

Winter 2021

Combat Edge

Air Combat Command's Safety Magazine



Safety
**DISCIPLINE & COMMON
& SENSE**

PAGE 3



WHY DO BRIDGES FREEZE FIRST?

- ◆ No ground underneath means the entire structure can be surrounded by cold air
- ◆ Freezing isn't uniform: shaded parts can be icy while sunny parts aren't
- ◆ Slow down before the bridge, as changing speed on ice is dangerous



Combat Edge



U.S. Air Force graphic by Gary Rogers

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COVER PHOTO BY SSGT JOSHUA HOSKINS

ACCent



Safety DISCIPLINE & COMMON SENSE



Lt Gen Russell L. Mack
Deputy Commander

If I've heard it once, I've heard it a thousand times: "Safety isn't just a commander's program; safety is every Airmen's and/or Guardian's business—24/7, both on-duty and off." Having served in the Air Force for more than 33-years now, I completely agree; every Airmen is combat capability.

The Department of the Air Force has an exceptional Safety program, managed by safety professionals around the globe, and driven by leaders at all echelons of command. But when you boil safety down to a few simple principles, it's really about two things: discipline and common sense.

So let's start with discipline. If you refer to the experts (Google), the Oxford Languages definition of discipline is "the practice of training people to obey rules or a code of behavior, using punishment to correct disobedience." I think it's safe to say that we've been driving home the idea of discipline since the day we entered our great service. Everything we have been taught centers around discipline, and for good reason. Safety statistics will verify that failure to employ discipline by not following checklists and not complying with technical orders is a leading cause of aviation, ground, weapons, space, and systems mishaps Air Force-wide. For this reason, our technical orders are filled with warnings, cautions, and notes, each hold a specific meaning. For example, a warning within the tech order indicates "... operating procedures, techniques, etc., which could result in personal injury or loss of life if not carefully followed." In other words, warnings are written because an action taken *did* result in personal injury or loss of life. We simply must be disciplined enough to comply with our tech orders, no matter how mundane the process may seem. The safety of our Airmen/Guardians and the precious resources they are entrusted to manage depend on it.

The second key safety principle is common sense. Merriam-Webster defines common sense as "sound and prudent judgment based on a simple perception of the situation or facts." Let's be honest; Airmen are injured more frequently while *off-duty* ... perhaps we're a bit more disciplined on-duty? Common sense applies to everything we do, but where common sense really plays a vital part in decision-making is when we aren't in uniform—remember: we're all Airmen, 24/7. Given that most leisure activities don't come with tech orders or checklists, we must apply a little common sense to guide our actions. Easier said than done, and I've questioned my own use of common sense at times. For example, I've driven all night after a long day of work just to start my family vacation a day earlier. I figured a little caffeine, some loud music, and all will work out. That time, it did; unfortunately, the outcome hasn't been so favorable for others. By applying the common sense test to all we do, we may just adjust course, and prevent a mishap. Again, every Airmen is combat capability!

Here's the bottom line: No matter your career field, specialty, or rank, we all play a critical role in the safe execution of our mission. Every Airmen has to take an interest in safety—both personally and professionally—because our partners and allies depend on it, and frankly, our nation demands it.

So when in doubt, apply discipline and common sense to everything you do!



BACK to BASICS



BY MSGT MICHAEL C. JACINTH

There I was: tasked with piloting an RQ-4 (call sign: Hawk 17) on a routine ferry flight from Andersen AFB in Guam to Beale AFB in California. These flights usually were routine, and the job was simple: Get the aircraft from Point A to Point B, returning it to its home station after a deployment.

As I conducted turnover with the takeoff pilot and settled in at the controls, it seemed as though nothing could go wrong. The aircraft was flying at its usual altitude and was straight and level. My only responsibilities were to make periodic position reports to the Air Traffic Controller, and make sure everything flowed smoothly.

Two hours into the flight, I conducted a routine systems check on the aircraft. All was well, until I checked the engine-oil quantity. My heart dropped: The display indicated that the RQ-4 had lost a quarter of its oil. Wild thoughts began to race in my head. I knew that another RQ-4 recently had been lost in the ocean because of this very same problem. As I stared at the screen, I remembered something ingrained into my soul from flight training: MATL.

“I will Maintain aircraft control, Analyze the situation, Take proper action, and Land as soon as conditions permit.”

I tried not to panic as I foresaw a horrible scenario. I was solely responsible for a 117-million-dollar aircraft that very well could crash into the Pacific Ocean. I alone would be held accountable. I knew I had to try my best to get this plane on the ground, as safely as possible.

As these thoughts ran through my head, I called the aircraft engineers who had designed the RQ-4, and discussed the loss of engine oil. They informed me

that this was a dire situation, and I needed to get the aircraft on the ground as soon as possible. It was flying normally, but for how long? Certainly, it could not make it to California, which still was at least seven hours away.

At the time, the RQ-4 was 30 minutes from a runway at Wake Island. I asked myself: Should I divert? For those who never have diverted an RPA, it is quite different from landing a manned aircraft. There is a tremendous amount of coordination required. In this situation, I would have to land the plane from the Mission Control Element station, without the support of a Launch-and-Recovery Crew.

Situated 1,500 miles from Guam in the south Pacific, Wake Island has only one runway, which would be shut down for a long period after the RQ-4 landed. In addition, the ground crews there would not be able to support an RPA landing. Worst of all, it would take several weeks for a maintenance crew to fly out to Wake to fix the stricken jet.

Considering the rate the aircraft was losing oil, I decided I could make it back to Guam. As I turned the RQ-4 around to head back to Andersen, I checked the oil level again. Another quarter of the oil had vanished! I felt the odds were against me.

Throughout the entire two-hour flight back to Guam, I felt as though I were sitting on needles. I dreaded the notification that the single-engine aircraft had shut down its motor—something that seemed inevitable. As I flew closer to Guam, the first warnings began to appear. The oil loss had triggered a series of faults that meant the RQ-4 soon would become a glider. I tried to remain calm and keep the aircraft on its course to Guam.

As the aircraft neared the terminal area around the base, I linked up with the Launch-and-Recovery Crew, who assisted with the landing at Andersen. As the RQ-4 touched the ground, I received one more warning on my display: The aircraft was critically low on oil, and engine shutdown was imminent. The

landing crew and I elected to shut down the aircraft on the runway, so as not to prolong the situation any further. I sighed with relief as my job was complete once the aircraft had landed.

As I proceeded to debrief my flight with maintenance personnel on the ground at

Guam, they remarked that the RQ-4 was streaked with oil. A subsequent investigation revealed that a critical oil seal within the engine had failed, resulting in the situation I had just endured.

As I reflected on this flight afterwards, I realized that my emergency-procedures training

had saved the aircraft. I had managed to follow the MATL statement, one that was drilled into every pilot’s head from the very beginnings of their careers. I strongly believe there is a reason flight training follows these principles. They certainly proved to be useful during this ordeal. ✈️





Photo provided by Capt John H. Decker

George has the **Flight Controls**

BY CAPT JOHN H. DECKER



There is no good time to lose control of your elevator at 600 feet AGL; however, this was the spot in which we found ourselves while circling off the VOR-B at Roswell Air Center, New Mexico in February of this year. My goal in this article is not simply to run you through our actions and thought processes that night, but rather to highlight how training and professionalism led to a safe outcome that day, and to the aircraft's being able to return to flying status in a timely manner, with full confidence from our aircrew.

When I realized that I could not correct the altitude in the EC-130H Compass Call that night, multiple reasons ran through my head: runaway trim, panel binding, linkage binding, or something else completely. In my attempt to regain control, I took our elevator trim tab selector switch to “off” and then “emergency.” I then could move the yoke aft and

get flight control back. This was the first piece of training that led to a safe outcome. Our annual simulator refresher courses, emergency procedure training in the simulator, and systems knowledge led me to that action; however, the biggest asset that we had that night was SMSgt Ken Thompson, our flight engineer. His professional understanding of Crew Resource

Management (CRM) led him to work on diagnosing the issue by listening carefully to what I described, using his aircraft systems knowledge, and leaning on years of experience in the Herc. All this enabled him to be a couple of steps ahead in understanding that we may have had an un-commanded engagement of the autopilot system—despite no indication of

the system’s actuating. He did all this while coordinating checklists and making crucial analyses in order to determine that we had isolated the system, and could safely return to Davis-Monthan. Along with him, Capt Andrew Koeller, the copilot, coordinated our communications to knock off the approach and transition to holding, while Capt Hannah Miles, the navigator, set up our

navigation systems to execute it. This professional CRM allowed me to focus on aviating while systems analysis, navigation, and communication were handled by our competent and well-trained flight crew.

The aircraft was impounded upon its return to Davis-Monthan because of the flight control malfunction. The next piece of the safety puzzle happened here. The 55 ECG Chief of Safety, Capt Brad Kusel, took over the investigation. Our maintenance team put hundreds of man-hours of troubleshooting, analysis, and work into the plane, but were unable to definitively conclude what had happened that night. Following the 755 AMXS’s exhaustive process, engineers from Lockheed-Martin were brought in to pore over the data and conduct more interviews. Capt Kusel tracked all the details of the process, and confidently made the recommendation to our group commander to release the aircraft, and to allow him to conduct a Functional Check Flight to verify its airworthiness upon its return to the flight line. Without his attention to detail, as well as the expertise of our maintainers and the Lockheed engineers,

the aircrew assigned to 1580 may not have been able to feel confident accepting the aircraft.

Although our safety award recognized the specific actions of the crew that night, perhaps the more important piece to take away here is that disciplined training and processes lead to confidence and ability in airmanship. The successful return of this aircraft is a direct result of the disciplined attitude flying requires, from mission planning all the way to debriefing. Such a mindset is practiced every single day, and the culture of adhering to high standards builds the habits that are critical in times of high demand. Each crew member played a crucial role in safely recovering our aircraft with an ambiguous flight control malfunction. The role the back-end processes played in returning the aircraft to operation in our small fleet were critically important to the operations group’s being able to support our mission in full. The entirety of the event affirms that our focus in the Air Force on training, professionalism, and processes can lead to safe outcomes even when the malfunction is not easily diagnosed. ✈️





A Single Wire

BY SSGT AUSTIN S. COWAN

An average day on the flight line at NAS JRB Fort Worth is routine: Pre-flight inspections are completed, aircraft are certified for flight, and scheduled sorties are completed. Sometimes, there's a break in the routine, and an aircraft comes back with problems that need to be addressed. As aircraft electrical and environmental technicians, we deal mostly with simple problems caused by broken wires, bad relays, or failing components; however, some malfunctions in our systems occasionally require more in-depth fault isolation. One day, an aircraft landed with a particularly difficult fault to troubleshoot, one that appeared intermittently, and couldn't be duplicated by maintenance crews. The problem was in the aircraft's anti-skid system, which controls the braking pressure applied to the wheels during landing.

The F-16's anti-skid system is designed to provide touchdown protection during landing at speeds of up to 180 mph. On this occasion, as the aircraft approached the runway, the anti-skid caution light illuminated in the cockpit, informing the pilot of a failure within the system. With no touchdown protection, the pilot still successfully landed the aircraft. My team and I immediately responded to investigate the cause of the failure. We soon realized this particular aircraft had been experiencing anti-skid failures at intermittent intervals going back several months.

Before this incident, all components of the anti-skid system had been changed, some several times. We conducted numerous operational checks, and still could not duplicate the

problem with the aircraft on the ground. We made the decision to form a dedicated crew that would examine the entire system in detail, scrutinizing every inch of wire, every connector, and every component. We removed all the access panels, and began the search. After five days, we had found only several small cosmetic issues, but nothing that would explain our problem.

We decided to go back and complete all previous operational checks, while monitoring the system's output using computer software. During one check, we noticed a 40-percent decrease in power output to the system while applying brake pressure. The number was within limits according to technical guidance, but, based on our experience, it wasn't normal. That was when it paid to have a keen eye for detail during inspections.

We systematically moved through the wiring that provided power to the brakes, and noticed a clamp in the wheel-well was installed in a peculiar position. As we removed the clamp to inspect the wiring, the power output returned to normal. We knew our problem was here. Upon closer inspection, we identified a short section of wire from which the insulation had been worn. The area was no larger than the width of a quarter, but the bare wire was pressing against a metal component, creating a short circuit.

From there, we looked for reasons why the clamp was positioned in that particular way. We found that a previous modification had been completed on every aircraft, one that involved the temporary removal of that specific

clamp. After locating the guidance for the modification, we discovered there was no specific instruction for replacing the clamp. We realized

that this condition could exist on more aircraft. We recommended a one-time inspection of all assigned aircraft in order to determine if the issue was widespread.

Before flights the following day, I inspected every aircraft on our ramp, and discovered two aircraft with the clamp in the same position. Of those, one that was scheduled to fly showed signs of damage to the insulation on the wire. Repairs were made on the spot, and the aircraft resumed scheduled flights for the day. By the end of the day, all aircraft were inspected and repaired, without losing a single sortie. To top things off, the aircraft that started it all has been flying ever since, without a single problem with the anti-skid system.

It felt good to know we had found the fault and repaired the system. We had helped prevent future problems, including a possible in-flight emergency. Through this incident, I was able to demonstrate to my Airmen the importance of attention to detail. You never know: Something that seems insignificant can cause large problems if left uncorrected.



Photo by 1Lt Andrew Layton



SLIPPERY WHEN ICY

KNOW THEY ARE SECURE!

BY MSGT NICHOLAS DILLENBECK
(retired)

Winter is a great time for some; for others it can be a giant pain. The snow, ice, and wind often make things more difficult for the morning routine of checking out vehicles. Vehicles are not the only thing on the roads, though. Many military members also rely heavily on trailers. Trailers come in all shapes and sizes, and some are designated for specific purposes. What does winter have to do with trailers? Just because mother nature throws some ice cubes in our way does not stop our mission. Some people, especially those who handle munitions, rely on trailers daily. Operating a vehicle connected to a trailer in the winter comes with a huge amount of risk, especially when it also involves explosives.

When I was a young Airman, I remember an incident involving a tractor and trailer, some ice, and bombs scattered all over the roadway. It was fortunate that the bombs were inert, but that doesn't take away from the fact that, when winter is involved, things become a lot more difficult. Here's what happened: A tractor and trailer had been loaded with inert bomb bodies. The driver had done everything that he was required to do, meaning he had all the tie-downs tight, the trailer was loaded correctly, and everything was in operating condition. One thing that was not taken into account was that the trailer had some frost on it before the bomb bodies were loaded. This reduced the friction between the bomb pallets and the surface of the trailer deck. When the truck stopped at a stop sign on an incline and then proceeded, the

bomb pallets slid down off the trailer. When the pallets loaded with inert bombs hit the ground, the metal strapping that held everything together sprang, and bombs scattered all over the intersection.

Trailer decks aren't the only things that can be problematic during the winter. Regular driving and handling also can be impeded. Braking with a loaded trailer can cause the trailer to swing left or right. In some cases, it can cause the tow vehicle to spin. That is not all ... oh no. Turning also can be tricky. With all the weight behind the tow vehicle, negotiating turns in icy conditions can be hit-or-miss.

What can you do? Good Risk Management (RM) is a start. First and foremost, ask the question: Does this load really need to be towed, given the current conditions? If the answer is "yes," de-icing the trailer deck is a good idea. Also, consider using tire chains to help maintain better braking and handling control. Make sure you check your base regulations to see if tire chains are allowed. Once everything is loaded, and you have done everything you can do to secure the load, go slowly. Safe hauling! 🗡️



Photo by Cynthia Griggs



Photo by A1C Stephen Pulter

What You Don't Know CAN HURT YOU.

BY MSGT KOERT J. LYMAN

We all come from different places, and have different backgrounds. Our experiences are unique to us: What is second-nature to one is alien to someone else. During my safety career, I have learned that what we call *common sense* isn't common at all. It began when I overheard a senior NCO in my office talking. Until then, like most people, I heard the term and thought I knew what it meant. "How could you make that mistake? It's common sense," or "Figure it out; it's common sense."
As a safety professional, I hate hearing this expression. What I believe everyone should know is

not what everyone knows. I grew up in a fishing village on an island in the northeast. I don't share the same experiences with someone who was raised in a small town in Oklahoma, or someone who grew up in a thriving metropolis in California. There are many factors that make us who we are, and each of us is unique. This is why common sense isn't common. It also is why any task you ask of subordinates—regardless of how simple it seems to you—still warrants training, a safety briefing, and guidance.
There is a story I use at every Supervisor Safety Training course I teach. It is based on a near-miss I investigated about six years ago. I was stationed at the host wing safety office of a small-sized Air Force base overseas. Early

one day, our office received a phone call from the Command Post, notifying us that an Airman had been crushed between the forks of a 10K Lb. (load capacity) forklift. We were told he had been rushed to the local medical facility. Amazingly, he didn't have any visible signs of injury.
Three people had been tasked with loading old office furniture onto a flatbed truck, to be taken to DRMO. The crew consisted of an 18-year-old A1C, his supervisor (TSgt), and a civilian who was trained and licensed in forklift operations. The operation was going smoothly until they got to the last piece of furniture, a large filing cabinet. The forklift had the cabinet on the forks, and was parallel to the bed of the truck. The A1C was attempting

to push the filing cabinet onto the empty space of the truck, but didn't have enough leverage. He came up with a plan: If he stepped between the forks, he could get better leverage. At the same time, the forklift operator came up with a plan of his own: to close and drop the forks, and then swing them around to push the cabinet onto the truck.
While they were thinking through their plans independently of each other, the supervisor was at the back of the truck, checking and tightening straps. As the A1C stepped between the tines, the operator shut them, squeezing the Airman's midsection down to nearly three inches. Luckily for the Airman, he was just the right height, and the forks missed his hips and ribcage. They pushed

his vital organs out of the way, and narrowly avoided crushing his spine. He returned to work later that day without so much as a bruise.
When the supervisor was interviewed about training and a safety briefing, he said the unit didn't normally use a forklift, and had borrowed one from another squadron. They didn't have anything in their Job Safety Training Outline about forklifts, there had been no safety briefing, and the topic of forklift safety had not been addressed. The supervisor said "It was his own fault. He was an idiot. Its common sense the forks close and you shouldn't stand between them." The Airman was 18 years old, had been in the Air Force less than six months, had grown up

in a city, and hadn't been near a forklift once in his life. How was he supposed to know the forks can close? He never had been trained.
While it may seem obvious to many people that one should not stand between the forks, it's not so obvious to those who don't have the experience. If you don't know what a forklift can do, how can you really know the dangers? Instead of taking the position of "It's common sense, they should know that!" you should think, "They won't know this until I tell them." You can say "It's common sense," and blame the other person, or you can realize the importance of training. Ensuring your people are properly trained is the best way to avoid injury or death. Stay safe! 🗡️

DON'T BE A **HERO**

BY TSGT KENNETH J FLORES

Have you gotten acquainted with your HERO? I'm not talking about your father, your mentor, or Tony Stark. I'm talking about Hazards of Electromagnetic Radiation to Ordnance (HERO). DESR 6055.09 AFMAN91-201 describes HERO as "the danger of accidental actuation of electro-explosive devices or otherwise electrically activating ordnance because of radio-frequency electromagnetic fields." In simple terms, some electronic devices such as cellphones and radios can accidentally actuate sensitive explosives. It's kind of like Superman and kryptonite.

The HERO program is a DoD-wide effort, spearheaded by the Navy, to minimize the hazards of the increasing number of electronic devices used around explosives. The basic concept has been a concern since the 1950s, but it has become even more important with the introduction of laptops and tablets as substitutes for hard-copy technical data.

There are 3 HERO classifications, based on the probability of actuation by

the external electromagnetic environments (EMEs):

- HERO Safe: Any explosive that is shielded or protected sufficiently from radio-frequency hazards. Imagine Captain America's shield protecting the explosives.
- HERO Susceptible: Any explosive item containing electrically-initiated devices proven to be adversely affected by electromagnetic radiation. Did you say Radiation? Somewhere, Bruce Banner is sweating profusely.
- HERO Unsafe: Any explosive item not certified as one of the above, or those previously certified but that have their internal wiring exposed (testing, assembly, etc.). See Thanos.

If it's HERO Safe, everything is peachy, right? Not so fast, Batman. Even though an item has been deemed "safe," there still are individual safe distances that need to be maintained, in accordance with AFI 91-208. If you want to break out your calculator and geek out, you can go for it, but the safest bet is to keep a 10-ft distance between

the emitters and the explosives, since that is the minimum safe separation distance (SSD).

Not all explosives are sensitive to EMEs. Percussion-initiated ordnance such as small arms, 25-mm, 40-mm, and 105-mm have no HERO requirements. I'm looking at you Ant-man. On the other hand, chaff and flare, small-diameter bombs, rockets, and missiles are certified under one of the 3 HERO categories, and should be treated with caution.

Finally, Modern Mobile Emitters (MMEs) such as cellphones, laptops, tablets, barcode-readers, and network access points "authorized for use in storage, build-up, and assembly areas where ammunition and explosives are present, shall not be connected to power via power cords. Batteries shall not be charged in the magazines, in storage, build-up, or assembly areas when ammunition and explosives are present due to the possibility of the batteries exploding."



Just like superhero storylines, the HERO program will never end. We must stay vigilant when using electronic devices around explosives, even

when we feel the plot has been overplayed and we can't even remember how we got here. You don't want to end up like Ironman. 🦋

3rd Quarter FY21 Awards



Aircrew Safety

Crew of Tron 02
42 ECS
Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ



Crew Chief Safety

SSgt Robert S. Hipple
757 AMXS/Raptor AMU
Nellis AFB, NV



Explosives Safety

Tyndall AFB EOD Response Team
325 CES
Tyndall AFB, FL



Flight Line Safety

23 WG Flight Safety
23 CPTS/FMF
Moody AFB, GA



Pilot Safety

MSgt Michael Jacinth
319 RW
Grand Forks AFB, ND



Safety Career Professional

TSgt Michael R. Macleod
85 EIS
Keesler AFB, MS



Weapons Safety

MSgt Jacob B. Danfora
366 FW
Mountain Home AFB, ID



Unit Safety Representative

SSgt Benton N. Cody
757 AMXS/CCX
Nellis AFB, NV



Unit Safety

Weapons Standardization
57 MXG/MXL
Nellis AFB, NV

Congratulations



FY21 Flight Thru 30 Sep 2021			
	Fatal	Aircraft Destroyed	Class A Aircraft Damage
15 AF			
16 AF			
USAFWC			
ANG (ACC-gained)			
AFRC (ACC-gained)			
AFCENT (ACC-gained)			

FY21 Occupational Thru 30 Sep 2021			
	Class A Fatal	Class A Non-Fatal	Class B
AFCENT		0	0
USAFWC		0	0
12 AF		0	0
15 AF		0	0
16 AF		0	0

FY21 Weapons Thru 30 Sep 2021		
	Class A	Class B
ACC	0	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)

= On-duty = Off-duty

Symbols for Mishap Aircraft



Flight Notes

Air Combat Command had two Class A mishaps during the 4th Quarter of 2021, bringing our MAJCOM's yearly total to ten. While airmanship and crew resource management (CRM) issues persist, the good news is we had another quarter without losing an Airman. Still, we always must strive to be better today than we were yesterday—"excellence in all we do" demands it. While it can be argued that perfection in airmanship and CRM are impossible to achieve, what's not arguable is the need for all Airmen to push themselves to maintain awareness, not to be distracted by complacency and/or inattention, to make sound decisions before and during flying operations, and to communicate clearly, correctly, and concisely—in less-than-ideal situations. As winter weather approaches, let's challenge our individual performance, and demand from ourselves a little more of that unachievable perfection. Fly Safe, and Check 6.

Occupational Notes

Air Combat Command had one fatal mishap during the fourth quarter of Fiscal Year 2021. An Airman drowned while participating in an inner-tube river excursion. The investigation is ongoing; however, initial reports indicate that the Airman was not wearing a life vest.

Weapons Notes

During the fourth quarter ACC experienced one Class C and three Class E mishaps. Of the four, two were inadvertent discharge of a firearm. The remaining two mishaps were damaged munitions. We continue to see a rise in negligent discharges not only in ACC but in the AF as a whole. As a reminder, exercise caution and refer to the procedures outlined in AFMAN 31-129 when conducting weapon loading, unloading and clearing. Always keep fingers clear of the trigger, trigger well, trigger guard and away from the holster when holstering the weapon. Also ensure clearing barrel areas are free from distractions and do not rush to complete procedures.

Back Issues Online!

Want to read flight, weapons, or maintenance stories from years past?
 Ever wonder what it was like on the flight line decades ago?
 Want to see what *The Combat Edge* used to look like?

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Happy reading! Stay Safe!

OVER the
Edge
MAGAZINE



THE
DRIVE
TO A SAFETY LESSON

TELL US YOUR *Story*

Photo by Brian G. Rhodes

The *Combat Edge* presents safety stories from Airmen – people just like you. If you enjoy reading their articles, you can bet they'll enjoy reading yours.

Think of it: You, a PUBLISHED AUTHOR! It could happen, and more easily than you think.

We welcome safety stories on all topics from across Air Combat Command. If you have a personal story, a lesson learned, or an idea you'd like to share, we would love to hear about it. Articles can be about on-duty mishaps and/or their prevention, as well as off-duty safety issues: in the home, while traveling, sports, etc.

How easy is it? I'm glad you asked. Send your story, along with any high-resolution photos that go with it to: acc.thecombatedge@us.af.mil. If you haven't done much writing, or don't know how to begin, we can help.

You have to play to win. Get in touch by contacting Richard E. Cook at 757-764-8846 (DSN 574-8846), or richard.cook.38@us.af.mil for more information.

Your story is too good not to share!

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SKIING & SNOW BOARDING

Photo by Artur Didyk/Shutterstock.com

TIPS TO HELP YOU STAY SAFE

- Get in shape, and reduce the risk of injury. Don't wait till you're on the slopes.
- Always wear a helmet designed for skiing or snowboarding.
- Protect your skin and eyes from the sun and wind. Apply sunscreen, and wear ski goggles that fit properly with a helmet.
- Make sure boots fit properly, and bindings are adjusted correctly.
- Know the weather conditions before hitting the slopes.
- Follow all trail rules, and stay on designated trails.
- Only go on trails that match your skill level.
- Take a lesson – even experienced skiers and snowboarders can benefit.
- Before using a ski lift, tow rope, or carpet, make sure you know how to get on, ride, and get off. If you need help, ask an attendant.
- Prepare for the weather. Wear layers of clothes, and a helmet liner, hat, or headband.
- Skiers in front of you have the right-of-way.
- Never ski or snowboard alone.

Drunk Driving and the MOURNING After

BY SSGT STEPHANIE BOWEN



We've all seen those corny slogans on the freeway, warning drivers not to drink before getting behind the wheel. They are important messages that save lives by reminding each of us to do our part, and stay sober while driving. While I may chuckle as I drive by, these slogans hit home for me because of something that happened in my family.

On my wedding day in 2014, my image of drinking and driving changed forever. It was to have been the happiest day of my life, when I married my best friend and celebrated all evening, surrounded by those I love. Unfortunately, the party started much earlier in the day for one individual – my older brother. Celebrations are great, but, for a

few family members, that means heavy drinking. It means black-out drunk, with no remorse for their actions.

My brother was bringing mimosas for the bridesmaids as they got ready for the ceremony. When he arrived with the drinks, he himself was already under the influence of alcohol. I remember being irritated, because he was supposed to walk me down the aisle, since our father had passed away. He walked me down the aisle as promised, and managed to maintain his composure. Afterward, we carried on through the night, celebrating as one would at any wedding.

At one point I went outside to get some fresh air. It had been a hot summer day, and my dress felt like a heater! I was standing on the sidewalk,

taking in the events of the day, when I heard my brother and a cousin arguing in the lobby. Both were angry, scary people when they reached a certain level of intoxication, and I usually left them alone when they were in that state.

The next thing I knew, my brother was headed full speed to the parking garage. A short time later, he came driving around the corner. I went back inside, worried. This wasn't the first time he had gotten behind the wheel after drinking.

Fast forward: It later was confirmed that my brother had rolled his car not far from where he had pulled out onto the highway. Luckily, no other vehicles were involved in the accident, and, by the grace of God, my brother suffered no injuries himself. I learned that intoxicated individuals

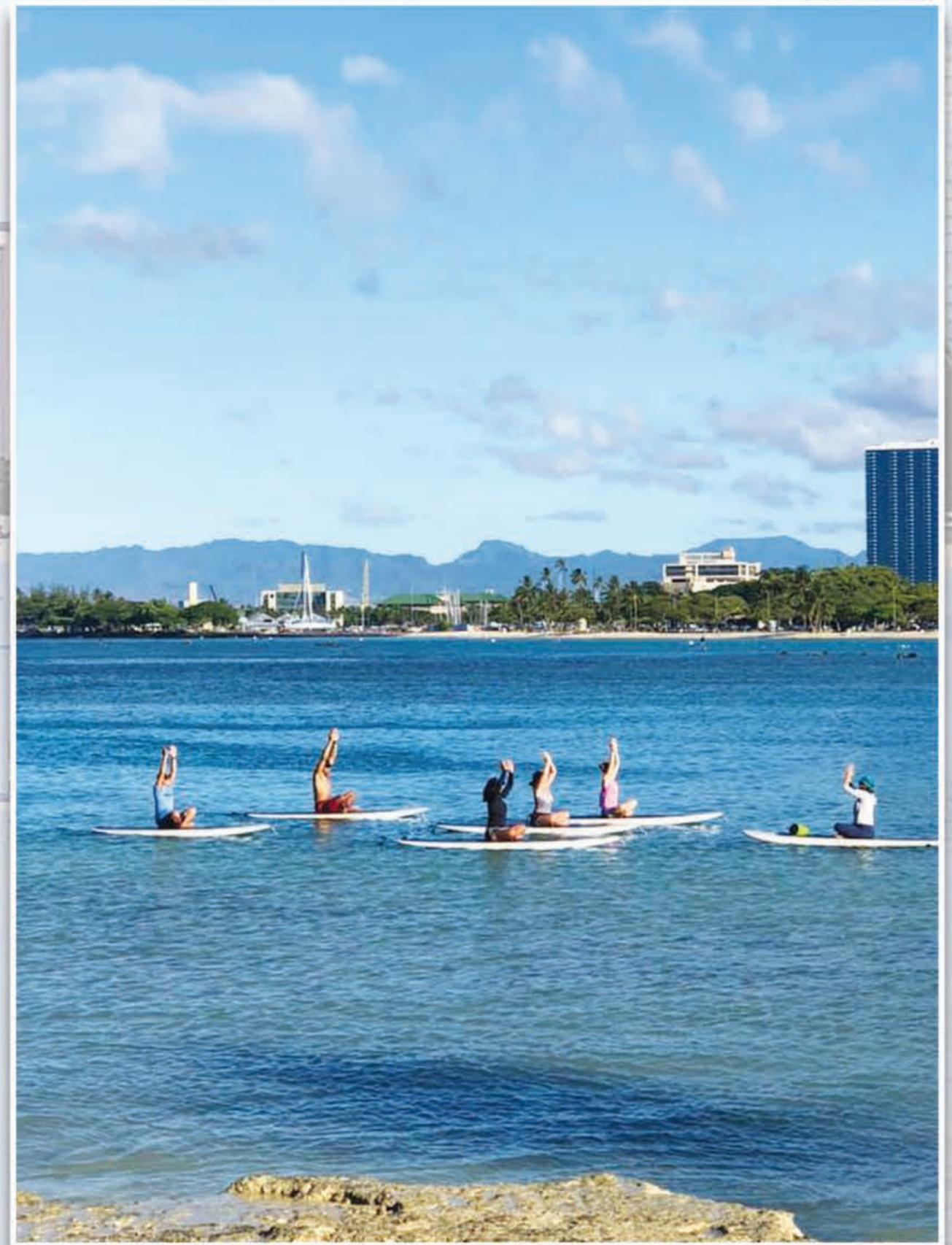
do not tense up in these situations, resulting in minimal injury. I was relieved that my big brother had lived to see another day; however, I also was angry and in shock. He had chosen to get behind that wheel, and had placed himself and those around him in extreme danger.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 29 people in the United States die each day in motor-vehicle crashes involving alcohol. These are mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, children, cousins, etc. The next time you're driving down the road and see "drive sober or get pulled over," or any other clever slogan, take those words to heart. Be responsible: Hand over your keys, designate a driver, or have a plan for getting home when you chose to consume alcohol. 🚗

The ART of Spiritual Care

BY LT COL MATTHEW BOYD and LT COL SONIA PONS

The Chaplain Corps' mission is to inspire readiness of Airmen, Guardians, and their families through unparalleled soul care, leader advisement, and religious liberty. The 480th Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Wing executes this mission through our Religious Support Teams (RST) at each of our groups and the wing staff. Combined, they serve over 6,000 Airmen at six locations around the globe. The Wing's RSTs do this in a unique way, embedded at the group level, and integrated into a multi-disciplinary cross-functional team. In addition to RSTs, the teams include active-duty physical and mental health officers, as well as their respective non-commissioned officers. What makes them cross-functional? They work together in the same space, with the same mission and "produce results that can't be achieved by any single discipline." (Amy Edmondson in *The Fearless Organization*)



The 480 ISRW created the Airman Resiliency Team (ART) concept in 2013, in response to high suicide rates within the intelligence community. They invited the 711th Human Performance Research Team and the Rand Corporation to study factors that led to these numbers. Their recommendation was to assign a medical provider, mental health provider, and a chaplain to each ISR group. The creators of the ART concept understood the value of the four domains of resiliency (spiritual, social, physical, and mental) to improve quality of life. This understanding was the bedrock for a solid program that addressed each domain with wing-owned medical and spiritual specialties.

“By having our RSTs focused on total Airmen resiliency, the ARTs in our Wing are able to harness the expertise of the Chaplain and Medical Corps to provide agile combat support to Airmen and families,” said Colonel Kayle Stevens, 480 ISRW commander. “This has enabled our teams to

intervene in challenging situations multiple times before they became a crisis and resulted in a dramatic reduction of completed suicides.”

Unlike a traditional wing, in which Airmen prepare to deploy, 480th Airmen are employed in place, executing their wartime mission every day. The impact of shift work, exposure to graphic images, and insatiable demand for time-sensitive precision products can have a negative impact on overall health. Common manifestations of health degradation include feeling disconnected, angry, sad, and can lead to neglected self-care. The ART works cross-functionally to address these variables ensuring our total force is equipped with coping mechanisms. The ART also positively affects an organization’s culture by influencing leaders, improving communication and conflict resolution, instilling unit responsiveness for distressed individuals, and addressing other factors contributing to physical, social, mental, and spiritual illness.

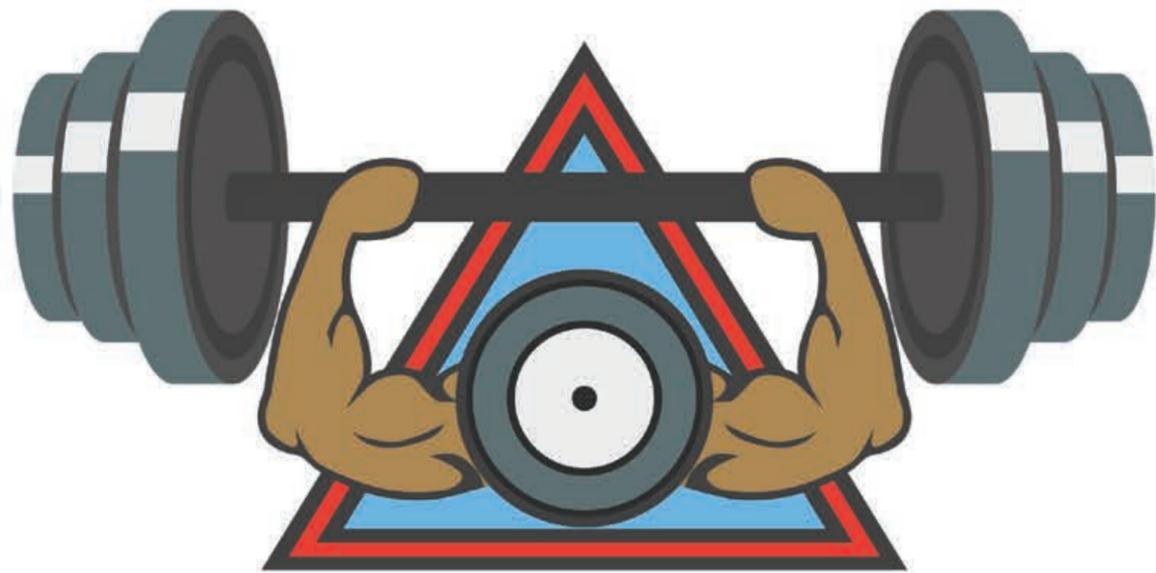
This systemic approach is advantageous for RSTs because they have immediate access to physical and mental health professionals for consultation and collaboration. This access is the foundation of flexibility in providing holistic spiritual care, allowing RSTs to be at the cutting edge of spiritual care, especially with younger generations who may not acknowledge spirituality as a necessary vehicle to thrive. Medical professionals in the ART understand and value spiritual care, referring Airmen to the RSTs and collaborating in ways that yield miraculous results.

Chaplain Capt. Karlton Edison and Staff Sgt. Alexander Orlando serve as the RST at the 692 Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Group, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, a group under the 480 ISRW. Edison’s ART is charged by Col. Stacy Kihara, 692 ISRG commander, to impact and build resiliency “left of the bang.” The team achieves this by daily engaging with Airmen where they work and live. They also conduct impactful integrated resiliency training events for Airmen and their dependents, tailored to their identified needs.

Integrated resiliency training includes several programs targeted to deal with fear and anxiety. Edison shares, “We recently included the activity of shark-diving, an event co-facilitated with our Operational Mental Health element.” Training includes spiritual and psychological tools to overcome fears followed by an opportunity to practice those tools while diving with sharks. The 692 ISRG ART also offered a program focused on developing a strong spiritual and physical core, co-facilitated by the RST and Physical Health element, where participants perform yoga on a longboard in the ocean.

All these programs are tailored to build resiliency in our Airmen and fulfill the commander’s goals. The success of the ART model is realized through high praise from commanders. “In a global Wing such as ours, our competitive advantage is our human capital—Airmen, Guardians, civilian and contractor force,” said Stevens. “Our ART and RSTs are a familiar and engaged presence at every site. I often hear from commanders that these are the last billets they would want to give up—they are true force multipliers.”





LIFTING THE BAR

BY SSGT BRITTANY D. DAWKINS

Weight-lifting is a great sport, but, as with many sports, it comes with the risk of injury. Whether you lift weights as a hobby, as part of training for other sports, or for competition, safety always comes first. Lifting the wrong way can cause serious injury, even death.

Whether you're new to lifting or an advanced lifter, you can follow basic guidelines to train more safely, thereby reducing the risk of injury. The following are a few tips on how to stay safe while lifting.

Form is critical in weight-training. Your goal should be to lift the appropriate amount of weight using perfect form. Attempting to lift more than you can handle, instead of working up to it, is dangerous by itself; doing so using bad form is a sure way to injure yourself. My coaches, mentors, and friends who lift always say "Let go of your ego, and lose the weight." They're right: Even now, with a few years' experience, I always warm up with little to no weight. Instead, I concentrate on my form before I get into the heavily-weighted sets. That keeps me from trying to prove how much I can lift, losing form, and risking injury.

Whether you're new or not, find a coach or someone to guide you. A coach will help you learn how to do the exercises correctly and efficiently, and also will be your biggest supporter and fan. If you need help finding a coach near you, the National Strength and Conditioning Association may be able to recommend a qualified coach in your area.

Conversely, avoid taking advice from people who themselves have never learned good technique. This includes parents, friends, unqualified coaches, or other amateur weightlifters. Books can help, but nothing beats personal coaching. Homemade videos of lifting and general workouts have become very popular on Instagram, TikTok, etc. I have seen thousands of videos of members lifting and giving bad advice while using terrible form. Take a side of caution when trying to learn anything from social media.

With your coach's help, decide on your goals for your weight-training program, which will depend on your age, physical maturity, and your reasons for lifting weights. You need to consider which exercises you will use, how often you will do each exercise, how much weight you will use at first, and when you will increase it.

As important as it is to warm up for each session, it's also important to cool down afterward. Your warm-up should include stretching, calisthenics (bodyweight exercises), and jogging. When you begin each exercise, use small amounts of weight at first, and progress to heavier weights. Stretching also is important during your cool-down.

As with any fitness program, you should begin slowly. Over time, you learn what you can do without putting your body in danger. Lifting weights that are too heavy can cause muscle and joint damage. It also can cause spinal injuries such as herniated discs. In extreme cases, heavy lifting can even tear a heart artery, which could result in death. The National Academy of Sports Medicine recommends resting muscle groups for 24 hours before working them again. More experienced lifters who use more weight should rest muscle groups for a longer time (48 hours or more to fully recover).

A word about injuries. Some are more obvious than others. You should see your doctor if you suspect an injury such as a persistently aching joint, a sore muscle that won't recover, back or neck pain, or hernia (a painful bulge in your abdomen). Weight-lifting is a great way to stay fit. Follow the rules, and lift safely!



Photo by PO2 Christopher Hurd



Photo by SrA Daniel Phelps



Photo by A1C Arielle Vasquez

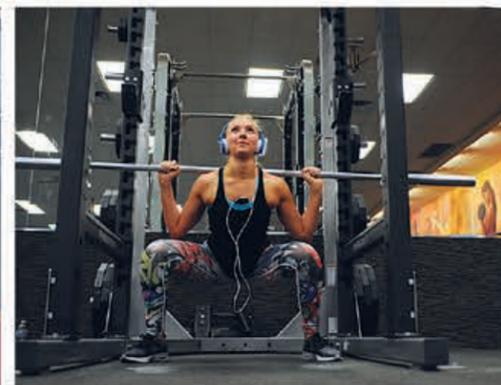


Photo by A1C Cheyenne Morigeau



Photo by TSgt Robert Cloys



Photo by TSgt Robert Cloys



BE PREPARED FOR A WINTER STORM



Winter storms create a higher risk of car accidents, hypothermia, frostbite, carbon monoxide poisoning, and heart attacks from overexertion.

Winter storms and blizzards can bring extreme cold, freezing rain, snow, ice, and high winds.



Greater risk



Can last a few hours or several days



Can knock out heat, power, and communication services

IF YOU ARE UNDER A WINTER STORM WARNING, FIND SHELTER RIGHT AWAY

Stay off roads.



Use generators outside only.



Stay indoors and dress warmly.



Listen for emergency information and alerts.



Prepare for power outages.



Look for signs of hypothermia and frostbite.



Check on neighbors.

HOW TO STAY SAFE WHEN A WINTER STORM THREATENS



Know your area's risk for winter storms. Extreme winter weather can leave communities without utilities or other services for long periods of time.

Prepare your home to keep out the cold with insulation, caulking, and weather stripping. Learn how to keep pipes from freezing. Install and test smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors with battery backups.

Pay attention to weather reports and warnings of freezing weather and winter storms. Sign up for your community's warning system. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio also provide emergency alerts.

Gather supplies in case you need to stay home for several days without power. Keep in mind each person's specific needs, including medication. Do not forget the needs of pets. Have extra batteries for radios and flashlights.

Create an emergency supply kit for your car. Include jumper cables, sand, a flashlight, warm clothes, blankets, bottled water, and non-perishable snacks. Keep the gas tank full.

Learn the signs of and basic treatments for frostbite and hypothermia. For more information, visit: www.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/staysafe/index.html.



Stay off roads if at all possible. If trapped in your car, stay inside.

Limit your time outside. If you need to go outside, wear layers of warm clothing. Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia.

Avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. Only use generators and grills outdoors and away from windows. Never heat your home with a gas stove top or oven.

Reduce the risk of a heart attack. Avoid overexertion when shoveling snow.

Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia and begin treatment right away.

Check on neighbors. Older adults and young children are more at risk in extreme cold.



Frostbite causes loss of feeling and color around the face, fingers, and toes.

- **Signs:** Numbness, white or grayish-yellow skin, and firm or waxy skin.
- **Actions:** Go to a warm room. Soak in warm water. Use body heat to warm. Do not massage or use a heating pad.

Hypothermia is an unusually low body temperature. A temperature below 95 degrees is an emergency.

- **Signs:** Shivering, exhaustion, confusion, fumbling hands, memory loss, slurred speech, and drowsiness.
- **Actions:** Go to a warm room. Warm the center of the body first—chest, neck, head, and groin. Keep dry and wrapped up in warm blankets, including the head and neck.

Take an Active Role in Your Safety

Go to Ready.gov and search for **winter storm**. Download the **FEMA app** to get more information about preparing for a **winter storm**.



THE DRIVE TO A SAFETY LESSON

BY SSGT SOLANA WILLIAMS

Military life is fulfilling, but it also presents its own, unique challenges. One major event faced by nearly every Airman is their first PCS or TDY. Some individuals have a good experience, while others are not so lucky. Not only was my first PCS a huge lesson, but it also was an experience I never will forget.

When I received orders to Robins AFB in Georgia, after five years at Malmstrom AFB in Montana, my family and I were absolutely ecstatic. For the trip, we decided on the route we were going to take, checked on how long we would be driving, and planned rest stops. We Google-mapped the route in order to time our trip. We thought we had made all the necessary preparations for our trip, and everything was in order. Little did we know, we were in for a big surprise.

We had two cars, and my daughter and I planned to follow my husband and son. Things went smoothly until we reached South Dakota. There we ran into a huge winter storm. Being a native of New Jersey, I was accustomed to driving in inclement weather such as snow storms. Although I knew we hadn't planned for snow, I believed I was capable of driving through it.

As we continued to drive, the snow began to get worse. At one point, it was coming down so hard I couldn't see anything behind or in front of

me. Despite my concerns, I continued to drive, anticipating our next rest stop. To make matters worse, the lack of a strong cell-phone signal meant the GPS was not working properly.

Without a map, and relying on poor GPS service, my husband made a wrong turn. He abruptly veered off the highway, and I tried to follow him. My front-wheel-drive, non-snow-equipped Honda lost traction, and I spun out of control in the middle of the highway. Fortunately, there were no cars near me, but my car ended up in a ditch. There I was: scared, alone in a snow storm, stuck in a ditch with my 1-year old daughter, with no cell-phone service, and with no one on the road to help me. I didn't know what to do.

My husband finally came back about five minutes later, having realized we no longer were following him. We were unprepared, with no way to tow me out or signal anyone. All we could do was sit there and try to come up with a plan. Luckily, a police officer doing his rounds saw us and called a tow truck. The situation had been extremely scary, and our lack of preparation could have led to a terrible accident or even loss of life.

While we were fortunate in that no one was hurt, we could have prevented the whole situation by following a few rules for highway safety during the winter months, like those on the following page. Safe driving, everyone! ✈️



Photo by LeManna/Shutterstock.com

Winter Driving Tips

Bad weather creates hazards such as poor visibility and slippery roads, and accounts for 23% of all road accident fatalities. It's better to wait until the weather clears up than to become a statistic. Military life involves a great deal of traveling for much of one's career, and staying safe on the highway is therefore a priority. The following are some tips for travelling safely, whether for PCS, TDY, or a road trip on leave:

- **Have your vehicle checked:** Many garages provide free safety checks, including checking fluids, brake pads, air flow, coolant, engine performance, and other major components of your car.
- **Tires:** Make sure your tires are properly inflated. A sticker on the inside edge of the driver's door lists the correct pressure for your vehicle.
- **Oil Level:** The mechanic can tell you if your oil needs to be changed, and they can do it for you.
- **Fuel:** Be sure to fill up, and don't allow it to get too low, especially on long stretches of highway.
- **Have jumper cables available.**
- **Roadside Emergency Kits:** These usually include flares, cones, flashlight, space blanket, and reflectors.
- **Roadside Assistance:** Available as a feature on many vehicles.
- **First aid kit:** A basic first aid kit should include antiseptic, gauze, sterile dressings, bandage tape, etc.

- **Familiarize yourself with the destination:** Make sure you know the route before you leave.
- **Make sure GPS is up to date.**
- **Have a print-out of the directions.**
- **Check the weather:** If weather conditions are bad, try to travel another day.
- **Have a map available:** If you are in a dead zone your GPS will not work. It's always good to have a physical map or road atlas, in case of road closures or construction.

Do's:

Make sure your GPS is in a secure place in your car where you can see it clearly. Get good sleep before your travel date. Make sure you are taking breaks as needed. Be aware of going into "autopilot." Practice safe driving, such as using your signals and driving the speed limit.

Don'ts:

No alcohol before or while driving. Do not text, call, or have GPS in your hand while driving. No eating and driving. Do not play loud, distracting music - Stay aware of your surroundings.

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