSAS was originally designed to capture investigations, and it does this well. Today, the career field is asking it to do other tasks such as investigations and hazard tracking. Unfortunately, these modules were built using the existing investigation construct, and have proved time-consuming for the other tasks. This makes the technicians reluctant to use the system, and when they do, they input reports with as little data as possible in order to finish and close quickly.

4. **Training.** Almost everything hinges on training. Train and educate an Airmen on how to uncover complex issues and hard-to-identify hazards, and they will be highly effective. Alternatively, if an Airman is trained only to look for daisy-chained cords and exit-sign illumination, then we can expect just those items in reports.

What is the impact of superficial inspections? Simply put, they lead to unidentified hazards, which usually lead to mishaps. This is especially true for on-duty mishaps. Sadly, the full impact of superficial inspections is felt in fatalities and extensive property damage. Take, for example, a recent confined-space fatality. A read of the report reveals gaps and discrepancies in program requirements, many of which were simple fixes. Why weren't these discrepancies addressed years before the mishap occurred? The bigger question remains: Were these discrepancies captured in previous assessments and spot inspections? When looking at inspections and reports through the lens of what could happen and what has happened, inspections and reports become absolutely critical in identifying and capturing hazards. There

is no other activity in the safety career field more important than that. This is because inspections are our first line of defense against mishaps.

How can we improve? First, it all starts with training and leadership. Leaders must ensure all personnel are trained to proficiency. What does this entail? We must ensure our personnel have a thorough understanding of every program they will encounter in the field. They must be proficient in all things, including confined spaces, fall protection, machine guarding, and many others. This builds the foundation for how they will inspect and capture future hazards. One of the best things a supervisor can do is advocate and budget for safety training. Newly-appointed safety trainees should not leave their first duty stations with a limited understanding of any program. This means safety professionals must be fully upgraded, and must have attended several OSHA Training Institute courses. Additionally, they should demonstrate the ability to conduct meaningful program assessments in their inspection reports. The next generation safety professional must be able to determine *WHY* things happen, not just note that things are happening. If our



Photo by SSgt Magen M. Reeves

safety professionals are able to go beyond capturing daisy-chained extension cords, and can uncover complex program hazards such as *confined space alternate entry non-compliance*, then they will be able to benefit the Air Force mission fully.

Second, safety professionals must grow continually. One of the best methods for doing this is to combine education with field experience. Education, of course, comprises reading regulations, OSHA Training Institute courses (and others), and upgrade training; however, without field experience, education is hollow. Field experience, therefore, is extremely important to the growth and knowledge of a

safety professional, and they can increase their field experience each time they observe and inspect a unit's activities.

Third, safety professionals must never lose sight of the mission. The Air Force Safety Center's mission is to safeguard Airmen, protect resources, and preserve combat capabilities. This is a good mission; however, why should we be interested in such things? Isn't it to ensure the broader Air Force mission is not hampered or degraded? As you can see, it is necessary to respect and understand how we fit into the greater mission. Safety should never be self-serving. One of the worst safety ideologies I can think of is *safety first*. Make no mistake: the mission is always first. Our challenge is to weave safety and risk management seamlessly into mission processes.

Our safety Airmen are incredibly talented, and will continue to perform the mission in amazing ways. Moving forward, our ability to improve and innovate as a career field will be dependent upon how much leadership invests in training and education. A well-educated safety professional will be able to identify complex hazards, pinpoint root causes, and ultimately prevent the next serious injury and fatality. ✈️



Photo by SSgt Magen M. Reeves

Watch Your Head ... *Before They Have Too!*

BY JOHNATHAN E. WHITE

The day started off like any other. As a Unit Programs Coordinator on base, I had the pleasure of working in the Maintenance Squadron, and had gotten the opportunity to see many different sides of the mission. Though I worked in the Programs Office, my duties occasionally took me onto the Flight Line for spot inspections, safety-boards updates, meetings, and other duties. During those times I was able to talk with maintainers, and to see some of the work they did on a daily basis. Theirs are some of the most demanding jobs, and our maintainers are among the best the United States Air Force has to offer.

As soon as I got to the office that morning, I went through my emails, searching for anything that may have come my way during the night shift. After scrolling through emails for about 20 minutes, it looked like all was calm on the flight line.

My schedule that day included a meeting with our new Unit Commander. This was our first opportunity to talk about his expectations, as well as a time for us to get to know one another on a personal level. We had been without a Commander for a while, and it was great to finally get someone in the position.

It was after the meeting that my day took a turn. I just received an AF 978 about a mishap on the flight line. A member had injured himself pretty badly and was being taken to the hospital for a head injury.

Over the next couple days, I worked directly with Wing Safety, as we set out to investigate the mishap. We learned that the Airman was injured while retrieving materials from a Joe Box, a large metal chest used to store a variety of equipment used by the aircraft maintenance crews, such as tarps and tools. 25 Joe Boxes were positioned in designated areas along the flight line. Some were in use, but most were not. As we walked along with Wing Safety and area supervision, we determined that the Joe Box in question had malfunctioned because of broken hydraulic rods on the front of the box. The rods are designed to keep the lid open while the Joe Box is in use, but these rods were faulty. Instead of staying open, they suddenly decompressed to their neutral position, allowing the lid to slam down on the member's head. Ouch.

After equipment inspections, it was determined that 16 of the 25 Joe Boxes were not functioning properly, and needed to be removed from the flight line. Many of them had faulty hydraulic rods, as they had outlived their recommended lifetime of about 10 years. The faulty Joe Boxes were replaced by Pelican cases, which are made of plastic, and therefore not as heavy and antiquated as some of the Joe Boxes. They also sit lower to the ground, thus eliminating the need for one to stick their head inside to reach materials at the bottom. The Pelican cases seem to be an all-around good choice from both a functional and safety standpoint.

Though a mishap occurred in which a member was injured, our unit, by being proactive and examining all the Joe Boxes on the flight line, saved themselves from possible recurrences. This was a good lesson in making sure that all equipment is up to standard, as well as considering safer alternatives to some.

Always remember to check equipment as recommended—and watch your head.✈️



Practice As You Play

BY SMSGT DANIEL C. WEATHERSBY



The Weapons Standardization (WS) team at Creech Air Force Base was awarded the quarterly Flightline Safety Award from Air Combat Command for their first-on-scene, immediate crash response actions. As armament technicians assigned to WS, the team is required to teach emergency procedures and general safety to the wing's weapons loaders. This training enabled the WS team to react quickly when faced with a real-world situation last year.

In March of 2022, the team was beginning their day: discussing scheduling, while Creech's RPAs were flying around the airfield, and a sister base was dropping bombs at the Nevada Test and Training Range. Such

range activity and daily flying is frequent, and the mild sounds and shakes that come from bombs dropping in the distance normally don't disrupt Creech base operations; however, early that morning, a surprising sound radiated throughout the team's building.

Whatever it was, they knew it was close. The first team member to rush outside to investigate: "I ran out the front door in time to see a massive dust-ball rising in front of me. I couldn't see the smoke pit or our cars. I heard the sound of metal breaking and dropping in front of me. The cloud of dust grew bigger and blanketed the sky as it traveled at a fast rate down the length of our fence."

As the dust settled, the Superintendent arrived to assess the scene. The team then realized the severity of the incident: A remotely-piloted aircraft had crashed. It had impacted the building fence line, ripping off its wing before barreling through the outdoor RV parking lot. With its engine still running and remaining flaps still actuating, it buried its mangled

body underneath one of the trailers while spewing fuel vapor into the air.

The members' training immediately kicked into action. They broke off into different tasks: one person called the Maintenance Operations Center to relay the emergency and request first responders, while others ran to neighboring buildings to begin evacuations. Numerous personnel in the buildings who were not aware of the immediate danger were successfully notified and cleared from the area by the WS team.

Shortly afterward, first responders arrived and took control of the scene, spraying

down the burning aircraft. After the threat was contained, the team proceeded to ventilate their building and further assess the damage. In addition to the fence and the trailer, pieces of the plane had broken off, flying into the neighboring smoke pit, and narrowly missing their Superintendent's truck by a mere four inches.

When the adrenaline wore off, the WS team began to show signs of smoke and fuel vapor inhalation. For some members it started as dizziness and headaches; for others, breathing issues. As one TSgt recalls her experience: "... because I was outside when it crashed and had

run to the neighboring buildings, I was having trouble breathing, and couldn't stop coughing. I was taken to the emergency room, where it was noted that I reeked of jet fuel. I was put through thorough decontamination procedures, extensive blood work, chest x-rays, and a physical examination. I was given breathing treatments and prescribed an inhaler to help me throughout the following days." Other members of the team soon followed suit as their symptoms worsened. Thankfully with the proper care, all were eventually given a clean bill of health ... along with a few more notes in their medical records.

In the face of a real-world emergency, it is difficult to predict how a team will react; however, trusting the processes and pressing forward with continuous training, the WS team proved the value in their daily diligence. Their ability to respond was molded by decades of training and led the team to trust their instincts to respond. This incident solidified trust in the way the WS team and their community does business. Holding true to their instilled mantra of "practice as you play," the WS team was able to protect Airmen and expedite the containment of the crash. ✖



Just a Bullet?

BY TSGT TYLER K. LOCKWOOD

One day, we were flying guns for pilot training, and something awful nearly happened. The pilots were stepping to their jets for the first launch of the day when I was called over. The loading gate to the ammunition container had not been secured. The pilots had opened a panel to make sure it was secure and to verify their weapon settings, and a 20 mm round had fallen out.

When I asked where the round was, the pilot said he had given it to the B-man, an avionics specialist. When launching jets, you have the A-man, who is usually a crew chief, and the B-man, who fire-guards, and pulls chocks and pins. Anyone can be a B-man with the proper aircraft safety training.

When I asked the B-man where the round was, he pulled it from his side pants pocket. I asked if he knew how unsafe that was, and he replied that he thought it was "just a bullet." The 20 mm round used in the F-15 can be electrically fired, or it can be fired with percussion—for example, if you strike the primer hard enough. I thought this was common knowledge, but it isn't. I put the round back in the jet, made sure the gate was secure, and everything was good to go.

I explained to him how a 20 mm round works, and what could have happened to him if something had gone wrong. I reported what happened to my flight chief, and suggested that the unit get basic weapons safety knowledge about our munitions. I took it upon myself to go around and brief the crew chiefs and avionics specialists. It was very surprising how little they knew about basic weapon safety.

I am very glad nothing happened to this airman, but who knows how bad it could have been. Now that everyone has a working knowledge of our munitions, we hopefully can prevent similar events in the future. I would hate to see someone lose a leg from having a 20 mm round in their pocket. 🗡️

Photo by SrA Malissa Armstrong

Hot Brakes

BY SSGT TYLER BOYD & MSGT ZACHARY P. GANT



On May 10, 2022, A1C Jeffery Rivera Anguita of the 74th Fighter Generation Squadron was recovering an A-10C Thunderbolt II on the Combat Aircraft Loading Area ramp at Marine Corps Air Station, Miramar, after night flying operations in support of exercise JADED THUNDER. During the recovery, A1C Rivera was marshalling his aircraft into its parking spot and noticed the left main landing gear brake glowing red and smoking. He immediately notified the pilot to call a ground emergency for hot brakes. The pilot had not had any indications of fault or failures during landing.

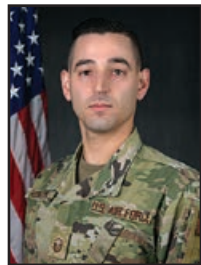
As the aircraft was directed towards the hot brake area, the temperature in the tire continued to rise until the thermal plugs in the tire were engaged, letting nitrogen out of the tire. From the parking spot next door, SSgt Tyler Boyd noticed the brake starting to catch fire, and immediately began to coordinate local ground emergency procedures. As A1C Rivera helped the pilot out of the seat, SSgt Boyd brought a fire extinguisher to the aircraft. When the immediate area was clear, SSgt Boyd began using Halon (H-70) to extinguish the flames. After the pilot was removed from the aircraft, the two Crew Chiefs cleared the immediate area and notified the flightline expeditor to start evacuating the entire parking ramp.



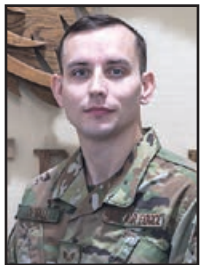
There were nine other A-10C's, fully loaded with live munitions, parked on the ramp, making this a potentially deadly situation. Each jet was loaded with 30 mm High Explosive Incendiary (HEI) rounds, unguided bombs (Mk-84), Air to Ground Missiles (AGM-65), Guided Bomb Units (GBU-12), Flares (LUU -19), and Air to Ground Rockets (AGR-20 RKTS).

The fire was extinguished so quickly that the only components damaged were the brake and the tire. The brake itself became so hot that the rotors fused to the stators. The maintenance team was able to replace the brake and tire without any impact to the flying schedule. The Airmen's ability to react quickly and with confidence saved the Air Force \$138m in assets. Both Airmen were awarded the 3d Quarter FY22 ACC Explosives Safety Award. 🗡️

4th Quarter FY22 Awards



Weapons Safety Professional
MSgt Austin S. Hoisington
23 WG
Moody AFB, GA



Aviation Maintenance Safety
SSgt Jonathan M. Dewall
27 FGS
Joint Base Langley-Eustis, VA



Unit Safety Representative
MSgt Gene-Gregory J. Spok
391 FGS
Mountain Home AFB, ID



Flight Line Safety
A1C Chandler H. Long
41 RGS
Moody AFB, GA



Pilot Safety
Capt Joseph J. Lesar
94 FS
Joint Base Langley-Eustis, VA



Safety Career Professional
MSgt David E. Almy, Jr.
23 WG
Moody AFB, GA



Explosives Safety
801 RHTS Explosive Ordnance
Disposal Team
801 RHTS
Tyndall AFB, FL



Unit Safety
552 AMXS Support Section
552 AMXS
Tinker AFB, OK





Congratulations

Fiscal Year 2022 Award Winners!

ACC AIRCREW AWARD*

Capt Dillon J. Beschel
and
1 Lt Richard S. Blanchard
391 FS/DOC
Mountain Home AFB, ID

ACC PILOT AWARD*

Lt Col Paul L. Vaughan
7 FTS/DOF, 1FW
Joint Base Langley-Eustis, VA

ACC AVIATION MAINTENANCE SAFETY AWARD*

Viper AMU Expeditors
57 AMXS/MXAAA
Nellis AFB, NV

ACC ACHIEVEMENT AWARD FOR OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY – CATEGORY II*

23d Wing Occupational Safety Office
23 WG
Moody AFB, GA

ACC ACHIEVEMENT AWARD FOR OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY – CATEGORY III*

319th Reconnaissance Wing Safety Office
319 RW
Grand Forks AFB, ND

ACC ACHIEVEMENT AWARD FOR OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY – CATEGORY IV*

552d Air Control Wing Safety Office
552 ACW
Tinker AFB, OK

ACC ACHIEVEMENT AWARD FOR WEAPONS SAFETY*

TSgt Ryan A. Drake
20 FW/SEW
Shaw AFB, SC

ACC SAFETY SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD*

Capt Robert K. Ashcroft
30 RS/SE
Creech AFB, NV

ACC SAFETY CIVILIAN PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR AWARD*

GS-12 Jason D. Hughes
23 WG/SEG
Moody AFB, GA

ACC SAFETY NCO OF THE YEAR AWARD*

TSgt Robert T. Summerville
85 EIS/SE
Keesler AFB, MS

ACC SAFETY SENIOR NCO OF THE YEAR AWARD*

MSgt Mark A. Leger
57 WG/SEF
Nellis AFB, NV

ACC SAFETY OFFICER OF THE YEAR AWARD*

Capt Janet Neufeld
12 RS/DON
Beale AFB, CA

ACC FLIGHT LINE SAFETY ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

71 Rescue Generation Squadron
71st RGS/MXA
Moody AFB, GA

ACC SAFETY UNIT SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE YEAR

TSgt Curtis W. Dibble
755 AMXS, 55 WG
Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ

ACC COMMANDER'S AWARD FOR SAFETY

15th Air Force Safety Office
Shaw AFB, SC

ACC WING CHIEF OF SAFETY OF THE YEAR

Lt Col Derek A. Dupuis
432 WG/SE
432 WG, Creech AFB, NV

ACC WING SAFETY PROGRAM OF THE YEAR


332 AEW Safety
332 AEW, APO/AE

* These winners also represented ACC at the Air Force-level safety awards competition.

Mishap Statistics Scoreboard

FY23 Flight

Thru 31 Dec 2022

	Fatal	Aircraft Destroyed	Class A Aircraft Damage
15 AF	0		0
16 AF	0	0	0
USAFWC	0	0	0
ANG (ACC-gained)	0	0	0
AFRC (ACC-gained)	0	0	0
AFCENT (ACC-gained)	0	0	0

FY23 Occupational

Thru 31 Dec 2022

	Class A Fatal	Class A Non-Fatal	Class B
AFCENT	0	0	0
USAFWC	1	0	0
12 AF	0	0	0
15 AF	2	0	0
16 AF	0	0	0

FY23 Weapons

Thru 31 Dec 2022

	Class A	Class B	Class C	Class D	Class E
ACC	0	0	1	1	0

Legend

Class A - Fatality; permanent total disability; property damage \$2.5 million or more
Class B - Permanent partial disability; property damage between \$600,000 and \$2.5 million
Class C - Lost workday; property damage between \$60,000 and \$600,000
(Class description effective Oct. 1, 2019)

(RED) = On-duty

(BLACK) = Off-duty

Symbols for Mishap Aircraft



Flight Notes

Air Combat Command Flight Safety experienced one Class A mishap in the 1st Quarter of 2023. Historically, the number-one cause of aviation accidents is human error; however, the root cause in recent mishaps lies in the technical area, which means our Airmen are doing it right! Staying trained and prepared for hazards outside our control increases survivability, and decreases loss of resources. Being an expert in your specific field makes the difference. Now that the holiday season has come to a close, flying operations are ramping up. In all the good, we can't afford to become complacent. Best practice is to stay the course! Thank you for what you do every day to accomplish the Air Force mission safely.

Occupational Notes

Air Combat Command Occupational Safety sustained three Class A mishaps in the first quarter of the fiscal year (FY) 2023. All mishaps involved 2-Wheel private motor vehicles. Several causal factors led to these mishaps. The lack of proper training and risk management, excessive speed, and distracted driving contributed to the mishaps and the severity of the injuries.

While we realize we cannot eliminate all risks, we must take educated measures to decrease the likelihood of the next mishap. As we transition from winter into spring, there will be an increased number of motorcycles on the road. We encourage all motor vehicle operators to slow down, focus and practice defensive driving. While commanders and supervisors are responsible for promoting and enforcing standards, **YOU** are the key to your safety, your family's safety, and the safety of your coworkers.

Weapons Notes

During the first quarter of FY23, ACC experienced one Class C and one Class D mishap. The Class C mishap resulted from a MK-84 bomb bar impacting a member's head. The member sustained a concussion and minor cuts. The Class D mishap was from mishandling munitions which resulted in damage to a CATM-9 seeker head. Good job keeping the incidents down for the first quarter. Let's continue to focus on mishap prevention to meet our goal for zero mishaps for Quarter 2!

**DISASTER
DESPITE
VIGILANCE**

FALLS

How can you help prevent falls?

Slips, trips and falls are a leading cause of workplace injury and death:

227,760 injuries and 887 deaths annually



Don't be complacent when it comes to fall hazards.

Falls, slips, trips

3rd leading cause of work-related injuries

- Injury rate: 23.1 per 10,000 full-time workers
- Age group most at risk: 55 and over
- Industries most at risk: transportation and warehousing and agriculture
- Typical days lost: 12
- Most frequent type of injury: sprains, strains, tears



- Be aware of your environment
- Avoid distractions
- Keep work areas clean
- Take your time and don't rush – especially around corners and doorways
- Wear the proper personal protective equipment
- Choose the right footwear for your work
- Use the correct ladder or scaffolding for the job
- Always hold the handrail when using the stairs
- Never carry too much in your hands or anything that obstructs your view
- Watch where you are going
- Keep an eye out for changes in elevation
- Report any fall hazards you find



Visit nsc.org for more resources.

OVER
the
Edge
MAGAZINE

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10 | **DISTRACTED DRIVING**
From The Centers For Disease Control and Prevention

Cover Photo by Somnuek saelim/Shutterstock.com

IT'S A FACT CPR saves lives!

EACH YEAR IN THE U.S., MORE THAN

356,000 PEOPLE

SUFFER SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST
Fewer than 10% of sudden cardiac arrest victims survive*

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN
YOU STOP BREATHING?
WITHOUT OXYGEN

4 MINUTES: Permanent brain damage sets in

8-10 MINUTES: Brain death can occur



When CPR is provided immediately after sudden cardiac arrest, a victim's chance of survival can

DOUBLE or TRIPLE

Before you start

1. Check for responsiveness

- Tap the shoulder and shout, "Are you OK?"



2. If victim isn't breathing or only gasps occasionally, contact emergency services

- If others are nearby, have someone call 911
- If you are alone, call 911, provide details and begin CPR
- Lay the victim on their back and kneel next to their head and shoulders



CPR for adults and children 9 and older

If not breathing or only gasping:

Position



Keep your elbows straight and position your hands one on top of the other in the center of the chest

Give 30 rapid chest compressions



To a depth of at least 2 inches, at a rate of at least 100 per minute. Let the chest rise completely after each compression

Tilt the head and lift the chin



Give 2 rescue breaths

Each lasting 1 second



Continue cycle of 30 compressions and 2 rescue breaths until:

- Victim wakes up
- An AED is brought to the scene and is ready to use
- Professional help arrives and takes over

Compression-only CPR

If the rescuer is unable or unwilling to provide rescue breaths,

perform compressions continuously at a rate of at least 100 per minute.



CPR for young children and infants

If not breathing or only gasping:

Position



INFANTS TO AGE 1
Position two fingers of one hand or two thumbs just below the nipple line

Give 30 rapid chest compressions



YOUNG CHILDREN
Position one or two hands in the center of the chest

INFANTS TO AGE 1 & YOUNG CHILDREN
Press down 1/3 of the chest's depth, at a rate of at least 100 per minute

Tilt the head and lift the chin



Give 2 rescue breaths



INFANTS TO AGE 1
Make a complete seal over the mouth and nose, then give 2 rescue breaths

YOUNG CHILDREN
Pinch the nose shut and make a complete seal over the mouth, then give 2 rescue breaths

Continue cycle of 30 compressions and 2 rescue breaths until:

- Victim wakes up
- An AED is brought to the scene and is ready to use
- Professional help arrives and takes over

NSC First Aid training saves lives!

Learn more about classroom, online and onsite training at nsc.org/infafa

Bucket-List Bike



BY MS. CEMEAL J. CARLSON

I have a love/hate relationship with motorcycles. When I was a child, my father had a bike, and he sometimes would give us children rides around the neighborhood. There were no helmets or any other form of protection during those outings, and one summer I received a bad burn on my calf, but that didn't hinder me from loving motorcycles. Owning and learning how to operate my own motorcycle was at the top of my bucket list. I could see it: all-black leather gear, Harley riding boots, and my passenger on the back.

Fast forward to one night in the fall of 2001, in Honolulu, Hawaii. I was on my way home from my shift at Tripler Army Medical Center. I was the first person to arrive at a fatal motorcycle accident.

While preparing to merge onto the highway, I had seen the motorcyclist flash by. I remember thinking to myself that he wouldn't make the corner at the speed he was traveling. Sadly, I was right. There he was: in the middle of the road, helmet and motorcycle about seven car lengths away, and blood and brain matter on the roadway. He was wearing proper safety gear, but it hadn't protected him when he hit a patch of sand and lost control of his bike. He was a young man with a family, and recently had separated from military service.

The event changed my views on motorcycles. The idea of owning one no longer appealed to me. I grew very anxious about being near a rider while driving on the roadway.

May is the traditional start of riding season, with more and more service members riding because

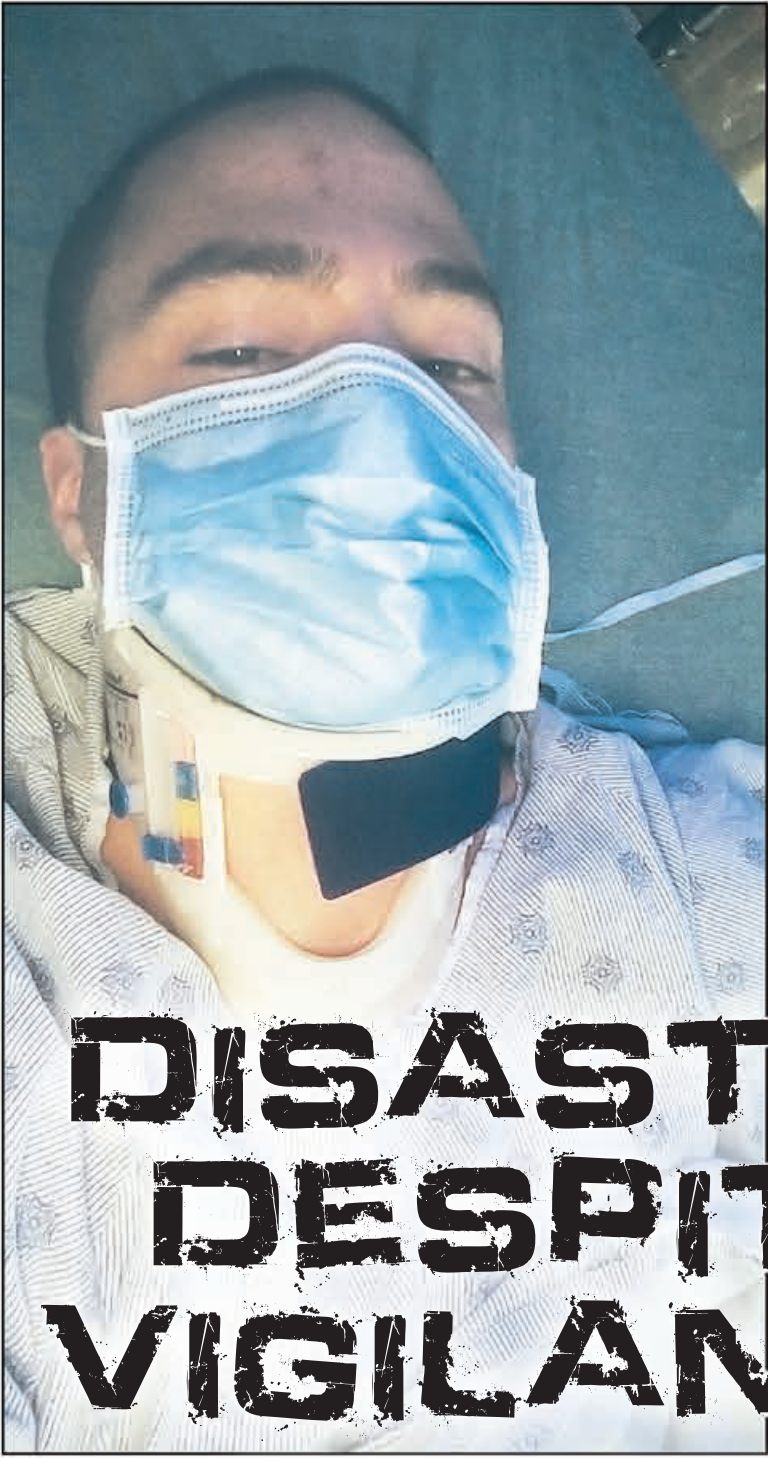
of the warmer weather. The number of mishaps that occur while riding a motorcycle has increased dramatically in recent years. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that civilian motorcyclists are 37 times more likely to be killed than those traveling in an automobile, with motorcycle-related fatalities accounting for 15% of all fatal crashes in the U.S. The rate for military personnel is even higher: Motorcycle-related fatalities in some military branches account for 35% to 40% of all highway deaths.

Now, I see motorcycles and motorcycle safety in a whole new light. The appeal is gone. I had to find an alternate route home for the remainder of my time in Hawaii because of my anxiety about that particular highway. My advice to anyone who is interested in riding a motorcycle is to take all

necessary training and precautions, and always to wear the necessary safety gear.

Unlike being in a car, there isn't a barrier between yourself and the road, another car, or anything else you may strike. Be responsible and respectful to other motorists, and obey the rules of the road. I had been looking forward to owning and operating a motorcycle. After talking to the Hospital Chaplain, I found out my trauma was due to my internalizing the event. The rider who died could have been a friend or family member.

Motorcycle ownership and operation can be fun and exciting if done in a safe way. I am still fascinated by motorcycles, but I refuse to get on one. My bucket list is now one item shorter. 🦋



DISASTER DESPITE VIGILANCE

BY TSGT JEREMIAH D. “BULLDOG” LOOP

Like many people, I grew up around motorcycles, dirt bikes, and jet skis, and was taught safety from an early age. My first motorcycle (age 6) was a 50 cc Zundapp. Later, I moved on to a 75 cc Honda, then to an 80 cc Suzuki. At 14 years old I was riding 250 cc and 400 cc dirt bikes. I've had my share of scrapes, bumps, and bruises, and I've learned a lot, especially the value of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). My father was adamant that I wear my gear when I rode, and he taught me fundamentals about riding on/off road, lessons I still use today.

My experience – “There I was ...”

Fully geared, with long sleeves, armored pants, leather gloves, armored riding shoes, helmet, and a rigid backpack, I was on my way to pick up my to-go order, about 10 miles away. As I returned home, I noticed traffic was heavier, and I kept a little more distance between myself and the cars around me. This paid off: just one mile from my home, a driver ran a stop sign, a normal occurrence in San Antonio. Thanks to my caution, I avoided an accident. The moment after, I realized I had forgotten to pick up a drink to go with my meal. I waited at the next light, then made a U-turn to go about 1/8 mile back to a store to get a drink.

There was a sweeping right-hand curve in the road ahead. As I finished the sweeper, got back up to speed, and looked up from my speedometer, I saw an oncoming car creeping into my lane, headed straight toward me. The driver was attempting to cross over my lane from the right, to join the oncoming traffic that was at a standstill. I began to brake and move to position 1 (far left of my lane) to safely slow down/dodge the car. I realized the

driver wasn't looking in my direction (all I could see was the back of his head) and I began to brake harder. He then heard my motorcycle, his head whipped around, and he stepped on the gas.

When I saw his front tires spin, I realized we were about to collide, and I braked even harder. He was fully in my lane and there was no way to escape. I contacted the driver's side front fender and was ejected from the motorcycle.

There isn't much I remember of the accident. I “greyed” out for the first part of it, but was told later that I had hit the car at 30-35 mph, and was airborne for about 20 feet. I twisted in the air and rolled out of the impact, taking most of the hit to the back of my right shoulder. I broke four ribs, split my shoulder blade, and damaged two vertebrae. Thankfully there were three nurses on their way home from work, and they stopped to assist. I had stood up, and they made me lie back down and wait for EMS to arrive.

While I was waiting, there were several bystanders who had witnessed the accident, and they shared what they saw with the first responders and police. The one comment I remember hearing clearly was from a gentleman who told me “I ride; there was nothing you could do.”

I often revisit the event, playing it in my head and wondering what I could have done differently. What did I learn from this event? I was able to come up with a few items that I would like to share.

First – Balance your speed with your attention on the road. Your focus ALWAYS should be the road and what's around you. If you get a speeding ticket for 5 mph over, it hurts less than a hospitalization and recovery. Plus, you get to keep your motorcycle.

Second – Wear as much PPE as you can. If I hadn't worn mine that day, my injuries would have been much more severe. When you don't wear your gear, the list of possible outcomes is extensive.

Third – Expect the drivers around you to take the most dangerous actions in the moment, and be prepared to compensate. This means practice, including maneuvering, braking, and swerving. Find classes that challenge and improve your skills at handling your motorcycle. Please don't settle with meeting the minimum requirements. The better trained you are, the less you will have to deal with on the back end.

Fourth – Even with a loud bike, bright colors, and high beams, I was in an accident. The 99% preventative factor is YOU, the rider. Always seek to improve your control over the motorcycle. Doing so will save your life.

I picked up another motorcycle after I had recovered, and I ride today. I incorporated my “lessons learned” into my daily riding mindset. It won't prevent the next accident, but it will reduce the chances greatly. No one is perfect; all you can do is remain vigilant, ride within your abilities, ride your ride, and get home safe! 🏍️

RAGING ON THE ROAD

BY DR. RICHARD E. COOK

Ah, spring. The time of year when people begin to venture out of their homes and take to America's highways. The first warm days of the year tempt us with thoughts of Spring Break, family vacations, weekend getaways, and Sunday drives. Even the current gas prices aren't enough to keep folk from getting behind the wheel and taking off. As satisfying as it is, traveling on highways can be a dangerous undertaking. We should remember, as the 1960s TV ads taught us, to "watch out for the other guy."

For the first four months I was on the job at Langley AFB, VA, I lived 132 miles from work. I drove 264 miles per day, 1,320 miles per week, 5,676 miles per month. By the time my wife and

I had moved into our home closer to work, I had driven 23,232 miles, during the winter, and almost entirely on Interstate Highways. The 4 ½ hours I spent on the road was the most dangerous part of my day.

Commuting was stressful under normal circumstances, but on many days it was made worse by aggressive drivers. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), aggressive driving is a major factor in U.S. traffic crashes, playing a role in a large number of fatal highway collisions each year. The NHTSA defines aggressive driving as occurring when "an individual commits a combination of moving traffic offenses so as to endanger other persons or property." While aggressive driving is difficult to quantify, a study by the American Automobile

Association reported that aggressive driving played a role in 56 percent of fatal crashes from 2003 through 2007, with excessive speed being the No. 1 factor. Speeding was also the leading driving behavior associated with fatal crashes in 2018 (almost 17 percent), followed by driving under the influence (10 percent), according to NHTSA.

The drive to and from work each day was dramatic, to say the least. I saw it all: drivers racing to get in front of you, only to take the next exit; drivers following so closely you could tell the color of their eyes; drivers weaving from lane to lane, cutting in front of you with only inches to spare; and drivers abruptly changing lanes or merging from an on-ramp without making sure the road was clear. Frequently, I saw drivers cross over from aggression to what we now call *road rage*.

7 Shocking Road Rage Statistics

(source: NHTSA)

- #1 53% of Drivers Think Speeding is Normal**
Over half of all drivers consider driving 10 mph over the speed limit to be perfectly normal; however, speeding and other aggressive driving maneuvers significantly increase the chances of a car crash.
- #2 About 33% of Collisions Involve Road Rage**
Road rage is the cause of nearly 1 out of every 3 crashes. About a third of crashes can be linked to road rage behaviors such as speeding, changing lanes without signaling, and tailgating. Keeping cool behind the wheel is one of the easiest ways to prevent a collision that could have been avoided.
- #3 50% of Drivers Become Aggressive With Road-Ragers**
Half of drivers admit to driving aggressively after another driver has done it to them. The most common responses are horn-honking, light-flashing, rude gestures, and shouting. Don't add to the problem by becoming an aggressive driver yourself.
- #4 2% of Drivers Seek Revenge**
A small but significant percentage of drivers actually take road rage to the next level. Some of the startling things drivers have done in retaliation to road rage include tailgating, brake-checking, and bumping the other vehicle. About 2% of drivers admit to attempting to run another aggressive driver off the road!
- #5 37% of Road-Rage Incidents Involve Firearms**
Over one-third of road-rage incidents involve at least one driver with a firearm in their vehicle. This is especially dangerous if tensions already are running high.
- #6 66% of Traffic Fatalities Are Caused by Aggressive Drivers**
The number of annual fatalities is declining little by little, but around 40,000 people still die in car crashes every year. Vehicles are safer than ever, but no safety system in the world can protect you from an aggressive driver. Aggressive driving has been linked to 2/3 of all traffic fatalities.
- #7 Road Rage Leads to 30 Murders per Year**
Fatalities from collisions are bad enough, but some people lose their lives over a road-rage incident because one of the drivers completely loses their cool. You never know what someone else is capable of doing.

Play it safe, and keep well away from aggressive drivers and road-ragers. Hopefully, you won't get caught up in their dangerous behavior. Drive defensively, give everyone plenty of room, obey traffic laws, and **stay safe!** 🚗

DISTRACTED DRIVING IN THE UNITED STATES

Distracted driving is doing another activity that takes the driver’s attention away from driving. Driving distractions include using cell phones, eating, talking to other passengers, and adjusting radio or climate controls.

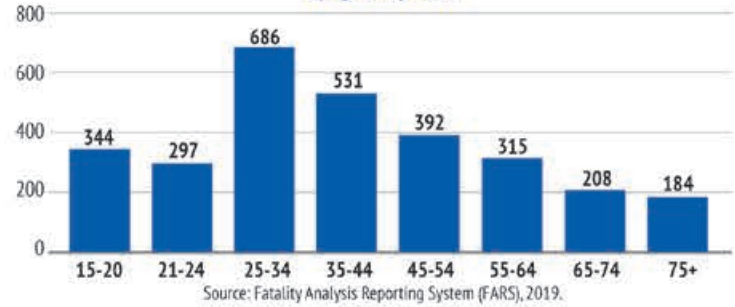
The 3 Main Types of Distracted Driving

Taking your eyes off the road

Taking your hands off the wheel

Taking your mind off driving

Number of Distracted Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes
By Age Group, 2019



Get the Facts

Many states have taken steps to help prevent distracted driving. Examples include:

- banning texting while driving
- banning hand-held cell phone use while driving
- requiring passenger limits for young drivers
- using high-visibility enforcement of these laws

However, research on the effectiveness of cell phone and texting laws is mixed.



Working together, we can help keep people safe on the road—every day.

Promising Strategies to Help Address Distracted Driving

High-Visibility Enforcement: Cell Phone Use and Texting

High-visibility enforcement (HVE) efforts aim to prevent cell phone use while driving by increasing the perceived risk of getting a ticket. HVE combines increased enforcement, such as saturation patrols (increased number of officers patrolling a specific area), with paid and earned media.



Impact

HVE can reduce cell phone use while driving. Pilot HVE programs in Syracuse, New York, and Hartford, Connecticut, used increased enforcement efforts with paid media, press events, and news releases over a one-year period. Syracuse saw a 32% decrease in hand-held cell phone use among drivers, while Hartford saw a 57% decrease.²



By the Numbers

As of 2020 the use of HVE is limited to a few states.³



Learn More

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety keeps track of distracted driving laws.

You can learn more here: www.iihs.org/topics/distracted-driving

Graduated Driver Licensing: Young Passenger Restriction

Graduated driver licensing (GDL) is a system that helps new drivers gain experience under low-risk conditions by granting driving privileges in stages. Comprehensive GDL systems include five components,⁴ one of which addresses distracted driving: young passenger restriction.



Impact

Limiting the number of young passengers can help reduce distracted driving among teen drivers.⁵ A national study of 15-17 year old drivers showed that fatal crashes were 21% lower when zero passengers were allowed and 7% lower when one passenger was allowed, compared with policies that allowed two or more passengers.⁵



By the Numbers

For drivers with intermediate or provisional licenses:

- 16 states and Washington, D.C., have a limit of zero young passengers without adult supervision.⁶
- 29 states have a limit of one young passenger without adult supervision.⁶

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For more information about distracted driving, visit www.cdc.gov/transportationsafety/distracted_driving.

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