

December 1998



The Combat Edge

Air Combat Command's
Mishap Prevention
Magazine

Gen Richard E. Hawley
Commander

Col "Turk" Marshall
Chief of Safety

Ron Smith
Executive Director

Lt Col Adrian Robbe
Editor

Barbara Taylor
Associate Editor

SSgt Dave White
Design & Layout

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
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CONTRIBUTIONS: Articles, comments, and criticisms are welcome. Write:

Editor, *The Combat Edge*
HQ ACC/SEP
175 Sweeney Blvd
Langley AFB VA 23665-2700

Telephone: (757) 764-8842
DSN 574-8842
FAX: (757) 764-8975
e-mail: adrian.robbe@langley.af.mil

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Kirtland AFB NM

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Accent on Safety

from the Commander



I asked for this opportunity to provide the ACCent article in order to congratulate all of the ACC and gained unit members who contributed to making Fiscal Year 1998 one of our safest years ever. During the past fiscal year, your efforts achieved:

- A one-third reduction, from the previous year, in ACC and gained Class A Flight mishaps
 - The USAF's second best year ever both in Overall rate and Fighter/Attack rate
- A one-quarter reduction in ACC Class A, B, and C Weapons mishaps
- The second fewest ever ACC Class A Ground mishaps (on and off duty)
 - One On-Duty Class A, same as our previous best of FY 95
 - Seventeen Off-Duty Class A mishaps, equaling the previous year's total

These figures are indicative of your continued efforts to manage and reduce the risks we encounter both at work and at home.

However, there are still some disturbing issues that are masked by these encouraging numbers. We had several flight mishaps where missions were continued as planned even though something had occurred which should have caused us to reassess the risks. For example, our crews often encounter minor aircraft malfunctions related to their planned maneuvers. This new risk element should trigger an additional safety buffer in either our maneuvering parameters or in the training rules and limitations which already apply. Maybe you should raise the training floor, limit maneuvering, or go to a backup mission to provide a greater margin of safety. Even so, if you can't accomplish meaningful training while complying with the added restrictions, it's time to take it home and "live to train another day." I will repeat it here so that no one doubts our policy: **"There is no training mission so important that it is worth the loss of a life or an aircraft."** I hope that's clear enough.

On a more personal level, there is the extremely disturbing fact that 5 of the 16 ACC off-duty fatalities involved situations where the basic safety precautions of wearing seat belts, a motorcycle helmet, or a life jacket were not followed. Commanders, supervisors, and safety folks have preached this over and over again; but still, a few folks didn't get the word. Here's some real simple math — wearing a seat belt reduces the risk of dying in an auto accident by half. **Half!** And, that's before you remove other "killer factors" such as fatigue, speeding, or drinking. Put the odds in your favor... buckle up.

By now, you should all know something about Operational Risk Management, or ORM. I am a believer in ORM. I think it is powerful stuff. It gives us a way to look at our everyday jobs, our routine activities, how we live our lives, and helps us assess whether what we do has benefits worth the risks involved. I ask all of you to give ORM a try in your personal life. Take a moment before you start the car, a routine daily task, or anything else that you do, and give some thought to the potential for bad things to happen. First, ask yourself, "Have I done all that I can to minimize the risks?" Second, "Is the benefit worth whatever risk remains?"

With the holiday season upon us, we can all be thankful for the successes we have achieved in controlling risk. But it is also clear that there is more we can do. I ask your help in 1999 by personally taking on this challenge. Let's work together to make this new year our best ever. Mary Ellen and I wish you and your families the happiest of holidays and a joyful, prosperous (and safe!) New Year.

Dink Hawley

Everyone's

People who kill themselves are like you and me: living in relationships, working in a high operations tempo, and trying to make ends meet with increasing demands on limited income.

*Lt Col Joseph Wagner
Air Intelligence Agency (AIA) Staff Chaplain
San Antonio TX*

On a Friday afternoon, just before a holiday weekend, I got a call from a squadron commander asking if I would accompany him to visit the family of a squadron member who had recently committed suicide.

"John was the last person I would have ever expected to kill himself," the commander said. He talked about what a great worker the airman had been and how well he seemed to be adjusting to the assignment, the base, and the community. Were there any indicators he would kill himself? What could have been done? I heard the same

questions asked by the airman's wife, peers, and supervisors.

No one likes to hear that another human being is so troubled that he or she would consider self-murder. Thus far in 1998, two of our Air Intelligence Agency (AIA) members have taken their own lives. Of the nine suicides that have taken place in AIA since 1995, a contributing factor in eight cases has been a relationship issue. Five of the nine had been barred from their work center and faced the loss of their security clearance.

Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem! To

Responsibility

counter such self-destruction, we need to increase our awareness and sensitivity to others by focusing on preventative skills and warning signs that peers and supervisors can recognize. For example, your recognition and intervention to help a friend or coworker find a solution to their problem may be just the encouragement they need to save their life. Many people kill themselves without ever realizing help can be found from an informed buddy, a caring supervisor, or numerous professionals working on base.

People who kill themselves are like you and me: living in relationships, working in a high operations tempo, and trying to make ends meet with increasing demands on limited income. The difference is those who attempt or carry out a suicide become so sad or hopeless they cannot stand it anymore, or they believe they've been dealt such a horrible blow by life that they become overwhelmed and see no other way out.

A tragic case in point: Louis supervises over 30 airmen. He has a large cross-section of men and women who come from different parts of the globe, each with a background as unique as the individual. Many come from blended families, single parent, or foster homes.

One of his troops, Helen, was very popular in the squadron. Al-

though well liked, her low self-esteem and abusive past haunted her. She was happy to be with her boyfriend Bill; but deep inside, she often wondered what he saw in her.

One day, she asked Louis if they could talk. When they spoke, it seemed she wanted to open up; but she ended up crying, unable to ask for some help and guidance. "I'm sorry I took up your time. I always seem to waste people's energy over stupid things. I'll just tell Bill I don't want to go on the singles' retreat after all."

She told Bill she'd stay home alone. "If you don't want to go with me, maybe we should think twice about getting serious with each other," he replied. His words devastated her. She stayed home over the weekend — lonely and in despair.

The night before Bill was to return, Helen called Louis. In a weak, tearful voice, she asked again to talk. Louis said, "I thought you and Bill went on a retreat together. Is everything okay between you two? I have an errand to run; it might take 2 hours. Would tomorrow morning be all right, before work? Let's say 6:30." She started to cry and hung up the phone. Louis — disturbed by the sound of Helen's voice — tried to call her back, but the line was busy.

Later that night, Helen gave away her CD collection, special

dresses, and mementos from various TDYs. She walked to Bill's dorm, got in his car, and drove to a field beside her shop. After writing a final note to her supervisor and boyfriend, she swallowed an entire bottle of medication.

Helen left life as she'd lived it... alone. She took her life never realizing there were caring professionals available right on base — chaplains, mental health, and family support center workers to name just a few — who could have helped her solve her problems.

Frontline suicide prevention is a network of peers, coworkers, friends, and family members. They are the ones who note dramatic or subtle changes in behavior or attitude. As members of the Air Force family, we must take care of our own. As commanders, mentors, and peers, we all know the challenges brought on by today's very demanding high operations tempo environment that confronts us today. As a result, we all share a responsibility for the health and well being of our family, friends, and coworkers... no matter what their circumstances may be. When necessary, we need to have the courage to intervene on their behalf. After all, you may very well be their only source of help at a very critical time in their life. Make yourself available to others in times of need. By doing so, "you" can make a difference. ■

RESPONSIBILITY and

*Col Dave Williamson
9 AF/SE
Shaw AFB SC*



Each of us has a responsibility to implement Operational Risk Management (ORM) throughout our daily operations. This responsibility includes an obligation to understand the risk management process as well as to encourage other personnel to use it. Taking responsibility for risk management by incorporating it into all our daily activities is absolutely critical to maximizing ACC's mission success.

Here are a couple of war stories that demonstrate how ORM can help prevent injury, damage, and mission degradation. Taking responsibility for implementing risk management into our daily routines "can make a difference."

ORM — Suwon Style

I was sitting SOF (Supervisor of Flying) at Suwon years ago as a

pogue captain and got into a discussion with my ROKAF (Republic of Korea Air Force) counterpart who was a major. The weather was bad but forecast to come up to landing mins. With our ever-present "lean forward" attitude, the squadron was briefed and committed to fly our sorties even though the weather held little promise of productive tactical training. Our plan was to launch the sorties with the hope that our pilots could find some "workable" airspace just south of the DMZ.

The ROKAF major asked me why we were flying. He said the weather was bad, and they — the ROKAF — would not risk their aircraft (F-5s) in such marginal weather with such little promise of productive training. He said their aircraft were too few and valuable to risk; he was recommending that

they cancel flying for the day.

I really didn't have a good answer for him other than, "Well, we got mins to launch and recover." I don't even remember if we flew that day or not, but my conversation with the major has stayed with me all these years.

Today's USAF is still a lot bigger than the ROKAF, but there's no mistaking our massive drawdown since my tour in Korea. I don't need to quote stats and numbers, but we don't have the assets — people or machines — we used to. Perhaps we need to start adopting the mindset of our friend — the ROKAF major. He was fulfilling an important responsibility of ORM: "Accept or reject risk based on the benefit to be derived." He knew his combat power was limited and, therefore, should not be risked un-



RISK MANAGEMENT

The ROKAF major asked me why we were flying. He said the weather was bad, and they — the ROKAF — would not risk their aircraft (F-5s) in such marginal weather with such little promise of productive training.

necessarily with little chance of meaningful training.

ORM and Common Sense

And another story... fast forward a few years, and I'm sitting SOF again (this time at Cannon AFB watching New Mexico blow into west Texas). In this scenario, it was a winter night and snowing hard. Again, the crews were briefed and stepping to the jets. Remember when you were SOF, and they said you were the DO's representative? (DO? OK, OK... so I'm dating myself!) Well, I believed them. As the first F-111s were taxiing through the arming area into what looked to be a snow storm, I thought to myself, "Boy this is stupid!" and then promptly cancelled all sorties for the evening. I didn't realize it at the time, but I was actually doing ORM. We weren't going to get much out of that night, so why take the risk?

What am I suggesting? Fly only when the weather is VFR? Absolutely not! However, what I am suggesting is that we ask some questions when a complicating factor enters into our decision matrix. It doesn't have to be marginal weather like my example. It could be many different factors: inexperienced flight lead or wingman, unfamiliarity with a scenario or range, currencies, or whatever. This is a responsibility that falls squarely on the squadron supervisors: "Incorporate risk management in all planning."

So when you're staring at the scheduling board trying to create a flawless plan out of chaos, don't be afraid to ask the question, "Is this really the way to go?" Also, try to foster an atmosphere in all of your organizations where anyone can speak up and say, "This is stupid!

Why are we doing this?" I know this must sound like the basics of ORM; and you know what... you're absolutely right! After all, that's what risk management is — a common sense way of accomplishing the mission with reduced risk.

Summary

You "can make a difference" by effectively applying risk management concepts and methods to your daily operations and tasks. Take responsibility to integrate risk management into all phases of your operations, and don't accept unnecessary risks — those that have no benefit and clearly are not worth taking. Initially, this will take a focused effort on your part each and every day; but eventually it will become second nature and the results will truly be worth it. ORM... THE SMART WAY TO DO BUSINESS! ■

Weapons Safety a

*Capt Kirk Kehrley
8 AF/SEW
Barksdale AFB LA*

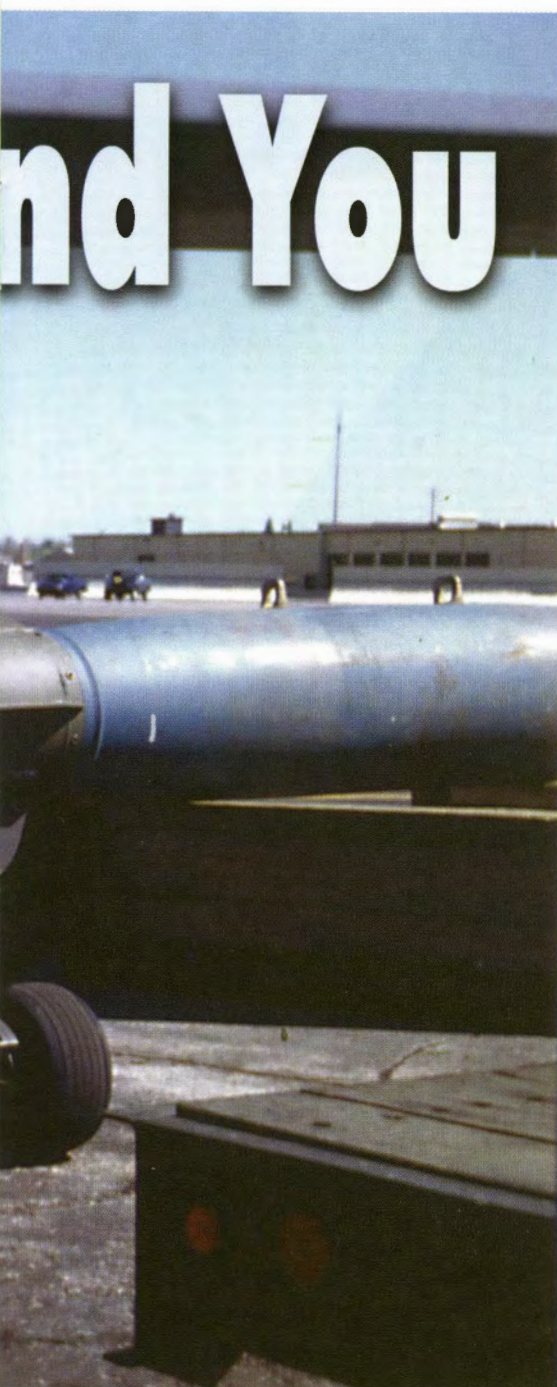


During my travels to various wings, I enjoy asking folks in the load barn or bomb dump, "What do Weapons Safety folks do for you?" Unfortunately, I've heard some disparaging comments such as... "The only thing Weapons Safety personnel do is ensure that safety reports are done correctly." Other people I've

talked to believe that Weapons Safety's job is to sit around and come up with catchy cliches such as "Safety is No Accident" or "Be Safe." These are false impressions that don't accurately reflect the Weapons Safety mission which is "to prevent explosives incidents."

Mishap prevention is the pri-

mary task of the Weapons Safety Office. But sad to say, much of our time is spent corresponding between safety offices and explosives related activities, determining whether an incident qualifies as a "Dull Sword," or is "reportable." I hope you're not saying to yourself, "Hey, this sounds just like my wing!" We in the Weap-



ons community should be asking ourselves, "What can be done to correct this inefficiency." Well, read on to find out what the safety offices should be doing and how they can also help you.

The Weapons Safety Office exists as a support function of the wing staff. Therefore, the Weapons Safety Office is there to work

with and for you. Weapons Safety personnel dedicate themselves and their time toward the constant improvement of explosives operations throughout the wing. For example, all locally written instructions — from Security Forces training on smoke grenades to wing operating instructions needed for hazardous materials shipment by government vehicles must be reviewed by the Weapons Safety Manager (WSM). This is one of the many tasks performed daily by WSMs and is a good example of the major role they play in mishap prevention.

The job of the WSM is to ensure all explosives-related activities interface smoothly and safely. As a result, WSM's must be flexible. They must learn as much as possible about all wing activities affecting safety and how to interact with the myriad of personalities throughout the wing. ACC Weapons Safety personnel are quality people trained and ready to prevent explosives incidents. They exist to help "you."

The WSM is a key position in the wing, should never be taken for granted, and should always be supported. WSM responsibilities are critical to the safe conduct of wing operations. Therefore, these duties should be assigned to someone who has the initiative to actively determine potential explosives-related mishaps and who is willing to work aggressively to remedy existing problems. After all, that's the WSM's job!

But remember this, he can't do it on his own. He needs your help. In fact, you can make a real difference in your organization by helping the WSM help you. Seek his assistance and get him involved. Call on him to come out

and analyze your next weapons movement or bomb build-up operation. Use him to get the latest information about bomb build-up procedures from the Air Force Combat Ammunition Center or the latest changes dealing with nuclear surety matters.

The Weapons Safety Office exists to prevent explosives-related mishaps; it is not a staff agency that has outlived its usefulness. ACC has quality people assigned to the Weapons Safety Offices throughout the command. And remember, for them to be most effective, they need your involvement and support. Use the expertise of WSMs to the maximum extent possible — they're there to help you! ■

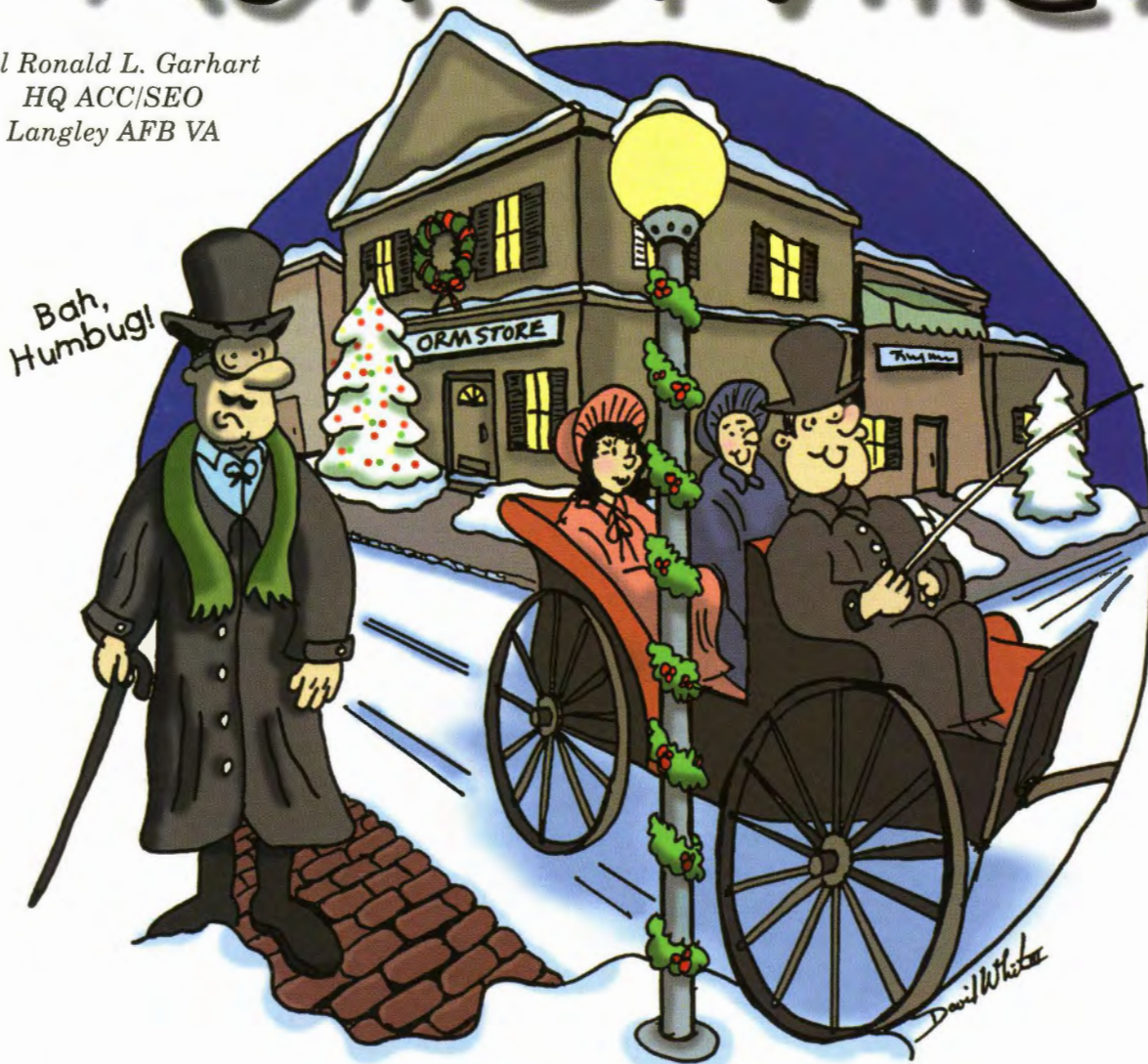
Editorial Comment

HQ ACC Weapons Safety commends Capt Kehrley's article. As stated, the WSM's goal is mishap prevention — not just to stand on the sidelines waiting to report the next accident. No MAJCOM, NAF, or unit level safety office can prevent accidents; only those doing and supervising weapons tasks can do that. However, our goal is to be a proactive partner by: (1) reviewing potential risks involved with day-to-day operations, (2) increasing the amount of crosstell, and (3) spreading the good ideas being used throughout ACC, other commands, and services, as a form of mishap prevention.

*Lt Col Bruno R. Eddy
Chief, Weapons Safety Branch
ACC Office of Safety*

Ask Orville!

Col Ronald L. Garhart
HQ ACC/SEO
Langley AFB VA



As Thanksgiving dinner fades to but a memory and Christmas becomes a most anticipated event, I believe that it is fitting and proper for me to step off the ol' soapbox. Permit – even if for only the briefest of moments – another voice to be heard, another view to be shared, and another story to be told. We know there are a million stories out there in Air Combat Command, but the story that longingly called to be shared throughout ACC this joyous holiday season had a haunting ring of familiarity. Although we couldn't quite put our finger on it, it left the reader feeling like it was *déjà vu* all over again. Indeed, we had heard similar chronicles before, on other wintry nights, during other festive holidays. And so it is that I introduce to you, from the frozen tundra of the Northern Tier, Lt Col S.K. Rooge, Squadron Commander extraordinaire.

Dear Orville:

Thanks for permitting me to share my experience with your readers. At first I thought it was a bit of undigested beef, or a blob of mustard, or a crumb of cheese that was causing me to hallucinate; but I know now that it must have been a dream, or a nightmare is perhaps more descriptive. But it just seemed so real. It was Christmas Eve a year ago as I left the office a little early — must have been about 2130 or so. At any rate, dinner was nice and all was going well until I stood at the entrance of my meager apartment. As I reached for the doorknob, I could swear that I saw the faces of Marty and Jerry, two very talented and promising aviators who died needlessly in an F-4 mishap on a cold November night many years ago. And although I don't score as well on the hearing tests as I once did, they seemed to be warning me of dangers to come. They said that I would be visited this night by three goats (or maybe they said ghosts). Yeah that's what it was... ghosts! At any rate, I was tired and fell quickly to sleep as I watched the nightly news.

As I heard the clock strike one, a bright light filled the room, and I was confronted with the likes of a World War I pilot (with leather helmet, scarf, goggles and all). This guy was right out of the open cockpits. He said he was the Ghost of Operational Risk Management (ORM) Past. He took me by the hand and off we flew; no kidding, it was like Superman or something. The first place we visited was the mishap site of a heretofore cocky pilot who blatantly violated the low flying rules and paid the ultimate price. Actually, the pilot got off quite lightly; not much pain at all. It was his surviving spouse and children who bore the brunt of his reckless decisions. Our next stop was a dark and "black ice" laden road where an athletic TSgt traded his legs for a wheel chair after he took

the risk of navigating this treacherous path while DUI. On we traveled to an emotional graveside memorial of an airman who decided that taking his own life was the only honorable way out of a difficult financial and personal situation. But the image of the next stop will be frozen in my memory forever. It was an F-4 mishap site, 1/2 mile on final approach, trees cut down at a precise 3-degree angle as if by a giant surgical knife; the smiles and friendships that we shared in London only hours before, now gone forever. I begged my guide, "Spirit, show me no more, why do you delight in torturing me?" His crusty response was simply, "These are the

He reflected the
seemingly plain and often
overlooked power of
today's airmen as he
boldly stated, "I am the
Ghost of ORM Present.
Come with me, for I have
much to show you."

shadows of things that have been. They are what they are, do not blame me."

Back in my slumber I heard the clock strike 2. Not sensing anything particularly alarming, I dared peek through barely open eyes. There before me looked to be a normal, everyday, modern pilot in full combat gear. Missing was the romantic flare of the WWI pilot, but his character was captivating nonetheless. He reflected the seemingly plain and often overlooked power of today's airmen as he boldly stated, "I am the Ghost of ORM Present. Come with me, for I have much to show you."

At that, we were transported (it was sort of like a "beam me up Scottie") to an ORM training session. Here... enlisted and officer, airmen and generals, young and old, expe-

rienced and rookies alike, were all being taught the simple philosophy and principles of ORM. They were being equipped with the tools and techniques that would surely help them to avoid the needless losses experienced by those that went before them. It appeared that the time was right and the opportunities were there to surely make a better future. I was very encouraged with what I saw on the surface.

Our next stop was not as promising. We were eavesdropping on two ORM students on a coffee break. The gist of their conversation was this. "Don't take that ORM stuff too seriously. My boss said that we are only going through the motions of doing ORM because the old man thinks it is a good idea, and nobody wants to buck the old man. He'll be gone in about a year, and we will then be able to kill this initiative outright... just like we flushed the last one."

One more puff of smoke and we found ourselves onlookers as my squadron prepared for the initial strike in a new conflict. It was obvious that this battle was going to be different than those of the past. The weapons systems were sometimes overwhelming, and the mission was very complex. One of my pilots, Lt Tim Burke (tactical call sign Tiny) was noticeably struggling to keep up. As they stepped to the jets, I could not help but ask, "Spirit, tell me if that young pilot will live through this mission." His response was entirely void of emotion. "That is of the future, my realm is the present. But if the philosophy, principles, tools, and techniques of ORM have been properly applied, the young man's chance for success is far greater than that of the pilots that have preceded him. If, however, the lessons of ORM have been ignored, then I see a vacant seat at the debriefing and a spare G-suit without an owner. If today's risks remain

unaltered, I believe he will needlessly die."

As the clock struck 3, I felt the overwhelming presence of the third ghost. I asked, "Am I in the presence of the Ghost of ORM Yet to Come?" He spoke not a word, but walked me to the rusted gates of a lonely cemetery. There his crooked and fleshless finger pointed to a simple grave marker. Chills ran the

length of my spine as I saw for the first time the name on that cold stone — "Lt Tim "Tiny" Burke." I grabbed the spirit's robe and asked, "Can the risks that I will ask Tim to face be changed? Why would you show me this if we were past all hope? I and my squadron will embrace ORM and try to keep it in all endeavors, on and off duty. Tell me that I may scratch out the writing

on this stone."

Well Orville, the next thing I knew, I awoke to the TV test pattern making an obnoxious noise, Fido licking my face, and I was thankful just to be alive in my own home. I hope you are able to share my story. Cheers to you and yours. Have a very Merry Christmas and wonderful New Year. And just one more thing Orville, could you get me a slot in that January class?

If you have any questions or comments regarding ORM, send them to:

"Ask Orville!"
HQ ACC/SEO
175 Sweeney Blvd
Langley AFB VA 23665-2700

DSN 574-8800, Fax DSN 574-8975

Respectfully,

Lt Col S. K. Rooge

Dear Lt Col S. K. Rooge,

Thanks. You said it all. See you in 1999,

Orville R. Mudd

ORM Dogfight Veteran
ACC Office of Safety



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'Twas the Season for Safety

SMSgt Abel Hernandez, HQ ACC/IGIL-S, Langley AFB VA

'Twas the season for holidays and all through the base,
not a person was thinking, not one in the place.
The T.O.s were laid on the cabinets without care,
in hopes that QA or Safety wouldn't come there.

The airmen were horseplaying and cutting a joke,
not once ever thinking anything could get broke.
While sitting in my chair with a safety reg in my lap,
I truly felt like taking a long winter's nap.

When out in the hangar, there arose such a clatter,
I sprang to my feet to see what was the matter.
Away to the door... I flew like a flash,
and looking in the hangar, I stood there aghast!

When what to my wondering eyes should appear,
but an aircraft in tow and AGE equipment quite near.
In a blink of the eye, I knew what was on tap,
Then it happened... KABONG!!! — a terrible MISHAP.


The Safety Officer was there before we could call,
and he asked what occurred, but there was none who knew all.
With an upset look and fire in his eyes,
he growled, "You've really done it this time you guys!"

And though I possess worldly wisdom and stripes,
I wondered if I should have been in the hangar that night.
I told my shop, "You can't be complacent this time of the year;"
and they said, "But Sarge, it's time... for holiday cheer."

I gathered the people who'd been part of this mess,
to go see the Colonel... so we all could confess.
We entered his office and made not a sound,
As he exclaimed, "You'd better watch it, or you won't be around!"

Standing at attention, we knew it was too late;
it was easy to see we had sealed our fate.
As we stood and declared, "We'll sure change our ways,"
the Colonel responded, "Let's brief lessons learned on Safety Day."

In the words of this poem, the meaning is clear;
don't be complacent because the holidays are near.
In this event, a lot of equipment got wrecked;
next time it could be people... a price much too high for senseless neglect.



Maj Joe Wallace
HQ 10 AF/DOIT
NAS Fort Worth JRB TX

"It's Still Dark Out

"Don't let the light from your 'hair on fire' gain do

It's time to re-evaluate what we are trying to do with Night Vision Goggles (NVGs) in the fighter force. Recent observations point to a trend of trying to use the goggles to turn night into day and make ourselves and our aircraft perform as if it wasn't dark out there.

The truth is — we can't light our "hair on fire" at night — it makes the goggles gain down. Okay, I'm trying to be cute, but that's really the meat of the developing problem. As more fighter aircraft types and different commands start to use NVGs, they seem to be trying to re-learn some hard lessons paid for by our A-10 Hog drivers over the last 4 or 5 years.

The phases of a Hog driver's discovery of NVGs were typically something like this:

- **Caution based on fear and awe.** NVGs were a strange appendage hanging on our face, and we weren't sure what we were doing; but we sure liked it!

- **Euphoria based on initial accomplishments.** That first high-illumination night surface attack ride made us think nobody could ever hide from us again. It made us feel like we were invisible... and bulletproof.

- **Overconfidence based on overreliance.** No matter what a sneak peek under the goggles would have told us (e.g., like our false conclusion that the "star in the sky" we were looking at was in reality the "red navigation light" of a Cessna), we were going to keep staring through those green tubes.

- **The return of caution when fear smacks overconfidence in the lips.** (See previous sentence...) There is no reason for other commands and aircraft to go down this path, but recent references to "near daytime tactics" with NVGs without an equal and opposite caution may be an explanation for the hazardous trends we are seeing. If we step back and look at what we are really trying to do with night vision goggles, we can save some lives and aircraft in the future.

It is a matter of emphasis. We must remember that NVGs are just one part of the night tactical clue bag — they are not an "end-all, be-all" of their own. If we can't do peacetime intercept training or surface attack tactics with NVGs without smacking the ground, how will we do it in combat?

Before NVGs were available to



There" wn your NVGs."

us, we knew we had to avoid spatial disorientation when doing tactical maneuvering at night. We would have never considered dropping the Attitude Direction Indicator (ADI) from our cross-check while doing an all-aspect missile defense so that we could get a visual pickup on the bandit. By the same token, the pull-off from a bomb pass was an instrument maneuver we wouldn't deviate from to count bomb splashes either.

Here are some basic truths on flying with Night Vision Goggles that need to be taken to heart:

- **It's still dark out there.** We are all still VFR direct (i.e., daytime) creatures. We need a horizon—artificial or real—to stay right side up. Flying at night is an unnatural act that tends to cause spa-

tial disorientation and an overreliance on NVGs. An overconfidence in what they can do for you will put you in a corner in a hurry. Look under or around the NVGs from time-to-time when you are looking outside. Never drop your instruments from your cross-check—no matter how demanding the mission tasking becomes. Constantly evaluate the NVG scene as to how well the NVGs are helping or hindering you. Remember, it is the pilot's responsibility to constantly evaluate the illumination level, and there is no reason not to include weather (as well as the effects of obscurants to visibility) in that evaluation.

- **NVGs do not make light.** You are not superhuman when you put on NVGs. You have less field of view, depth perception, and acuity when you are wearing NVGs—no matter what the outside illumination level is. Imagine you strapped on a couple of empty toilet paper rolls over your eyes with the openings covered by milky plastic film and then went flying in the daytime. How aggressive would you be? Then consider how much less of a sharp sword you would be on a low illumination night.

- **If you wouldn't do it without NVGs, why would you do it with them?** NVGs are a clue bag expander because they allow you to do more daytime-like tactics. They are not intended to replace validated and approved night tactics and procedures. These lessons learned have already been paid for in blood, sweat, and tears; there is no reason for us to relearn them. For example, do you remember all the effort we used to put into aircraft deconfliction at night prior to NVGs? Before NVGs came on the scene, running airplanes together at

night used to be avoided by adhering to strict formation procedures with carefully controlled maneuvering during rejoins. Simply stated, the use of NVGs does not replace sound night formation practices.

- **Don't let the light from your "hair on fire" gain down your NVGs.** NVGs are an important enhancement to night fighter operations—if used wisely. That wisdom begins before the mission and begins with Operational Risk Management (ORM). After identifying the hazards (i.e., visualizing the expected flow of events and identifying any conditions which might result in degraded mission performance, a risk assessment must be done. In order to assess the risks, a determination of the identified hazards that present the greatest risk (considering the potential outcomes and their probability and severity) needs to be done. Your risk assessment should always be used to evaluate the factors you have—as well as do not have—control over. For example, you can control the intensity of the mission you are about to fly by asking yourself if the nighttime capabilities of the threat you are simulating are realistic. Ask yourself if your objectives and methods of implementation include specific nighttime oriented lessons learned that are geared toward night operations. Continue your assessment into the mission. This assessment can be at some interval during the mission that makes sense to you, but especially when your hair starts to smolder. At the first odor of hair smoke, ask yourself if the bounds of your plan and goals are being exceeded. Even if the assessment results are okay, it is always worth ending your mental ops check with the reminder that "It's still dark out there." ■

A Safer Home and Hearth

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December, January, and February are the leading months for U.S. home fires and home fire deaths. On average, more than one-third of home fire deaths in the United States occur during the winter months.

Safer Home Heating

NFPA's latest report on U.S. home heating fire patterns indicates that heating equipment fires are the second leading causes of fire deaths in American homes and the biggest fire culprit December through January. An estimated 73,800 home heating fires in 1994 killed 487 people and injured just under 2,000 people. The experts at NFPA say that most U.S. home fires caused by heating equipment could be prevented by taking simple safety precautions.

"The home heating fire problem in America is largely one of human error, particularly with the misuse of portable heaters, fireplaces, and woodstoves," says NFPA's Assistant Vice-President for Public Education, Meri-K Appy. "The critical elements of home heating safety have to do with correct installation, maintenance, fueling, and operation of portable and space heaters, as well as safely arranging household items around them." According to NFPA's report, the major causes of U.S. home heating fires are:

- Lack of regular cleaning of chimneys in fireplaces and woodstoves.
- Placing things that can burn too close to space and portable heaters.
- Flaws in design, installation, or use.
- Fueling errors involving liquid- or gas-fueled heaters.
- Leaving portable or space heaters unattended.

Tips for Preventing Heating Equipment Fires

When purchasing new heating equipment, NFPA advises selecting equipment that bears the mark of an independent testing laboratory. Install and maintain heating equipment correctly, and be sure it complies with local fire and building codes. Where possible, have local building or fire officials check the installation and maintenance.

"In many cases, you can actually prevent a fire just by reading and following the manufacturer's instructions when using a heating device. This is especially important when you are using a new heater for the first time," says Ms. Appy. Here are some specific fire prevention tips from NFPA to keep in mind when heating your home:

Portable and Other Space Heaters

Portable and space heaters can be either electric-powered or fueled by gas, liquid fuel (usually kerosene), or solid fuel (usually wood). All types must be kept at least 36 inches (1 meter) from anything that can burn, including furniture, bedding, clothing, pets, and people. Space heaters must not be left operating when you are not in the room or when you go to sleep. Children and pets should be supervised at all times when space heaters are in use. Ensure everyone is aware of the high fire hazard associated with drying clothing or placing combustibles over heaters. If you have an electric space heater, check each season for fraying or splitting wires or overheating. Have all problems repaired by a professional before operating the space heater.

Portable Kerosene Heaters

If you have a liquid-fueled space heater, use only the fuel recommended by the manufacturer. Never use gasoline or any other substitute fuel, because the wrong fuel could burn hotter than the equipment's de-

sign limits and cause a serious fire. When refueling, always turn off the heater and let it cool down completely before adding fuel. Wipe up any spills promptly. If you are considering buying a kerosene heater, be sure to check with your local fire department first to find out if it is legal in your community. Store the kerosene away from heat or open flame in a container approved by the local fire department, and be sure it is clearly marked with the fuel name.

Fireplaces

Have your chimney inspected by a professional prior to the start of every heating season and cleaned if necessary. Creosote, a chemical substance that forms when wood burns, builds up in chimneys and can cause a chimney fire if not removed through cleaning. Always protect your home and your family by using a sturdy fireplace screen when burning fires. Remember to burn only wood — never burn paper or pine boughs, which can float out the chimney and ignite your roof or a neighboring home. Do not use flammable liquids in a fireplace. If you are purchasing a factory-built fireplace, select one listed by a testing laboratory, and have it installed according to local codes. If you decorate your fireplace with Christmas stockings or other seasonal decorations, don't burn fires in it.

Wood Stoves

Be sure your wood stove bears the mark of an independent testing laboratory and meets local fire codes. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for proper installation, use, and maintenance. Chimney connections and chimney flues should be inspected at the beginning of each heating season and cleaned when necessary. Follow the same safety rules for wood stoves as you would for space heaters. Burn only wood, and be sure the wood stove is placed on an approved stove board to protect the floor from heat and hot

coals. Check with your local fire department and local code officials before having your wood stove installed.

Propane Heaters

Portable LP Gas (Propane) Heaters with self-contained fuel supplies (cabinet heaters) are prohibited for home use by NFPA fire safety standards.

Safer Holidays at Home

The winter holidays are a time for celebration; and that means more cooking, lots of entertaining, and an increased risk of fire. In recent years, nearly 600 fires per year have been started by ignition of Christmas trees in the U.S. (510 in homes), causing an average of 33 deaths (all in homes), 112 injuries, and \$21 million in direct property damage per year. Decorating with candles can also be a fire hazard. An annual average of 6,700 home fires are caused by candles every year, with 87 associated deaths and 587 injuries. Nearly \$59 million in property damage results from candle fires every year. Follow these fire prevention tips from the NFPA to help keep your family safer during the holidays:

Holiday Lighting

Take care when burning candles. Be sure candles are placed in sturdy, non-combustible holders, and are kept well away from decorations and other combustible materials. Check candles frequently to make sure they don't burn down too far or drip hot wax. Don't leave children unattended in a room with lit candles, and always keep candles, as well as matches and lighters, up high, out of the reach of children (preferably stored in a locked cabinet). Don't display lighted candles in windows or near exits in case you need these to escape. Under no circumstances is it safe to use candles to decorate Christmas trees! Keep

flashlights and fresh batteries on hand to use for lighting in the event of a power outage.

Holiday Entertaining

Use caution with holiday decorations and, whenever possible,



*Take care when
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sure candles are placed
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combustible holders,
and are kept well
away from
decorations and other
combustible materials.*

choose those made with flame-retardant or non-combustible materials. When cooking for holiday visitors, remember to keep an eye on the range. Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home fires in the U.S., so "stand by your pan!" If there are smokers around your

home, provide plenty of large, deep ashtrays and check them frequently. Cigarette butts can smolder and cause a trash fire, so completely douse cigarette butts with water before discarding or flush them down the toilet. After a party, always check inside and under upholstery and cushions and inside trash cans for cigarette butts that may be smoldering. If you have children in your home, keep matches and lighters up high, out of their sight and reach (preferably in a locked cabinet). Ask visitors who are smokers to keep their smoking materials with them when they are visiting in your home.

Christmas Trees

Choose a fresh Christmas tree, and put it in a stand designed not to tip over. Place the tree well away from heat sources and exits, and water it constantly. If you purchase an artificial tree, be sure it is labeled as fire-retardant. When decorating with lights, be sure to purchase only those that bear the mark of a testing laboratory. Replace any frayed or damaged cords. For outside decorations, use only those lights labeled for outdoor use. Bring outdoor lights inside following the holidays so they are not damaged by extended exposure to harsh weather conditions. Always unplug all lights before leaving home or going to sleep and don't overload electrical outlets. Use only battery-operated lights if you have a metal Christmas tree, or decorate without lighting. ■





Chock Talk

Maj Dave Saville
HQ ACC/SEF
Langley AFB VA

Flight Safety with a Maintenance Slant **Tools That Kill!**

I'll never forget the day I learned that Foreign Object Damage (FOD) prevention was a lot more than preventing a foreign object from getting inside a jet engine and damaging the blades. At that time, I was a very, very, new lieutenant assigned to the swing shift on the flight line. Someone working in the cockpit of an F-15A ended up one screw short of what he started with. I watched the production superintendent ("pro super") get this grimacing look on his face; and almost without words, he tasked the expeditor to supervise the search for that missing screw.

Everyone knew what they had to do; there was no whining or quibbling. I watched them pull the seat up and spend hours — literally hours — upside down in the cockpit looking for that little screw. When one guy would exhaust his efforts, and withdraw (obviously frustrated), someone else would put

some new eyes to the task. Meanwhile, the pro super initiated the aircraft impoundment paperwork. NCOs from Quality Assurance came to fill out their paperwork and offer their help. Of course, it wasn't long before the senior maintenance officer on duty in the wing also stopped by.

When I finally got a private moment with the pro super, I displayed my ignorance. (Note: He was a good mentor to me, so displaying my ignorance was a very natural and frequent occurrence.) I said, "This may sound really stupid, but how is that little screw going to get out of the cockpit and get ingested in the engine? Isn't this a little bit of over-kill?" He responded, "Lieutenant, do you have any idea what happens when a pilot is heading for a mountain and pulls back on the stick... but the stick jams?" I guess he saw the little light come on in my head, so he spared me the

explanation. He did, however, tell me of a crash that was caused by that very thing, and the mishap investigators were able to prove it. Yes, FOD is more than a threat to the inner workings of jet engines; it can also be catastrophic to flight control systems.

Since that time, I've experienced all sorts of different ways FOD threatens safe operations of an airplane. I've seen a circuit board fry because of a metal shaving from some nearby sheet-metal work. I've seen an A-10's big 30mm Gatling gun come to a grinding halt because an internal part failed, then migrated into the gun drum, jamming thousands of moving parts and live 30mm rounds. It didn't take me long to begin to understand why we have the FOD prevention policies and practices we do. In the best maintenance units I've been in, FOD prevention was not a chore; it was part of the culture. It seemed

to permeate throughout the organization as the starting point for "Maintenance 101."

There are some very visible aspects of FOD prevention policies — like stopping your car at a FOD checkpoint and checking your tires for rocks, or participating in a FOD walk to ensure the flight line and aircraft taxiways are clear of any potentially damaging stones, bolts, or washers. Probably the most obvious part of these policies to an aircraft maintainer is tool control.

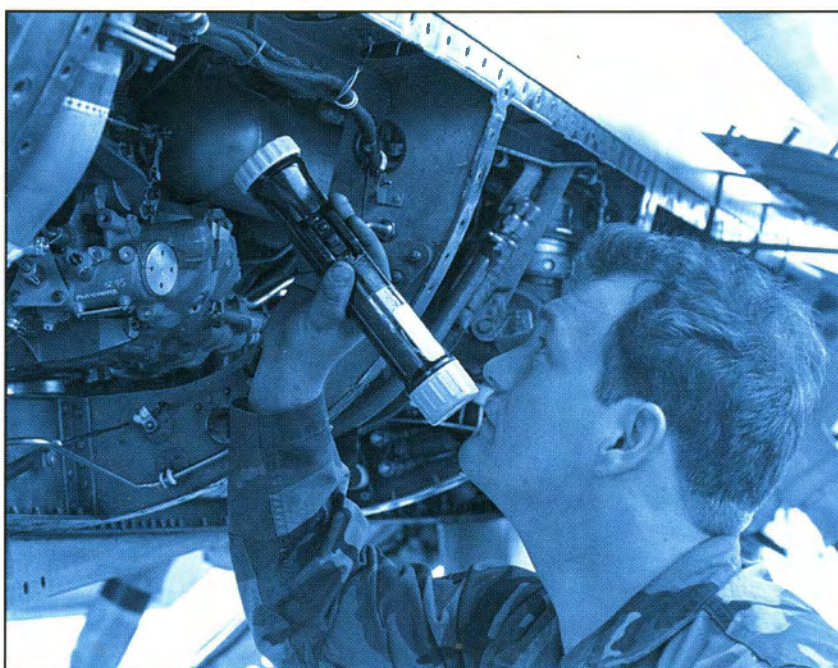
Paragraph 21 of ACCI 21-101, "Objective Wing Aircraft Maintenance," outlines the various requirements for tool control; and to an outsider, these conditions might seem a bit excessive or extreme. However, it is a problem in this arena of tool control that I must share with you. This problem arises in some of the best units, even those that work extra hard at FOD prevention and possibly even have a benchmark tool control program. Behind the scenes, beyond what meets the casual eye, is a subculture of tool

discipline breeches that pose a real threat to safe operations. I am speaking of sharing tools. Yes, a simple and generous act presents a serious FOD threat. Don't believe me? Let me illustrate my point with a true story.

I was approached by my pro super with a problem. (Note: I was much older at this time than in my introductory paragraph.) In the middle of the flying effort, a group of our engine technicians worked on four of our F-15s in sequential order. Three of the jets were on the flying schedule and ready for pilots to step for their second flight of the day. However, one of the engine techni-

cians discovered his flashlight was missing after working on the fourth aircraft. With the facts I had, I was confident that the flashlight could not be on any of the other three aircraft. The technician assured me it was used "only" on the fourth jet; and after drilling him with what seemed to be over a hundred questions, I was totally convinced that it was lost there.

In order to get a closer look at the suspect aircraft, I agreed that we should ground only the one jet from flying the second sortie. As you might guess, that jet was opened back up and checked by dozens of



maintainers with a fine tooth comb; and no flashlight was found. It remained a mystery until 5 days later, when the flashlight dropped out of an engine bay panel when opened for heavy maintenance. Get this... "it was on one of the three jets we cleared for flight!" In fact, that very jet flew four times, including a functional check flight where the pilot wrings it out to prove the jet was really repaired from some previous anomaly.

It didn't take long to determine who was working the jet that day, and I had a long talk with that particular crew chief. He was a good kid who

made a mistake. Instead of going all the way back to the support section (i.e., the tool crib) to get the tools he needed to finish preparing his jet, he asked the engine technician working the jet nearby if he could borrow a speed handle (a type of screw driver). The engine technician approved it. On the way to his jet, however, the crew chief helped himself to a "flashlight" as well as the speed handle. He forgot to return the flashlight, and the engine troop saw him return the speed handle. That's how it ended up on the jet we didn't ground.

How serious was the bullet we dodged? Well, as I said earlier in this article, FOD doesn't have to occur inside an engine to be catastrophic. FOD is a threat to flight controls, avionics, landing gear, fuel valves, and, yes, even the outside of an engine. The "lost" flashlight had bounced around in the engine bay, leaving dented linkage arms on the engine electronic control module, fire detection loop, bleed air ducts, as well as smaller fuel lines that seem to be all

over the place in the engine bay. Get the picture? We clearly dodged a "big" bullet! The guilty crew chief realized his mistake and took his disciplinary action with character and penitence, and even volunteered to brief every element's roll call on what he would have done different. I remember him telling me, "Captain, I could have easily been responsible for killing a pilot — or even worse — responsible for the lives of many young children and adults if it crashed into a kindergarten class or something." I had no doubt that this would be the last time he would ever let something like this happen to him in his career

as a maintenance troop.

That event really scared me. I'm not kidding. I gathered some key players in this event together in a room and asked them how this could happen. I became aware of how prevalent tool borrowing had become on my flight line. Once a tool is borrowed, all sorts of liability enters into the tool control equation. In the strictest sense, it is breach of tool discipline and should never be tolerated. But wait! Don't jump too fast! As I listened to what this group had to say, I began to realize that strictly forbidding it was not practical.

For example, three engine troops were dispatched to a jet to remove the engine, but only one of them signed the engine change tool kit out. Doesn't that mean the others are borrowing? You say, "But they're still at that same jet; that's different!" I disagree... because we often pulled one or two of those guys off that jet in a hurry to work a redball on a launching jet. See what I mean? How about a redball (maintenance performed on an aircraft with a pilot in it to correct a problem and avoid a ground abort) at the end of the runway (EOR)? No one expects the guy to get his own tool box before dispatching down there to rescue that mission. He borrows a tool from someone already there. You get the idea; if you think long enough, you can come up with several legitimate scenarios where borrowing a tool is not only warranted, but even necessary to continue the mission.

I was stuck. On the one hand, I felt compelled to eradicate tool borrowing. On the other hand, forbidding it entirely (assuming I could get everyone to stop) would make certain key processes in our mission impossible. The regulations are provocatively vague on the subject, as though they acknowledge this strange dynamic. After much deliberation, soul searching, and direct observation, I arrived at a breakthrough.

I realized that the vast majority of tool borrowing events were nothing more than poor planning and laziness. In eight out of ten times, I

saw someone turn to the option of borrowing a tool — it was because he failed to sign out the right tool kit, or he didn't want to lug the bigger tool box (with the complete set of tools needed), or when he realized he needed more tools for the job as it progressed, he simply thought that going all the way back to the support section was too much work. Worse than that, I realized it was my "experienced maintainers" that taught this to the newer troops! They were

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place in the engine bay.
Get the picture?*

convincing role models, teaching the wrong behavior. I will accept that there are times when reason dictates it is prudent to borrow a tool, but watch out! If the option is overutilized, you may have a serious tool discipline problem, and a Class A mishap in your near future. Do a health-check of your situation — the chain of events that leads to a mishap may already be started on one of your jets right now.

I would like to offer the following bits of advice to any maintainer, whether you are a worker or a supervisor:

1. Take a close look at the tool discipline culture in your unit. Do you have rose-colored glasses on, or can you see weak spots? Don't wait for a mishap to intervene. It's called leadership, no matter what rank you wear.

2. Take special note of when tools are borrowed from the guy who signed them out. Has the tool discipline degraded to the point where you are harboring unnecessary risk?

3. Ask the troops why they borrowed a tool, when you see it happening. You'll probably hear things like, "There aren't enough of these kits to go around," or "I just need it for a quick job; it's not worth going all the way back to the tool crib." Neither one of those statements should be tolerated. If there aren't enough of a certain kind of tool or a particular tool kit, buy more... **THERE IS MONEY FOR THAT!** If a guy can't seem to remember to bring the right set of tools to his jet to do his job, you can solve that problem too.

4. Lastly, ask the guy who lent the tool to convince you that he still has positive control of the tool. Tell him the story I shared above, or one of your own if you have one. Remind him that if they found his wrench in the wreckage, he'd be in a world of hurt.

If you are a supervisor reading this article, let me ask if you think a Safety Investigation Board (SIB) or an Accident Investigation Board (AIB) that found that proverbial wrench in the wreckage would overlook your role in allowing a poor tool discipline culture to exist on your flight line? Don't count on it. In fact, I would expect them to highlight it as a finding, and even call it "CAUSAL."

I was given a gift by getting my wake-up call without a mishap, although a mishap could certainly have resulted from our situation. I will pay much closer attention and do what needs to be done from now on. Will you? ■





Ground Safety Stats

ACC Losses for FY 98

(1 Oct 97 - 30 Sep 98)

Practice the principles of Risk Management both on and off duty.

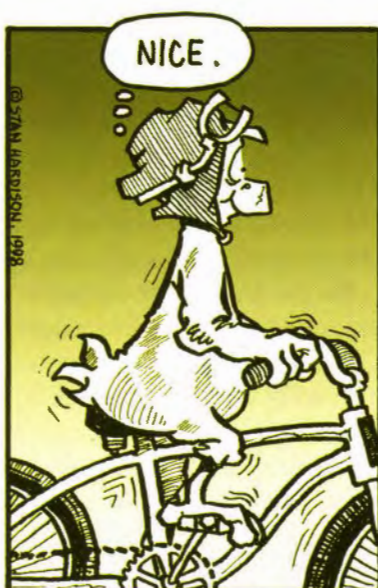
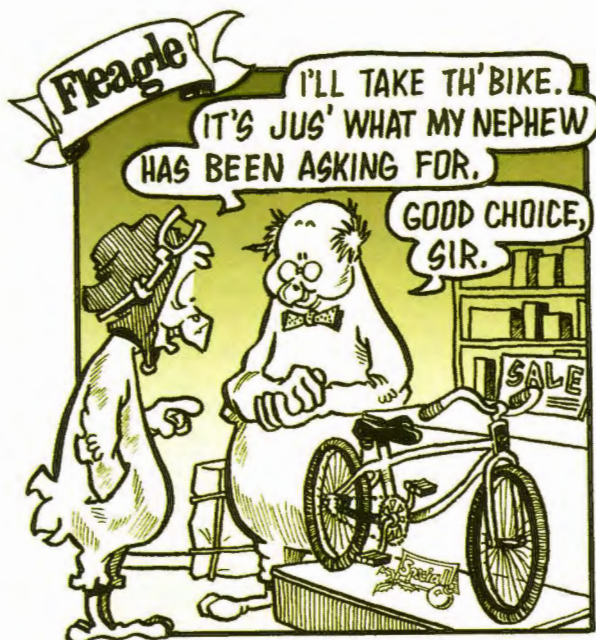
Ground Mishap Fatalities

8 AF	
9 AF	
12 AF	
DRU	

Number of Ground Mishaps/Dollar Losses

	Class A	Class B	Class C
8 AF	3/\$1,373,410	1/\$180,000	174/\$908,190
9 AF	5/\$650,000	1/\$345,309	154/\$970,386
12 AF	7/\$1,635,000	1/\$560,684	313/\$1,112,604
DRU	3/\$7,530,000	NONE	55/\$326,075
Total	18/\$11,163,410	3/\$1,085,993	696/\$3,317,205

Class A - Fatality; Permanent Total Disability; Property Damage \$1,000,000 or more
 Class B - Permanent Partial Disability; Property Damage between \$200,000 and \$1,000,000
 Class C - Lost Workday; Property Damage between \$10,000 and \$200,000



Monthly Awards

PILOT SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*Capt Christopher Prusak
71 FS, 1 FW
Langley AFB VA 23665*

Photo
Unavailable

On 22 Jun 98, Capt Prusak was returning an F-15C single-ship from a Maple Flag exercise in Cold Lake, Canada, to the 1st Fighter Wing at Langley AFB VA. While en route from Sioux Falls SD to Langley AFB, and approximately 30 NM west of Wright-Patterson AFB OH at FL 430, Capt Prusak noticed an oily burning smell in the cockpit and started to experience an eye irritation. He gangloaded the oxygen regulator (100% oxygen) and coordinated an immediate descent with Air Traffic Control. Capt Prusak soon noticed severe vibrations directly under the ejection seat. He shut down all non-essential avionics to reduce the

demands on the F-15 electrical and environmental control system (ECS). Within 2 minutes of the first oily smell indications, the ECS turbine failed as Capt Prusak descended through FL390. At that time, Capt Prusak declared an IFE with ATC and started a 70-degree nose low emergency descent as cabin pressure started to increase rapidly. Capt Prusak was able to descend below FL250 before cabin pressure exceeded 25,000 ft. Once below FL180, he accomplished required emergency checklist items for ECS failure and coordinated with ATC for an emergency divert to Wright-Patterson AFB. The rapid emergency descent from FL390 resulted in the entire F-15 canopy fogging over. With no available defog system (ECS system shut down), Capt Prusak safely recovered the F-15 to an uneventful full-stop landing with very little forward visibility outside the cockpit. Only after clearing the runway and opening the canopy was Capt Prusak able to regain forward visibility for taxi and shut down. At Wright-Patterson AFB, Capt Prusak was examined by a flight surgeon for rapid decompression sickness and given a clean bill of health. Capt Prusak's quick reactions to declare an IFE and start an aggressive descent to below FL180 prevented the possibility of incapacitation and possible loss of a valuable Air Force combat asset.

AIRCREW SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Lt Col Gary C. Webb, Maj Richard J. Dennee
333 FS, 4 FW
Seymour Johnson AFB NC



On 25 Jun 98, Maj Dennee and Lt Col Webb were departing as number two of an F-15 two-ship Night Surface Attack Tactics instructor upgrade sortie for Col Webb. Climbing through a haze layer that extended up to 3,000 feet MSL, the crew observed all video displays disappear including the Head Up Display. This left only standby instrumentation

available to the crew. Maj Dennee attempted to reset the Multi-Purpose Display Processor and the Central Computer by all methods available. Visibility was good above the haze layer and enough residual sunlight enabled the crew to rejoin on the flight lead. Maj Dennee dumped fuel until reaching 9,000 pounds remaining and commenced an approach on the wing of the flight lead. Anticipating the descent into the haze layer, Maj Dennee requested the tower increase the Visual Approach Slope Indicators compensating for marginal glide slope indications on final. As the flight began their approach, they entered the haze layer at 3,000 feet and poor visibility conditions. Although they could see lights below them, the crew did not pick up the runway until 1.5 miles from touchdown. The flight lead continued the approach until 300 feet AGL and cleared Maj Dennee and Col Webb to land single ship. Due to the awkward location of the standby instrumentation and the marginal inflight visibility, Col Webb called out airspeeds, altitudes, DME, and approach information while Maj Dennee focused on the runway and glide slope. Maj Dennee executed a flawless approach and landing and taxied back to parking without incident. The combined teamwork, airmanship, flying skills, and coolness under pressure led to the successful recovery of an irreplaceable Air Force combat asset.

WEAPONS SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*SSgt Joseph Massey, SrA Benny Rummel, A1C Jason Kelsey
334 FS, 4 FW
Seymour Johnson AFB NC*

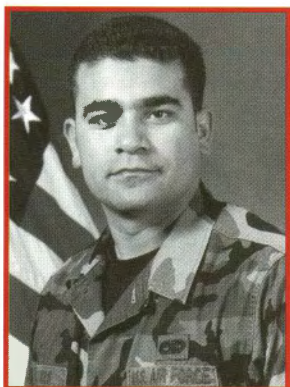


During a routine aircraft de-arming of an F-15E, A1C Kelsey noticed a slight protrusion of an MJU-10 flare from the canister. Recognizing that a partially expended flare is the most dangerous explosive condition, the load crew quickly sprung into action. Amn Kelsey and fellow crew member SrA Rummel began evacuation procedures of non-essential personnel from the area. SSgt Massey (weapons load crew chief) alerted the Maintenance Operations Control Center and initiated a ground emergency. Explosive Ordnance Disposal and fire fighting agencies arrived and took control of the situation. Sgt Massey and crew are to be commended for their rapid response to a potentially disastrous situation.

Their keen sense of urgency ensured the safety of the entire shift, by quickly evacuating them to a predetermined location, immediately upon the discovery of the danger. Pre-task briefings accomplished by Sgt Massey left no room for interpretation, and guidance was followed by the weapons load crew members exactly as cited by the load crew chief. The actions of the weapons load crew are ones to be emulated by all personnel who handle, transport, load, or unload munitions. Rapid response to all emergency situations is the key to personnel safety and a major contributor to mishap prevention.

FLIGHT LINE SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*SrA Christopher M. Farias
552 AGS, 552 ACW
Tinker AFB OK*



SrA Farias was performing a pre-engine run visual inspection on the number three engine of an E-3B Sentry Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft. He was called upon to open the cowling after several other people had failed to open it. Rather than just forcing the cowling, he inspected the latch and noticed a bolt head showing through a drain hole in the bottom of the engine cowling near the latch. The bolt had become wedged in the latch assembly causing it to be jammed shut. Upon opening the cowling, he discovered the bolt, nut, and two washers laying in the cowling directly below the fuel control. Concerned with this unusual situation, he searched relentlessly and found the forward cowling maintenance support arm was missing all mounting hardware. He tested the arm for security and it easily came free in his hand. When the cowling is closed, this arm is located directly beside the fuel control throttle cable. Had this arm vibrated loose during

flight, it could have easily lodged in the throttle cable linkage. The close proximity of the arm and the linkage made this a distinct possibility. SrA Farias' close attention to detail averted a potential engine failure during a critical phase of flight. His dedication to continue searching until locating the exact origin of the hardware directly reflects his professionalism and integrity as an Aerospace Propulsion Journeyman for the 552d Air Control Wing and the 552d Aircraft Generation Squadron. He is truly deserving of this prestigious award and has established a standard of excellence that all aircraft journeymen and technicians should emulate.

GROUND SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*Capt Shannon M. Cooper
347 SUPS, 347 WG
Moody AFB GA*



Capt Cooper manages the 347th Supply Squadron Safety Program. His aggressive approach as unit safety representative directly contributes to the success of the 347th Wing's overall mission. He is responsible for managing all aspects of the squadron's mishap prevention program, which incorporates approximately 300 military and civilian personnel. His duties cover a wide range of mishap prevention activities using a "no nonsense" approach. He completely consolidated the unit's entire mishap prevention program, creating computerized safety-related materials to be used throughout the squadron. This program includes a tracking system for monthly and quarterly safety inspections, covering 28 different work sections. He also developed and implemented briefing guides for personnel using the Supply Squadron facilities to acquaint them with general operation and safety concerns. Taking a careful systematic approach, he created checklists for each section to use which helped to standardize the squadron's overall safety operation. The checklists allow newly assigned functional managers and supervisors to quickly take charge without spending numerous man-hours defining and redefining safety program criteria. He increased safety awareness base-wide by developing and distributing more than 800 safety-related pamphlets on a variety of topics, covering on- and off-duty activities. Pamphlets were made available to base personnel during several squadron fund raisers involving cookouts and washing cars. Capt Cooper's personal involvement, strong aggressive management, and initiative contributed to his unit receiving only one discrepancy during their annual safety inspection. They received no discrepancies during the wing's external Environmental Compliance Assessment Management Program inspection. His exemplary performance as a unit safety representative has established one of the best squadron safety programs and can be used as a "yardstick" by which other units can be judged. Capt Cooper's commitment and concerns to safety and resource protection make him extremely deserving of this award.

A Toast of

*Maj Jordan A. Wommack, ANG
150 FW/IN
Kirtland AFB NM*

Remembrance

I grew up the son of a fighter pilot. My father flew the F-86 in the Air Force, and then flew the F-80, F-100 (with 246 combat missions), and A-7 in succession in the New Mexico Air National Guard until his retirement from the military in 1987 as a brigadier general with over 5000 hours in single-seat, single-engine fighters. I serve as the Chief of Intelligence for the unit and take great pride following my father's example in service to the unit. Growing up around fighter pilots, I became aware at a young age that they are in a very dangerous business. I was 6 years old when dad and a bunch of the guys were called up to serve a year in Vietnam flying F-100s out of Tuy Hoa Air Base. During that tour, Captain Mike Adams got shot down over Laos, and Major Bobby Neeld and First Lieutenant Mitch Lane never made it back in from the

South China Sea. Since then, our unit has lost pilots to training missions as well.

The loss of a pilot has a devastating impact on those who knew him, and I have known that loss — both as a child and an adult. When Lieutenant Colonel Hugh H. "Cato" Williams was killed during a training mission in bad weather on 11 January 1992, it hit me at a very personal level. Cato and my dad were best friends, and he had been like an uncle to me from a young age. The nickname "Cato" came during a summer camp trip shortly after he and my dad met. Being the young guy, he was tasked with rental car duties and showed up with a long body green Chrysler. Dad and the other guys were reminded of the sleek automobile used by the Green Hornet gang on the classic television series, and the driver's nickname stuck. Cato rose through

the ranks to become the squadron commander and was respected as a consummate fighter pilot and leader when his life ended on that fateful day in '92. In many ways, Cato defined an era for our unit through the strength of his personality and effectiveness of his leadership. The toast "Here's to Cato" has become commonplace



Lt Col Hugh H. "Cato" Williams

since his death. While I take pride in uttering those words, they seem somewhat empty now that many unit pilots never knew the man.

Paying honest and due tribute to those who have left us is very difficult; as I again recently found out upon the untimely death of Lieutenant Patrick J. "Sherman" Potter on 22 April 1998, whose nickname came courtesy of another classic television show — M*A*S*H. Pat died shortly after returning from LANTIRN school, while performing a complicated bombing run at one of our local ranges. I had worked with him on mission planning that week and was floored when the news came about 3 hours after I had said good-bye to him for the day. Upon the news of the accident, some friends and I gathered; and memories of Cato and all those "why's" circled around the room. While we couldn't help but be reminded of Cato's death, some remarked that we should keep the two events separate in our thoughts in order to properly mourn for Sherm. None of us

wanted for him to be overshadowed by Cato's memory. At Sherm's funeral, family members and friends shared personal stories; and since then, everyone has dealt with the blow as best they can.

We now drink a toast to Sherm when gathered, just like Cato. But as time passed, the idea came to me that they deserved more than a simple "Here's to..." toast. As I let

the thought expand to the fact that 50 years worth of courageous fighter pilots who went too early are honored in that way, the following lines started to form themselves. After a couple of drafts, I showed the poem to dad; and he liked it, so I thought it would be nice to share it with those who might appreciate it. As a "Toast of Remembrance," this one's for Cato, Sherman, and too many others...

A Toast of Remembrance

*For those of us who have taken off
Whom fate never allowed to land,
I now ask that all who are present
Raise a toast of remembrance in hand.*

*While we are all present to laugh and talk,
The silence of their absence speaks
Of a warrior's oath to his nation —
And the promises that he keeps:*

*To support and defend Truth and Honor,
To place service before themselves —
To avoid fear and hesitation,
Where the demon of complacency dwells.*

*They achieved the dreams of so many,
Though their physical presence departs,
The words "Duty", "Honor," and "Country"
Remain as an echo in all of our hearts.*

*May their memory be enshrined in us always —
May their hopes be played out as we strive
For by honoring those now departed
We forever keep them alive.*

- Major Jordy Wommack



Lt Patrick J. "Sherman" Potter

Editorial Comment

Major Wommack's article reminds each of us of the absolute and permanent nature of the loss of a comrade or loved one. While respectfully remembering them at social gatherings is very commendable, nothing we say or do can bring them back.

Although many of the duties we perform are dangerous and the risk of injury or death is ever present, we have access to methods and "tools" to minimize those risks. Each time we make an effort to honor and remember fellow airmen, who have lost their lives on or off duty, our minds should be energized with thoughts of how we can prevent a reoccurrence of a similar mishap. Although we hear a lot about ORM these days (and rightly so), there are a multitude of other critical factors in mishap prevention; leadership, supervision, training, proficiency, and maintenance just to name a few. Each of us may not be involved in all of these areas, but it's safe to say we deal in at least two or more. None of us works in total isolation where our efforts and actions affect no one but ourselves. So, the bottom line is that we all have a degree of responsibility for each other's safety. Accept that challenge and do something about it!

Major Wommack is justifiably proud of the history and heritage of his unit. He provided the following write-up as backup information. In reading it, I decided to include it in the article since we often fail to recognize how Guardsmen contribute to the mission "when the goin' gets tough." I think anybody would like to have the "TACOS" on their side!

-Ed.

150th Fighter Wing/188th Fighter Squadron Unit History

The proud heritage of the 188th Fighter Squadron began in January 1943 when the 621st Bombardment Squadron was constituted. The unit was redesignated the 507th Fighter-Bomber Squadron in 1944. Combat sorties were flown during World War II in the European Theater of Operations, and the unit was deactivated on 9 November 1945. On 24 May 1946, the unit was redesignated the 188th Fighter Squadron and allotted to the Air National Guard (ANG) stationed at Kirtland Field NM. The unit was equipped with the P-51 "Mustang" fighter, B-26 "Invader" light bomber, and T-6 "Texan" trainer. In December of 1950, unit members were absorbed by Air Defense Command for the Korean Conflict and flew combat sorties in the F-86 "Sabrejet," P-51 "Mustang," and AT-6 "Mosquito." Piloting the F-86, First Lieutenants Robert Lucas and Joseph Murray were killed in action flying close air support missions while Captain Francis Williams and First Lieutenant Robert Sands were credited with three MiG-15 kills each. Unit members flew a total of over 1400 combat sorties and were released from federal active duty in November of 1952. The unit received F-80 "Shooting Star" fighters in August of 1953; and in 1957, the unit was redesignated as the 150th Tactical Fighter Group,

with the 188th Tactical Fighter Squadron assigned. In 1958, the unit earned distinction by becoming the first in the ANG to transition to a Century Series fighter aircraft — the F-100A "Super Sabre." The unit left Air Defense Command in July of 1964, joining Tactical Air Command. On 4 June 1968, the unit deployed to Tuy Hoa Air Base, Republic of Vietnam, assigned to the 31st Tactical Fighter Wing. Captain Michael Adams was killed in action while flying a mission over Laos; Major Bobby Neeld and First Lieutenant Mitchell Lane were lost over the South China Sea and remain listed as missing in action. The unit flew over 6000 combat sorties and was released from federal active duty in June 1969, receiving the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with a bronze "V" for valor. While stationed at Tuy Hoa, unit pilots chose the callsign "TACO" as a replacement to the Air Force assigned callsign "Squid;" thus, the famous unit nickname was born. In January 1971, the unit established DET-1, a detachment of F-100 fighters stationed at Holloman AFB NM with the mission of supporting United States Army Air Defense programs. This detachment returned to Kirtland AFB in the spring of 1974 and has continued operations as the Defense Systems Evaluation (DSE) contingent of the New Mexico

ANG. That same year, the unit was distinguished to be the first in the ANG to receive the A-7D "Corsair II" aircraft. Assisting in development phases, the unit was also the first in the ANG to receive the Low Altitude Night Attack (LANA) modification to the A-7. Shortly after transition to the A-7, the 188th was the first fighter squadron in the ANG to be assigned to the prestigious Rapid Deployment Force, now known as United States Central Command. In May of 1992, the unit transitioned to the F-16C Block 40 "Fighting Falcon" and remains the only ANG unit to employ the Low-Altitude Navigation and Targeting Infra-Red for Night (LANTIRN) system. Following the Air Force reorganization in June of 1992, Tactical Air Command became Air Combat Command and the 150th Fighter Group dropped the word "Tactical," as did the 188th Fighter Squadron. In 1995, the unit provided pilot augmentees to the 31st Fighter Wing stationed at Aviano Air Base, Italy, for Operation Deliberate Force, where unit pilots flew combat sorties in the skies over Bosnia. On 1 October 1995, the 150th Fighter Group was redesignated the 150th Fighter Wing, with the DSE contingent and 188th Fighter Squadron assigned. The "TACOs" of the 188th Fighter Squadron are very proud of their unit history and are recognized worldwide as a premier fighter unit which remains at the tip of the sword in defense of our great nation. ■



DoD photo by A1C Greg L. Davis

Drinking & Driving Don't Mix!

Consider the Risks ...

- 24% of young male drivers involved in fatal crashes had been drinking.
- Alcohol-related crashes account for over 40% of total traffic fatalities.
- 30% of fatally injured motorcyclists are intoxicated.
- Of young drivers who were drinking and killed in crashes, 82% are unrestrained.
- On average, an alcohol-related fatality occurs every 30 minutes; and a person is injured in an alcohol-related crash every 2 minutes.

Consider the Consequences...

- Increased auto insurance rates.
- Repair or replacement of a crashed vehicle.
- Suspension or revocation of your driver's license.
- Potential civil lawsuits filed against you.
- Damaged career and punitive action.
- ***Injury ... or death ...*** to yourself, your loved ones, or others.

**Make this holiday season a safe one for you and your family.
Don't drink and drive — it's not worth the risk.**