



# Combat Edge

CRITICAL DAYS. CRITICAL CHOICES by Chief Master Sgt. Richard A. Parsons, ACC/CCC, Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va.

WHAT WAS I THINKING?

by Mr. Rodney Robinson, HQ ACC/SEG, Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va.

SAVING SUPERMAN ... by Col. J. Alan Marshall, Ph.D. HQ ACC/SEF, Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va.

THE DAY MY DAD WAS BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE by Master Sgt. Sean M. Rouillier, HQ ACC/SEG, Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va.



# Well Done!

Our 50th Anniversary Edition received an Honorable Mention in the 2011 Military Graphic Artist of the Year Competition —Publication Category!

CRITICAL DAYS OF SUMMER ... by ACC Ground Safety, HQ ACC/SEG, Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va.

Monthly Awards

QUARTERLY AWARDS

**S**TATS

GENERAL GILMARY M. HOSTAGE III COMMANDER

COLONEL SIDNEY F. MAYEUX DIRECTOR OF SAFETY

COLONEL J. ALAN MARSHALL SENIOR EDITOR

Mrs. Barbara J. Taylor Editor

> Mr. Kurt Reilly ART DIRECTOR

Volume 21 Issue 1, ACC SP 91-1

THE COMBAT EDGE

SEM, 220 SWEENEY BLVD, JOINT BASE LANGLEY-JOINT BASE LANGLEY-EUSTIS. VA 23665-2714.

JTION IS BASED ON A RATIO OF ONE COPY PER 10 PERSONS ASSIGNED. AIR FORCE UNITS

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS: AVAILABLE TO NON-THE U.S.) FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT OF DOCUMENTS, PO BOX 371954, PITTSBURGH PA 15250-7954. ALL SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE

PLEASE SEND ARTICLES WITH NAME, RANK, DSN PHONE NUMBER, E-MAIL, COMPLETE MAILING

EDITOR. THE COMBAT EDGE 220 SWEENEY BLVD JOINT BASE LANGLEY-EUSTIS, VA 23665-2714

**TELEPHONE**: (757) 225-7941 DSN: 575-7941 FAX: (757) 764-8975 E-MAIL: ACC.SEM@LANGLEY.AF.MIL

THE EDITORS RESERVE THE RIGHT TO EDIT ALL MANUSCRIPTS FOR READABILITY AND GOOD TASTE.

**DISCLAIMER:** THIS MAGAZINE IS AN AUTHORIZED CONTENTS OF THE COMBAT EDGE ARE NOT NECESSARILY THE OFFICIAL VIEWS OF, OR ENDORSED BY, THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT, INFORMATION CONTAINED IN ANY ARTICLE MAY NOT BE CONSTRUED AS INCRIMINATING UNDER ARTICLE 31, UCMJ.



# **ON SAFETY**

# critical days **Critical** Choices

Have you ever heard of a person breaking a leg or losing their life while playing a game of chess? Let's face it, some things in life are more dangerous than others, but we cannot stop living. I am as adventurous as the next guy. I have jumped out of planes, kayaked rivers, hiked a portion of the Appalachian Trail, been water skiing and the list goes on and on. But one thing is for sure ... I always think about my family. Safety is all about choices, risk mitigation, and Service before Self.



Chief Master Sgt. Richard A. Parsons **ACC Command Chief Master Sergeant** 

Bad choices lead to sad situations! What makes a choice bad? When we fail to take into account the risk and the potential results of our decision before we execute a plan. I do not think Airmen who face vehicular homicide charges set out to end up in that situation. I think they never stop to think about the results of their decisions and choose to act in spite of what they have been taught. Many may even think that "those things" only happen to other people. Many overestimate their abilities to handle the risk. But ask anyone who has faced devastating circumstances and they will tell you they wish they had a do over.

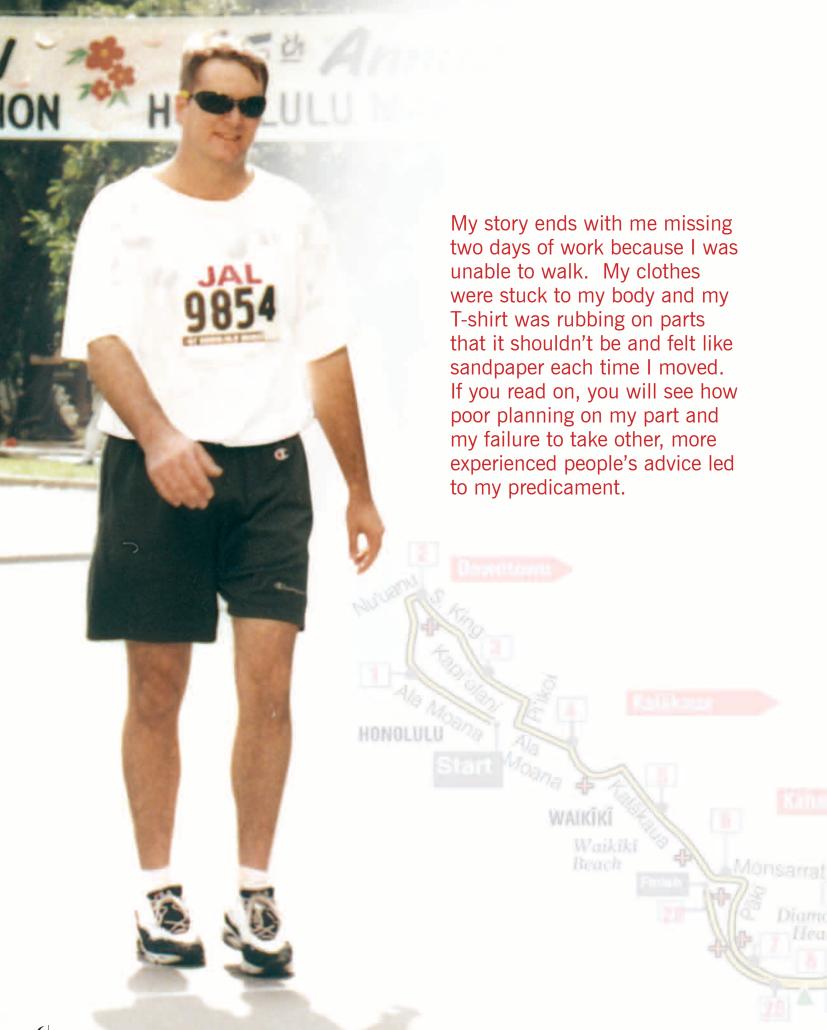
A key to adventurous activity and everyday living is risk mitigation. Determining the acceptable level of risk that is worth a certain activity is not that hard, but it takes forethought. You know how excited you get when you get the chance to do something you love—for me it's fishing. It's about thinking of others before self.

There are many things I would love to try that are simply not worth the risk; things that I would get a rush from but would require a level of risk that I am not willing to accept because of my family. I would love to own and ride a motorcycle, but for me the risk is not worth the reward. I would prefer to give myself the best chance to be available for my family. Let's face it ... the chances of a life-changing injury or death increase dramatically on a motorcycle versus in a car or truck. Even if you are a safety-conscious person doing all the right things the level of risk is always there.

That leads me to my main thought about safety; it is all about Service before Self. I choose to make the decisions that will provide me the best chance to be present for my family, my friends and my coworkers. You see, the decision to operate a motor vehicle without proper safety equipment or under the influence of a drug is a violation of the agreement I have made to my family, friends and coworkers. As a husband and father I made a promise to love and support my family. As an Airman I made a promise to never falter, fail or leave a comrade behind. Your family needs you and the Air Force needs you: so live out the core value of Service before Self as it relates to Safety.



4 http://www.acc.af.mil/library/accsafety.asp



# WHAT WAS I THINKING?

### BY RODNEY ROBINSON

remember when I (then Senior Master Sgt. Robinson) received my orders for Hawaii. I thought, "This is going to be a great assignment!"

Since I'm an avid sportsman, what more could I want? I now could play softball, golf and other outdoor sports year-round. I arrived in May and quickly got involved in the sports scene; but as summer came to a close, so did many of the sports activities I was involved in. Since I like to stay active, I was looking for something to do, when out of the blue I heard two chiefs in my office talking about the upcoming Honolulu Marathon. Since I'm not a runner, I should have just kept my head in my books, kept my mouth shut and pressed on, but that wouldn't be me. No, I eagerly joined in the conversation and commented that anyone should be able to run a few miles. **Boy was that a** 

HUGE mistake!

HONOLULU MARATHON



My counterparts in the office were going to walk the marathon, but there was no way I was going to walk; in fact, I had bigger plans. I found another coworker just as crazy as me that would be willing to run the marathon as my partner. Although we were not out of shape, we were certainly not in shape to run a marathon-26.2 miles.

Well, since the marathon was in December, we had five whole months to prepare. You would think I would have started running a little to get ready, but I made no such preparation. The two chiefs in the office invited me several times to train with them, but since they were "just walking," I felt that it would be a waste of my time. So I kept on training the way I had been by playing intramural flag football and racquetball at lunch.

The chiefs kept asking me and my coworker what we were doing to prepare and we would reply, "Don't worry about us." My wife was even on me to prepare for this event, but I didn't let that influence me either.

The marathon was now only a day away, and I was ready ... or so I thought. My coworker was on temporary duty and was due in later that evening. We would have to

parts of my body that it shouldn't be. The shorts I was wearing also were not designed for running and were causing me substantial problems in key areas, if you get my drift. My shoes, although they were running shoes, were not nearly as comfortable as I had remembered. During the race, I did see numerous runners going by tables along the course and putting their hands in something. I later found out this was Vaseline, which could have solved many of my problems.

After 13 miles I could run no more: so I began to walk. Shortly after I stopped running, my coworkers caught up to me. They were very encouraging and wanted me to walk with them. However, by this time my entire body was in pain. My shirt and shorts were sticking to all major parts of my body, my feet were sore and my hands were swelling. My coworkers ended up walking ahead, and I struggled to keep going. After several hours, and many rest breaks, It was almost over.

As I neared the finish line. I remember one of the medical folks asking me if I was okay. Although I told him I was "good to go," my body was telling me something entirely different. Well, when all was said and done, I had finally crossed the finish line some 7 hours. 32 minutes. and 37 seconds after I started. My body was totally exhausted. If you remember how I began this story, I was supposed to go to Hooters for wings, but, as you can imagine, that never occurred.

My dilemma now was getting home, and since I was separated from my running partner, that was not going to be an easy task. I did have some money in the bottom of my shoe—\$13.00, but the taxi driver wanted more than I had just to take me back to the car. I ended up calling my wife from the Honolulu Zoo. However, due to the runners and traffic issues downtown, she would not be able to make it into the city for about an hour.

Since I failed to plan. I had no other choice but to wait for her to pick me up. I was now in serious pain and unable to walk another step. I ended up lying down in the grass in front of the zoo and sleeping. When my wife arrived, I hobbled over to the car and got in. By this time, my body had started to stiffen, my clothes were sticking to very sensitive areas, my feet were sore, my toe nails were black and blue, and my hands were still swollen—not a very pretty picture.

The next day was Monday, but I was in no shape to go to work; so I called in and asked for the day off. I actually ended up taking Tuesday off as well. Well guess who answered the phone? You guessed it—one of the chiefs who walked the marathon. We all can joke about the experience now, but at the time it was not funny.

What was I thinking when I didn't prepare? Folks were reaching out to me, attempting to give me sound advice, but I just didn't pay them any mind. Since I'm not a runner and have little, if any, experience in this area. I should have listened. I know I should have done things differently, but my stubbornness got in the way of me making the right decisions, and I failed to properly assess the situation and take the appropriate actions that would have made the marathon a better (less painful) experience.

Throughout life we certainly encounter many situations where people offer help and advice. I sure hope the next time I take the advice of folks more experienced than me.





get up around 3 a.m. so we could get a good parking spot by Hooters and walk to the starting line. Yeah, that's right. We parked the car by Hooters because we thought, after

the race we would meet for wings and a drink. After we parked the car, we walked to the starting line a few miles away. I guess I should have figured something was wrong when one of the racers at the starting line approached me and asked if I was running in my T-shirt. I didn't think anything about it and just shrugged him off. I must admit I felt a little out of

place. Most runners were stretching. running in place, and putting Vaseline on their bodies—for what? I was just standing near the front of the starting area ready for the big event to begin.

Finally, the fireworks were in the sky and off we went. The race was packed with thousands of runners. The first 10 miles took what seemed to be days, although I did manage to pass a few of the walkers. At the 10-mile point, my coworker started having foot problems and had to stop. I pressed on, even though I already was questioning myself on what I was trying to accomplish. By this time, I was covered in sweat, and my T-shirt was rubbing on

# Saving Superman

THE COMBAT EDGE | MAY / JUNE 2012 11

and his Crew Chief Achilles

BY COL. J. ALAN MARSHALL, Ph.D. | PHOTOS BY SENIOR AIRMAN STEPHANIE RUBI

.S. Air Force Capt. Superman is number one in everything he does. First in his class at the Academy, he started the trend of being number one early in his career. His performance as flight lead and as an instructor pilot is legendary around the flight line. Capt. Superman always scores 100 percent on his physical fitness test, and he is working on his master's degree in his spare time. He is a loyal husband and a father of two little ones who think he is indeed Superman. He is also the go-to-man in the squadron, holding and excelling at a dozen additional duties above and beyond his flying duties. The squadron commander frequently ladles special projects on him because every project that he gets, he knocks out of the park; each one a firstclass performance. Who else could the commander trust with such important projects? Capt. Superman attracts other star performers making every team that he is on the best that it can be. Take for example his crew chief, Tech. Sgt. Achilles. Sgt. Achilles specifically requested to maintain Superman's aircraft. Sgt. Achilles graduated number one from the Non-Commissioned Officer Academy. He too max's out his physical fitness test and holds several additional duties in the squadron. He serves as a coach for his two sons' soccer team and volunteers at the local Red Cross. It seems like there is nothing the sergeant can't do well. He's an adrenaline junky and loves extreme sports such as skydiving and windsurfing. Everybody wants to be like him and many of the young Airmen in the squadron look up to Achilles, but few are as seemingly bullet proof as the popular crew chief. The only things about Capt. Superman and Sgt. Achilles that worries their closest friends are that their stories have been told before.

In the case of Superman, the super hero had one weakness that surfaced in the presence of Kryptonite, a mythical radioactive mineral from his home planet, Krypton. In the presence of Kryptonite, Superman lost his superhuman abilities and began to die<sup>1</sup>. In the case of Achilles, the ancient superhero had one weakness located in his heel. Achilles was universally known as the most powerful and skilled warrior in all of Greece or even the known world. Supposedly, the mother of Achilles had attempted to make him immortal by dipping him in the sacred river, Styx. Only the heel that was held by his mother went un-dipped, and was thus unprotected. Eventually a stray arrow hit Achilles in the heel during a battle and he died<sup>2</sup>. In both of these famous stories, the two super humans Superman and Achilles, were invincible except for one life threatening weakness. Both have similar weaknesses that make them all too human and even more vulnerable than their peers. In the case of Capt. Superman, his fatal weakness is a result of his extraordinary talent and his inability to say no to ever increasing demands on his time. In the case of Sgt. Achilles, his flaw is his Type A personality that causes him to be overly self critical and almost incapable of admitting failure. Although surprising to friends, Type A personalities sometimes harbor deep insecurity and suffer inadequate selfesteem<sup>3</sup>.

Although seemingly superhuman, both Capt. Superman and Sgt. Achilles are in danger and need a friend or supervisor to intervene and save them. Within a few days, Superman will awake several times during the night to tend to a sick child. The next day, he will go into the squadron early to finish a special project for the commander before briefing for a flight. After the briefing, Superman will eat a quick lunch comprised of a candy bar and a soft drink while answering a few e-mails at his desk. In the van ride out to his iet. he will be seen making a cell phone call to his wife to give her guidance on what needs to be fixed on the car at the dealership so that they can drive to see grandma the next weekend. Before climbing into the jet, he will realize that he left his water bottle on his desk but will decide to press on without it since he just downed a coke. During the flight, Superman completes his planned mission but adds an extra engagement because he is not happy with his performance on the last engagement. During the additional engagement, Superman will perform an inadequate anti-G straining technique and will lose consciousness. His aircraft will hit the ground before he regains consciousness.

# Over the next few weeks, Sgt. **Achilles will** become despondent over the loss of Capt. Superman.

He will feel that he might have failed

to give the captain a good jet and somehow this caused the normally flawless pilot to die. None of this will be true. He becomes depressed and starts drinking more. He stops exercising and shows little interest in extreme sports. He will try to give his favorite hunting knife away to one of his best friends, but the friend will decline without telling anyone. One morning, the usually punctual Achilles will fail to show for work but coworkers will assume that their supervisor had approved leave for him. After work, his wife will call the squadron to ask when he will be home. After a frantic search on base, a friend will find his car parked in a local parking lot with him inside. Achilles will be deceased with a selfinflicted gunshot wound to the head.

How can someone save Superman and his Crew Chief Achilles? Both

of them might fit what is known as the "superman model" of affiliation. In the superman model, leaders and peers may "evaluate [people] and support those who appear to be most likely to exceed their generalized expectations of human nature"4. This may be related to the "halo effect" where physical attractiveness leads people to assume that the observed person is similarly above average in other characteristics<sup>5</sup>. However, the superman model is based more on demonstrated performance that implies the observed person is somehow more resilient and less vulnerable in all aspects of physical, mental, spiritual and social qualities. For many people, this expectation by superiors and peers may cause intense pressure on the individual to excel in all aspects of life even when the additional effort may cause excessive stress, decreased performance and less resilience. In the case of Capt. Superman, had the squadron commander seen the signs of physical exhaustion, maybe that special project could have been given to someone else. Had a wingman noticed that Superman seemed preoccupied before the flight, maybe they could have called knock-it-off before that extra engagement. In the case of Sgt. Achilles, if a supervisor had known that he was blaming himself for the loss of Superman, maybe they could have arranged for counseling. If a friend had recognized some of the signals of suicide (depression, loss of interests in hobbies, increased drinking, attempting to give away keepsakes), maybe they could have escorted him to a medical professional who could have helped save his life.

With all this said, most of us in the Air Force know a Superman or an Achilles. They are hands down the best people we know. They excel at so many things, it is hard to believe there is any area of their life that they don't have under control. However, the reality is that most of us in the Air Force are over achievers, and all of us are only human. Every day, the



Air Force loses Airmen to preventable Superman and Achilles in the Air mishaps and self defeating behavior such as suicide. Leaders and supervisors should recognize this and avoid overloading star performers just because they are so good at what they do. Friends and relatives should also recognize that no matter how "together" we think another person is, they are still susceptible to selfdefeating behavior and we should always be on the lookout for signs of depression and personality changes in others. It turns out that saving

Force is the responsibility of every Airmen and every supervisor. In the end, each of us is a Superman or an Achilles and we all have human weaknesses that can bring us down. 🗽

**Even Superman** needs a good Wingman!

- 1) Siegel, J., & Shuster, J. (1932). Superman. DC Comics.
- 2) Plato. (180). Symposium.
- 3) Friedman, M. (1996). Type A Behavior: Its diagnosis and treatment. New York.
- 4) Sullivan, J. L. (1990). Candidate appraisal and human nature. Political Psychology, 11(3). 459-484.
- 5) Thorndike, E.L. (1920). A constant error on psychological rating. Journal of Applied Psychology, IV, 25-29.

The lead photo for this article was staged for illustration purposes only. We realize it it not an authorized uniform combination. ~Ed.

THE COMBAT EDGE | MAY / JUNE 2012 13 12 http://www.acc.af.mil/library/accsafety.asp

# The Day My Dad Was Brought Back to Life

BY MASTER SGT. SEAN M. ROUILLIER

was 15 years old when my mom called me inside the house and frantically shouted that dad was in a severe motorcycle accident.

We were all in shock driving to the hospital as everything seemed to happen in slow motion. As my mom, two younger brothers (Christian 13 and Ryan 10) and I arrived at North Florida Regional Trauma Center in Gainesville, Fla., we couldn't believe this was happening to us. Shortly after arriving at the hospital one of the doctors came out of the operating room, he looked exhausted and explained to us that there's a chance my dad won't survive his injuries, and they're doing the best they can to keep him alive. We later found out that he was pronounced dead at the accident scene but because of the great work of the onscene emergency medical team personnel, and a huge miracle, they were able to resuscitate him.

After several hours of continuous surgery, he was stable yet in a deep coma, and had severe swelling of the brain. We weren't allowed to see my dad for three days due to the sterile environment of the Intensive Care Unit and his comatose condition. On the third day, we were only allowed to view him through a glass window. I'll never forget seeing my dad just lying there crippled, helpless and still in a deep coma. The four of us cried, as we stared at our lifeless father through the glass of the ICU. We saw that his mouth was wired shut; he had staples in his head, and all down his chest and stomach; and his wrists, legs and knees were brutally damaged. After about three months, and a lot of praying, my dad opened his eyes, but could not speak. As his eyes strained to focus, he barely remembered who we were. After waking from his three-month coma, and several more weeks of recovery, he was finally well enough to come home. Confined to a wheelchair for several more weeks, he required endless sessions of speech and physical therapy. My dad had to relearn how to think, speak, walk, function and interact again. This process took many years, and was extremely frustrating for all of us, especially him.



Around the house, we avoided talking about his motorcycle accident. But one day I asked my dad if he remembered anything, and to our surprise, he remembered many of the grueling details, up until the point of impact. Here's what he had to say about his near fatal experience.

"I had the right of way as I was traveling southbound at 50 mph towards Crystal River, Fla., on Route 19, (a four-lane highway; two north and two south with a 10foot median in between). It was about 3:30 p.m. in the afternoon on a beautiful warm sunny day. My motorcycle was a 1981 Honda Gold Wing, which I rode quite often as my primary vehicle. As I approached the entrance to the Florida Nuclear Power Plant Co., which usually changed shifts between 3:00 and 4:00 p.m. each day, I noticed a police officer (there to direct traffic) had a car pulled over and was talking to the driver. As I was approaching the intersection at 50 mph, they stopped talking, and the officer waved the driver to proceed directly in my path without looking in either direction. When the 1978 four-door





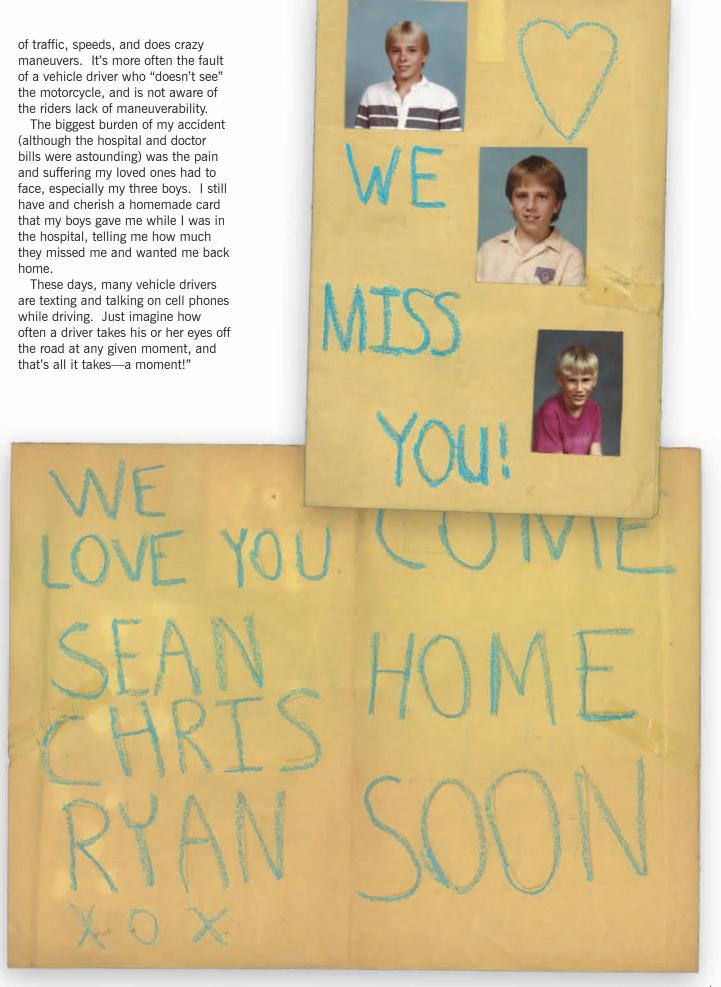
Buick got from beyond view of the police car, I immediately slammed into the left side of the rear door. turning the car completely around. I had no time to apply my brakes, and was propelled forward into the handlebars as my face smashed the roof line of the car, pushing it in nine inches with my jaw. The handlebars of my motorcycle turned sideways and ripped open my stomach, destroying my spleen and part of my

I have no recollection of my stay at North Florida Regional Trauma Center as I was in a coma for the first three months following the accident. My first recollection of my hospital stay was when my father was pushing my wheelchair to his car after I was discharged, and seeing my three boys again.

I had been a motorcycle enthusiast ever since I was 18 years old in the Air Force, and had owned several since then. I rode from Memphis. Tenn. to my home in New Hampshire at least twice, as well as riding from Memphis to Nova Scotia, Canada. I rode for about 26 years without so much as an incident. I was a very

safe motorcycle rider for all of those years and absolutely loved riding. I would probably still be riding today, but due to my injuries from that one incident, my riding days were terminated. I incurred a closed-head injury which did substantial brain damage to the left side of my frontal lobe, which controls the right side of the body. My sense of balance was greatly affected as well. Although I am still alive almost 28 years later, I have experienced two total knee replacement surgeries; I have two-each "Hebert" pins in my right hand about one and a half inches in length; I've had three Transient Ischemic Attacks (mini strokes); and shoulder rotator cuff replacement surgery; all of which were attributed to this single motorcycle crash. At the time of the accident, I was wearing a top-notch "Bell Helmet," a thick leather vest and Jacket, leather gloves and substantial high-grade leather boots.

Motorcycle accidents, are not always the fault of the rider, who typically rides safely due to their vulnerability on the open road, or even the rider who darts in and out





uring the same period last year there were three Class A fatal mishaps—a 50 percent increase over the previous year. In both years there was one motor vehicle fatality, and the remainder were sports and recreation fatalities.

One fatality involved an Airman who had recently (one week earlier) purchased a motorcycle and had not received the required training. As he was attempting to make a right-hand turn at an intersection, he used too

much speed and crossed over into the oncoming lane and collided with a truck. Take aways: Inexperience, speed, and lack of training ... *It was personal!* 

There was a drowning mishap involving a Chief Master Sgt. who was kayaking with his family when his son suddenly went over a dam and got caught in the hydraulic boil. The chief jumped in to help him but was also pulled under in the boil. Both individuals drowned. Take away: Know where you're traveling, be aware of hazards and plan accordingly. *It is personal!* 

In the last fatality, an Airman who was a passenger in a four-person ATV was tragically killed. The operator rolled the vehicle at 25 mph while making a right turn. The roll bar struck the Airman in the head. Take away: speed, vehicle handling characteristics and personal protective equipment (helmets, seatbelts) ... It gets very personal!

The majority of summertime mishap injuries result while playing sports. Last year there were 109 off-duty injuries; 46 of them involved sports and recreation. Activities ranged from basketball, softball to wave runners

and horseback riding. The 46 injuries came from 21 different sporting activities. Take away: Any sports or recreation activity can produce an injury or even a fatality. **Safety—It's personal!** 

Another category that has a number of injuries is miscellaneous mishaps. They can occur during any type of activity from lawn mowing, to falling off ladders, or burns from cooking to lifting a child or lighting fireworks. Take away: Any activity can produce an injury.

It's Your Safety—Make It Personal!

18 http://www.acc.af.mil/library/accsafety.asp

# FEBRUARY - MARCH AWARDS OF DISTINCTION

# Aircrew Safety



MAJ. JOSHUA B. SCHORE AND CAPT. RICHARD L. DAVIS, 455 EOG, 455 AEW, BAGRAM AF, AFGHANISTAN. Five and a half hours into the night combat sortie, Maj. Schore and Capt. Davis experienced a loud compressor stall which resulted in a right engine control light and a stuck closed nozzle--post flight analysis found a sheared engine gear box that sent metal through the engine. Their flawless and expeditious emergency and procedural actions, as well as sound airmanship and judgment, ensured the safe recovery of two \$56 million combat assets during combat to a strange field in IMC. (Feb 12)

1ST LT. GEORGE A. ARBUCKLE AND LT. COL. LANCE A. HOBSON, 333 FS. 4 FW. SEYMOUR JOHNSON AFB NC. Lt. Arbuckle and Col. Hobson were flying single ship during a basic course LASDT sortie on VR-87. While flying the, LL the crew initially received a left inlet failure caution. Lt. Arbuckle quickly climbed to 1,000 feet AGL, IAW procedures, then continued climbing amongst scattered clouds to RAA. The crew executed the approach end arrestment checklist and successfully engaged the cable, safely recovering a \$54M combat asset. Maintenance discovered a wire bundle with 40 burnt wires and 14 popped circuit breakers as the cause of the complex system failures. (Mar 12)



STAFF SGT. JASON WILSON, 28 AMXS, 28 BW, ELLSWORTH AFB SD. While waiting to recover a B-1B aircraft, Sgt. Wilson observed the #4 brake and tire assembly become engulfed in flames directly beneath the main fuel tank. He instructed the aircrew to shut down the engines and emergency egress the aircraft while directing his ground crew to position the fire extinguisher and fight the fire. Sgt. Wilson's quick, decisive reaction prevented the loss of a \$283M combat asset and potentially saved the lives of four crew members. (Mar 12)

# Flight Line Safety



STAFF SGT. CHARLES A. SILVIA, 76 ERS, 451 AEW, BASTION AF, AFGHANISTAN. While performing ground operations during recovery of an HC-130P, Sgt. Silvia noticed a fire starting on the number three propeller after the aircrew began their engine shutdown. He removed all external power from the aircraft and directed the crew to evacuate the aircraft. He posted two fire guards while coordinating the evacuation. His actions saved a combat aircraft worth \$77M, the lives of 15 personnel on board and prevented injury to the eight maintainers within 20 feet of the emergency. (Feb 12)

CAPT. ANDREW G. TOWNSEND, 99 ERS, 380 AEW, AL DHAFRA, UAE. Capt. Townsend noticed several unmarked signs on multiple taxiways that presented potential hazards to the U-2's wide and low wingspan. The taxiway signs in question were black and not illuminated, making them impossible to see at night until it was too late for the taxing pilot to change direction and avoid the sign. His recognition of a safety hazard, formulation of a solution and first-hand efforts in executing the fix have increased safety not only for the U-2, but for more than eight other U.S. and allied nation aircraft assigned. (Mar 12)

# Weapons Safety

TECH. SGT. JARED M. HANN, 355 CMS, 355 FW, DAVIS-MONTHAN AFB AZ. During an acceptance inspection Sgt. Hann discovered defective threads on M-99 canopy jettison initiators prior to issue from the Davis-Monthan AFB Munitions Stockpile Surveillance section. After this critical discovery, his unique expertise led to the identification of 30 more initiators with severely damaged threads. The defective initiators were immediately segregated from service and information routed to the item manager. His exemplary performance and meticulous safety discipline prevented the possible inadvertent canopy jettison during flight and alleviated the latent danger to air and ground crew members. (Mar 12)

# Ground Safety A. A. A. A.

MASTER SGT. STACY A. RODRIGUEZ, 332 EFSS, 332 AEW, AHMED AL JABR AB, KUWAIT. Sgt. Rodriguez trained six flight safety representatives on safety regulations and requirements. She also led the development of a standardized squadron safety outline that provided detailed expectations for managing over 100 facilities and established an enduring safety culture within the squadron. Her proactive and innovative approach to safety reinforced mishap prevention efforts and stressed the importance of risk management decision making to protect our greatest Air Force assets. (Feb 12)

AIRMAN CARLOS E. FLORES, 49 MMS, 49 WG, HOLLOMAN AFB NM. Airman Flores revamped the Power Production safety program. He created and implemented a new shop safety checklist, incorporated weekly which reduced mishaps by 80%. He utilized the Job Training Safety Order for safety research regarding the AF Form 55 as he took on the insurmountable task of updating and correcting 52 AF Form 55s. Airman Flores arranged CPR certification for youth basketball coaches ensuring all safety criteria were met prior to season opening. (Mar 12)



CAPT. CHRISTOPHER J. FRANKS, 77 FS, 20 FW, SHAW AFB SC. As number 3 of 4 aircraft executing a tactical training mission, Capt. Franks received an ENG LUBE LOW PFL. His position, over water and 36 NM from the coast, coupled with unfavorable weather conditions at all nearby divert locations led to an extremely complex and serious situation. He located the nearest divert airfield at Myrtle Beach, swiftly attained a 1:1 glide ratio, and attempted to retrieve local weather data which was temporarily unavailable. Impeccable systems knowledge, superior flying skills and high situational awareness culminated in the recovery of a heavyweight aircraft in highly unfavorable conditions saving a \$25M CAF asset. (Feb 12)

CAPT. BRADFORD BALAZS, 64 AGRS, 57 WG, NELLIS AFB, NV. Capt. Balazs took one of the most critical EPs in an F-16 and reduced it to a side note at a wing standup. Through his exceptional airmanship he was able to land an F-16 with a B system hydraulic failure at a divert base during the multi-national Red Flag 12-2. Capt. Balaz's B system began to leak completely out; he quickly and deftly recognized his changing situation and was able to adapt to the dynamic situation and reapply the checklist to his evolving EP. Due to his expedient actions, perfect checklist memory and his flawless execution, he was able to save valuable time which preventing the loss of a \$25M asset and his own life. (Mar 12)

# Unit Safety Minimum - 18



455TH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE SUPPORT SQUADRON, 455 AEW, BAGRAM AF, AFGHANISTAN. To ensure the safety of lodging residents during IDF attacks, 15 T-Walls were planned and erected around the RLB's and six new bunker units were placed. The 455 EFSS obtained and placed 500+ traction strips on the metal stairs of every RLB, which prevented slips during wet and icy weather. The unit managed the ordering and delivery of 92 dump trucks of gravel to ensure no standing water along walkways, increasing the safety of Airmen during wet/winter ops. (Feb 12)

809TH EXPEDITIONARY RED HORSE SQUADRON, 451 AEW, KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN. The RED HORSE Sq went into full swing conducting AF's largest ATO retrograde to date. Their goal--retrograde RH/AFCENT assets with zero mishaps! Across the ATO, we decommissioned/removed three industrial sites. At Camp Dwyer, a three-story/\$2M+ concrete batch plant was disassembled/cleaned/packed/trucked 120 miles across rugged/hostile terrain. At Kandahar, the ground cargo team orchestrated a symphony of heavy equipment. Mission complete with zero mishaps! (Mar 12)

# **QUARTERLY AWARDS**

# **Flight Safety**



CAPT. JASON A. SHEMCHUK, 75 FS, 23 WG, MOODY AFB GA. Capt. Shemchuk's aviation skill and adroit attention to detail led to successful treatment of rare A/C anomalies and safety situations this past quarter. During the first save, he was Sandy 3 in a 4-ship of A-10s leading a night training combat search and rescue task force (CSARTF) mission. After survivor pick-up and recovering from a threat suppressing night High Angle Strafe pass, he experienced an abnormal amount of back stick pressure. At 30 degrees nose high, with zero natural illumination he had no choice but to immediately recover the A/C or venture into an out-of-control recovery. Every attempt to trim the A/C failed, he was relegated to brute force and a solid instrument crosscheck to prevent any further spatial disorientation during the nose high recovery when he called knock it off. He then directed a deconfliction plan for all assets in the CSARTF and tasked another IP to provide night vision goggle (NVG) visual chase while he ran checklists away from the other assets. The checklists did not solve the problem, he had to continue with brute force and power modulations to maintain level flight. Once complete with controllability checks, he deemed the A/C suitable in the landing configuration then flew a flawless NVG landing with chase. A physical trim tab failure was discovered post flight! Another save came as Capt. Shemchuk's quick reaction prevented a mid-air collision. During the final phase of a CSARTF when 4x A-10s and 2x HH-60s were all w/in 1.5NM of each other, he noticed stranger traffic entering the MOA heading straight toward the fight. Immediately he contacted the stray A/C and directed a sanctuary altitude and snap vectors to avoid the congested area. Finally, Capt. Shemchuk guided his wingman in a rare cockpit pressurization emergency. During a critical phase of flight his wingman described to him the 'weird' sensation as pressure was depleting. He watched the canopy seal deflate to the point he could see outside the jet between the canopy frame and rail. He directed his wingman to fly the jet while he read the checklists to help ease the tense situation for fear that the canopy could depart the A/C. Through solid ORM, Capt, Shemchuk coordinated a chased approach and safe recovery of his wingman's A/C.

# Weapons Safety

MASTER SGT. JASON C. HARRE, 57 WG, NELLIS AFB NV. Sgt. Harre exhibited superior expertise in every facet of explosive safety. His adroit skills were indispensable while managing the aftermath of 25 collapsed sunshades at the live loading revetment rows. During the safety investigation, Sgt. Harre diligently catalogued \$4.8M worth of damaged and serviceable explosives for the SIB. He led an in-depth survey to balance post-damage explosive operations capabilities with current operational tempo; he identified restrictions based on barricade explosives protection criteria and developed a tailored parking plan ready for exercise RED FLAG 12-02. At the same time and with substantially reduced real estate for explosive laden aircraft, Sgt. Harre facilitated efforts to de-conflict Nellis ground operations with 2011 Aviation Nation Air Show static display aircraft and pyrotechnics displays. Moreover, his analysis proved key in minimizing risk to the public as well as pyrotechnic and airfield operations during Nellis' first-ever aerial countermeasures demonstration. Sgt. Harre also completed a safety analysis for F-16 AMU leadership, allowing continued loading operations with forward-firing training munitions on the main ramp. His plan capitalized on parking within the north main ramp and further mitigated hazards to exposed sites. The research and efforts proved vital for operations planners in the development of plans and scheduling solutions, preserving the USAFWS's combat training course curriculum. After determining loading live weapons was not feasible as a result of parking constraints, Sgt. Harre proposed utilizing training and inert munitions to minimize training loss. Due to his invaluable efforts, there was no interruption to the WIC syllabus which enabled 17 students to graduate on time. He was instrumental in working with Airfield Management on alternate parking plans for both transient and TDY aircraft, enabling these units to fulfill their training requirements. His dynamic approach to explosives safety hazard reduction has ensured Nellis AFB and all those who come here to train, succeed to the highest and safest degree.

### As of March 31, 2012 **FY12 Flight** Class A Aircraft Fatal Destroyed **Aircraft Damage** 1 AF \* 9 AF 1\*\* 1 x2 12 AF 1 \*\* X2 **USAFWC** ANG (ACC-gained) AFRC (ACC-gained

FY12 Ground As of March 31, 2012			
	Fatal	Class A	Class B
9 AF	111	1	1
12 AF	****	5	1
DRU's	İ	1	0

FY12 Weapons As of March 31, 2012		
	Class A	Class B
9 AF	0	0
12 AF	0	0
AWFC	0	0

Class A - Permanent Total Disability: Property Damage \$2,000,000 or more

Class B - Permanent Partial Disability; Property Damage between \$500,000 and \$2,000,000

Class C - Lost Workday: Property Damage between \$50,000 and \$500,000 (Class Description Effective October 1, 2009)

\*\* Non-rate Producing \* Fatality

Legend

= Fatal due to misconduct

## Flight Notes

Since the last edition of The Combat Edge, ACC experienced four Class A Aviation mishaps. Three of those mishaps (two MQ-1s and one Aerostat) were non rate-producing. The single rate-producing mishap was an F-15E which involved a fatality. All of the above mishaps are currently under investigation. Human Factors (aircrew errors) remain the common theme in ACC's Class A Aviation mishaps.

### **Ground Notes**

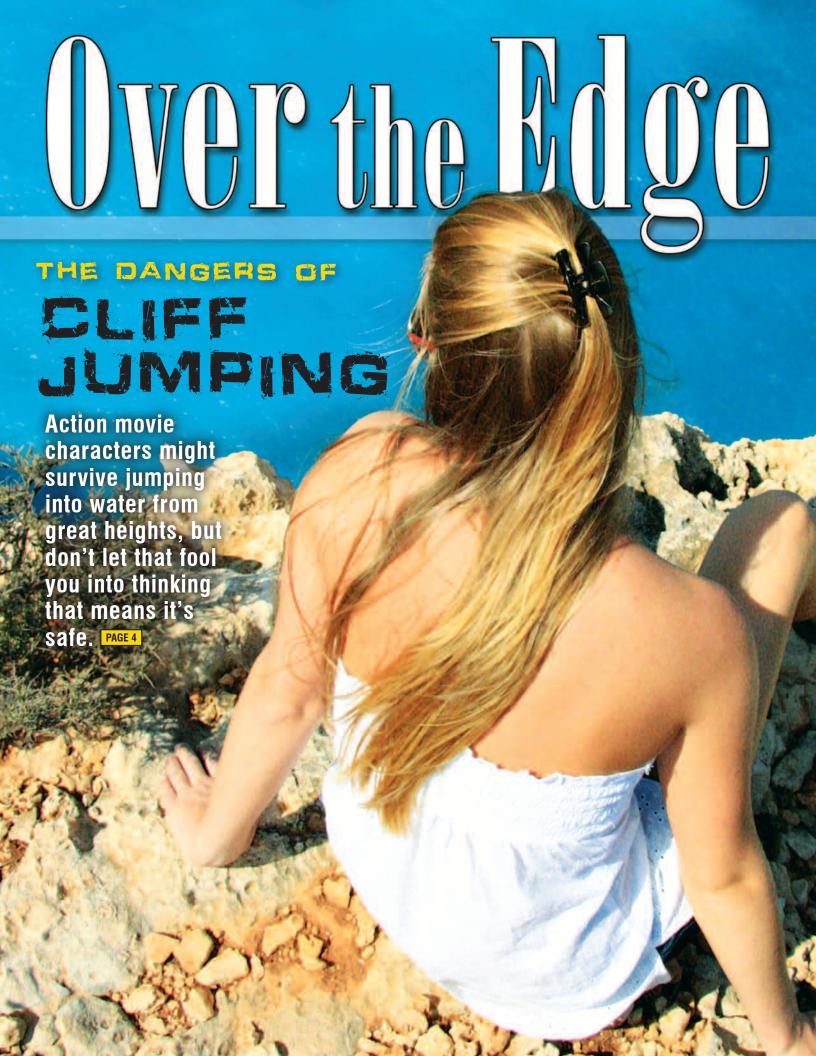
ACC had a troubling first half of FY12. So far this year we have experienced four PMV4 and three PMV2 mishaps which have taken the lives of nine of our Airmen and left another permanently totally disabled. In a 30-day period, we experienced three Class A motorcycle mishaps, and this was before the real motorcycle season has begun. Now is the time for units to provide their motorcycle riders with annual motorcycle briefings and the mentors should be helping full swing to guide our newer riders to a successful experience in learning to operate their vehicles in a safe manner. This is also the time to inform our four-wheel operators to be on the lookout for their two-wheeled partners who are sharing the road with them. To emphasize just how easy it is to not see a smaller vehicle, please visit www.msfusa.org/motion.html to see an experiment that proves how motion-induced blindness works.

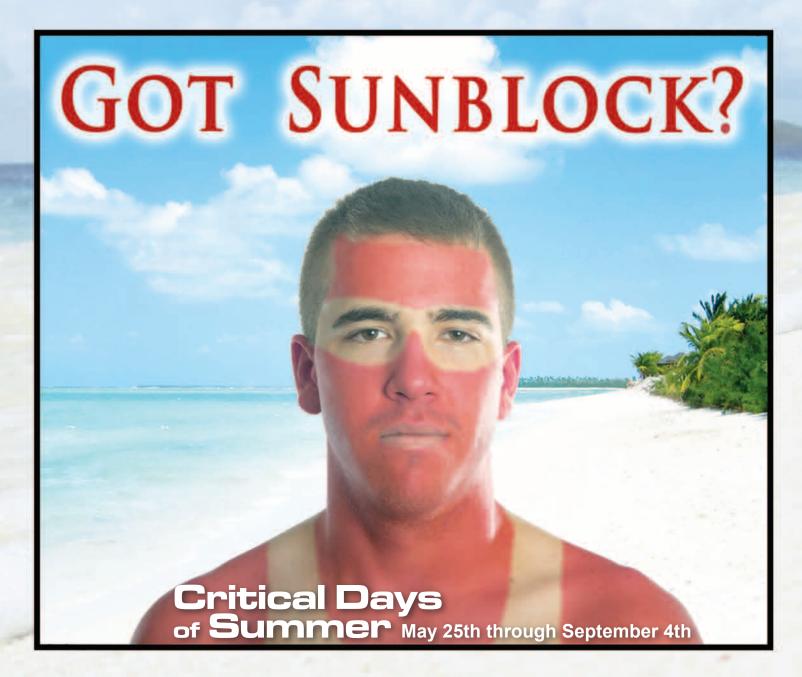
## Weapons Notes

Over the past two months, ACC experienced 3 Class E mishaps with equipment failure as the contributing factor. The lack of mishaps involving technical data usage this period is a positive trend. However, let's be mindful of the impact of equipment failure and the possibility of personnel injury. With summer fast approaching, work conditions changing, and training new personnel, there will continue to be daily challenges. With combined efforts from everyone, we can mitigate most mishaps that occur in ACC. We are professionals; continue to strive for excellence when performing explosive operations. Thanks for your contributions to the ACC community!







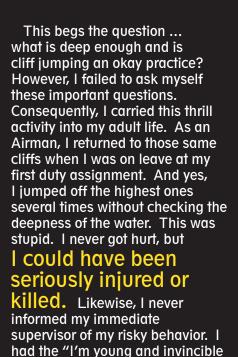


# Over the Edge

- 3 Don't Be That Guy
- 4 CLIFF JUMPING by Mark W. Holstein, 7 BW, Dyess Air Force Base, Texas
- HUMPTY DUMP-T Current location unknown







attitude." My second duty assignment was Aviano Air Base, Italy. This base is at the foot of the Dolomite Alps. Additionally, there are hundreds of nearby mountain lakes. The lakes are beautiful with pristine aqua-blue water. Furthermore, there are deep ravines with crisp glacier water continually running through them. Upon discovery of these, my mind went directly to cliff jumping.

There was never a great time to get into this water ... it was always cold. However, summertime seemed to be the best time. One warm afternoon, a few friends and I got into my car and headed for the Alps. Earlier that year, I had spotted a good possible location for some excellent cliff jumping. I estimated the cliffs to be 40 to 75

feet in height. Using a scientific wild ass guess (SWAG), I made the assumption that the water was deep enough. Without hesitation, we commenced the cliff jumping ... not thinking of the shock our bodies were about to receive.

The lake run-off water was around 40 degrees and our bodies hit it at terminal velocity ... at least it seemed like terminal velocity. We were blessed. The water was deep enough, but extremely cold. Furthermore, we could not get out of that water fast enough. This is another aspect that we did not think through. How are we going to get out?

There were no paths to climb out. These cliffs were almost vertical. We did have the forethought to wear shoes, but that was it. After about 30 minutes, we found our way up the cliffs and back to our car. However, the Italian Carabinieri (the military police) were waiting for us at the car. They were not pleased with us for jumping off of their cliffs and they let us know it. They did not arrest us, but they easily could have.

We were so blessed not to be hurt. I never told my boss. I never gave it a second thought ... until now. Cliff jumping is incredibly unsafe, and I was unsafe in my actions.

Never again ... not this guy.



Action movie characters might survive jumping into water from great heights, but shooting these scenes requires special effects and stunt professionals. In real life, these sorts of jumps are dangerous. The obvious risk of jumping into water is that you'll hit an underwater object or the water bed, leading to an injury or even death. But even if you calculate your jump well to avoid underwater hazards, you still face risks.

## HEIGHT

Some people think that landing feet first will protect them, but at 25 mph—the speed you're traveling when you hit the water after jumping from a height of just 20 feet—you can experience spinal compression, fractures and concussions. If you don't manage to land feet first, the impact with the water can kill you. If you jump from just 10 feet, your body will reach 17 mph by the time you contact the water. Your risk of injury depends on your body positioning, which can be hard to adjust when you're in free fall.

# HIDDEN DANGERS

People who jump from great heights can't see what they are jumping into. For example, cliff jumpers can't tell how shallow the water is or if there are underwater rocks or logs that pose a hazard. Also, water levels can change. Even if some jumpers do have experience with a particular cliff and are able to memorize which areas are deepest, there's still a chance they can miscalculate their jump and kill themselves.

### DROWNING

If the fall doesn't kill you, the drowning might. You can jump a dozen times without hurting yourself only to die when you happen to get knocked out by landing at an odd angle. If the impact with the water knocks you unconscious, you won't be able to swim back to the surface.

A portion of this article was excerpted from Livestrong.com

