

# THE COMBAT EDGE

February 1998



The Combat Edge February 1998

A large, weathered wooden sign is mounted on a rocky cliff face. It features the names of four presidents: George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and Andrew Jackson, each with a portrait. The sign is partially obscured by the word 'SAFETY' in large, bold, white letters with a black outline. The sign is set against a backdrop of a desert landscape with mountains and a clear sky.

SAFETY





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## CONTENTS

**FEBRUARY 1998**

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**About the cover:** In celebration of "President's Day" this month, our magazine cover has an artist's concept depicting the "rock solid" emphasis that "safety" needs throughout all of Air Combat Command's operations. The unique photograph over Mount Rushmore shows a formation of F-16s assigned to the 114th Fighter Wing (Call Sign "LOBOS") of the South Dakota Air National Guard. The illustration reaffirms ACC's safety goal of protecting our people and preserving combat capability through aggressive mishap prevention and risk management.

## FEATURES

### 4 THE LEGEND OF TUCK'S LUCK

Major Brian S. Cumming, USAFR  
953d Reserve Support Squadron, USACOM  
Norfolk VA

### 16 TO CLIMB THE SKY (A tribute to aviation history)

Written by: Col Jay B. Welsh, USAF (Retired), ACC/CSV, Langley AFB VA  
Illustrated by: SSgt Dave White, *The Combat Edge*

## DEPARTMENTS

FLIGHT SAFETY

8

WEAPONS SAFETY

24

GROUND SAFETY

14

ORM

6

AWARDS

11, 18, 27

CHOCK TALK

30

ACCOLADES

26

FLEAGLE

23

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# ACCent on Safety

**H**i! Thanks for joining us for another issue and a special hello to those joining us on our new online edition (find us through the ACC homepage at <http://www.acc.af.mil/public/combat-edge/>). Whether in print or on the web, we hope to serve you by dishing up the best safety information and personal stories in a plain old, really good read.

This month, I want to talk to you about what I have come to believe are the three most dangerous words in the English language. I'm talking about, "one," "just," and "more." Okay, okay, I can sense a lot of quizzical folks out there. After all, these words aren't much more threatening than the words, "Mom's," "belt," or "Marine Corps" (maybe this last is just a wee bit threatening). However, put those latter words together in the right order, "Mom's Marine Corps belt," and I can tell you that they were threat enough to keep my brother and I toeing the line throughout our childhood. In the same way, put together as, "Just one more," I think you've hit on a phrase that ought to set off enough bells, whistles, and flashing lights to put a railroad crossing to shame. Let me give you some examples:

- The flight line maintenance supervisors were in a major league pow-wow, working out how to fill the gaps in the daily schedule. There was one tail left available, but it had been running high iron and nickel in the oil sample for a couple days. Finally, the Pro Super made his decision, "Let's fly it just one more time and see what happens." — The next we saw that jet, it's broken, mangled remains, including the seized engine, were dangling from a crane lifting it off the barge that had fished it out of the Gulf.

- The 2 vs 1 air combat training sortie had gone fairly well through the first several engagements. But, whether he'd just missed having his Wheaties that morning or what, Blue 2 was really growing weary of pulling G's. He started to say something about it, but thought, "Well, there's just one more engagement. I can hack it." — He woke up to see a windscreen full of HUGE rocks getting HUGER every heartbeat. Thankfully, he was alert enough to find the handles, but a perfectly good jet dashed itself into a jillion bits all over the high desert rocks.

- The last couple weeks had been a real killer with a thousand extraneous things intruding on our stalwart aviator's mind. At last, he was thankful to just be airborne and get back to the simpler pleasures of a well fought 1 vs 1 BFM ride. But this one was different. Whether he was really off his game, or the jet's handling was not quite right — or maybe a bit of both — he was barely holding his own. Well, he thought, there's just one more fight and then we go home. — I think you can put together the rest ...

You know, I have a hard time believing that there is anything out there that just one more of will make a hill o' beans of difference. Certainly, our national security doesn't swing on the merits of just one more training sortie, bombing pass, BFM engagement, or whatever. So okay, folks, now it's time to trot out that Operational Risk Management training you've had. What was that Step 6 again? Oh yeah, "Supervise and Review." That means, when things have changed, be ready to change your risk assessment as well. If things aren't quite right, there's probably an elevated risk involved. You have to ask yourself, "Is the benefit of just one more \_\_\_\_\_ really worth doing?" I'm here to tell you, if you're considering "just one more," the answer ought to be clear ... "JUST SAY NO!"

**Ya'll take care; fly, drive, and be safe!**

*Colonel Turk Marshall  
Chief of Safety*



# The Legend of Tuck's Luck

*Major Brian S. Cumming, USAFR  
953d Reserve Support Squadron, USACOM  
Norfolk VA*

**R**obert Sanford Tuck was recognized by his fellow Royal Air Force (RAF) pilots as one of the great fighter pilots of WWII. He rose humbly, teetering one sortie away from washing out of flying school to tallying 29 victories and 8 probable kills, making him the eighth-ranked RAF ace. Along with his great courage and hard-won flying skill, Tuck also had another trait working for him. That was luck — “incredible luck” — which many people believed had enabled him to escape from a multitude of life-threatening combat situations unharmed. “Tuck’s Luck” became a legend in the Royal Air Force.

Ironically, Tuck had become a seasoned aviator and effective combat pilot after learning to shun his own luck. An incident early in his flying career convinced him that luck was something he ought never lean on. While on a formation training flight just 3,000 feet over

Sussex, England, in his biplane fighter, Tuck had a midair collision after one of his formation members flew in front of him. After impact, he was pinned in the airplane until the wings finally broke off, taking the canopy with them and allowing Tuck a last-second bailout! He knew it was only by the skin of his teeth he had survived. After that incident, Tuck’s attitude changed forever. He no longer took needless risks in flying. His historian wrote, “... he had learned that in military flying there were unpredictable factors that killed the best and worst pilots with terrible impartiality.”

As if we have not learned from Tuck, we aviators are continually coerced to take “needless risks” at times. Every so often, we have allowed ourselves to be rushed by some external pressure. Let’s face it — anyone who has flown airplanes as flight lead/wingman, pilot/copilot or any other crew member has “rushed to comply”

with some type of restriction or constraint. Ever been rushed to get the flight airborne to meet a “fragged” range or tanker time? What about more subtle situations like meeting a controller-imposed altitude/fix crossing restriction, or dealing with a last minute runway change in Instrument Meteorological Conditions (IMC)? I’ve been there ... you’ve been there. (If you have not been there, get ready ... because your turn is probably coming up!)

As a first officer for a regional airline on the East coast, I have noticed a common (and refreshing) thread in the operation: every captain I’ve flown with refuses to be rushed. Despite routine operations into airports like Boston, Kennedy, La Guardia, and Detroit, 30 minutes or less to “turn” the airplane on the ground, leg lengths often shorter than an hour, and all the weather complications East of the Blue Ridge, these guys have obviously learned Tuck’s lesson



about avoiding “needless risks,” such as rushing to meet that next departure time. The foundation for this characteristic “refuse-to-be-rushed” attitude is a rock-solid Cockpit Resource Management (CRM) program that stresses, among other things, the importance of pacing the flight to prevent errors of omission or commission. (This first-hand exposure to CRM only reinforces my notion of CRM’s continued importance to the Air Force.)

One aspect of this program includes cockpit briefings as a tool for pacing the flight properly. A comprehensive series of briefings are accomplished at specific phases of each flight in the same way. Although this sounds obvious and familiar at first glance, the checklists are the product of research both in the simulator and “on the line.” They cover key areas unique to the airplane, the airline’s operation, and integrate with normal cockpit checklists to enhance their viability. Use of these

CRM checklists at low workload times on the ground and in flight inherently promotes prior planning and consideration of variables ahead of time to avoid last-minute decision making or reliance upon plain old luck to ensure a safe flight. This improves crew coordination, situational awareness, and keeps everyone “ahead of the airplane.” A safe, efficient, cockpit environment is the product of a flight crew that knows when to say “standby” or “negative” when asked to rush or comply with a clearance that affects safety of flight.

No matter who we fly for, we owe ourselves as aviators to resist that pressure to rush or comply. Why trade preparation, cross-check, or procedural compliance in an effort to make up for factors that were probably beyond your control in the first place? It has been said, “The difference between being prepared and professional versus being unprepared and sloppy can be measured in minutes.”

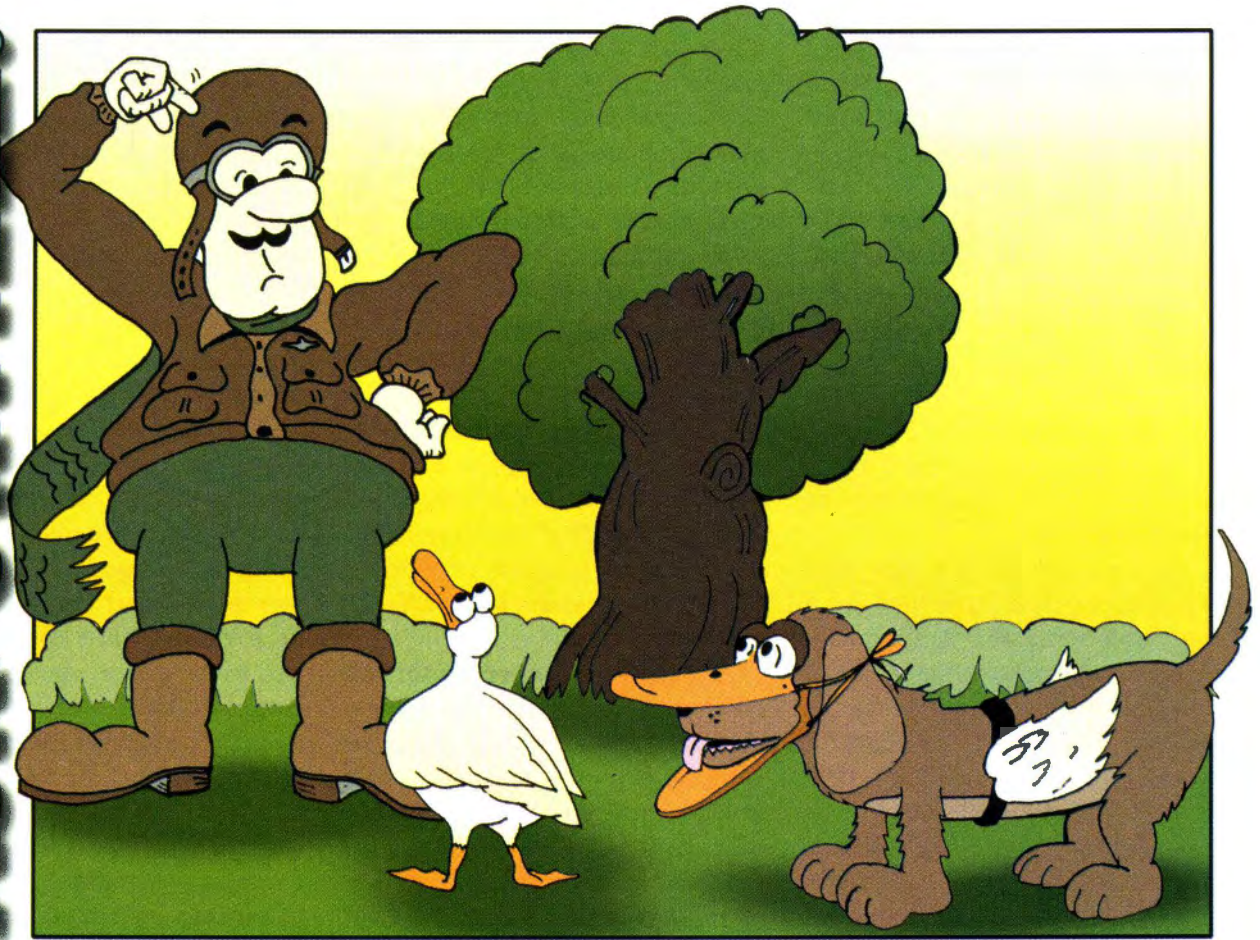
However, the question is — which minutes? It possibly could be the minutes you are trying to make up in order to get back on schedule. If you pursue those minutes in a hasty rush, you are relying on luck to keep you from making a serious (albeit unintentional) error in judgment, planning, or just about anything else.

Making the right call and refusing to be rushed is essential to a safe flight. Sure, there are always times we need to pick up the pace temporarily; but when you sense your limits will soon be exceeded, it’s time to speak up, slow down, and refuse to complete the notorious chain of events that could lead to an aircraft incident or worse ... an accident. Refusing to rush is using CRM — not luck — to put time on your side! To fly any other way would be to rely completely on “Tuck’s luck,” of which some people shake their heads and say, “Tuck’s luck — some have it; some don’t.” ■





# ASK ORVILLE!



Our letter this month “waddles” in from the Great Lakes area. The skeptical major writes:

*Dear Orville:*

I have been in the military for almost 20 years now. I enlisted in the Army right out of high school. After a couple years of “being all I could be, and less,” I went back to school, earned my bachelor’s degree, and received a commission in the Air Force. The bottom line is that I have a little larger perspective than the average bear. But speaking of animals, I have always held this philosophy: “If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck — chances are, it’s a duck!”

This brings me to the reason that I fired this letter off to you in the first place. I have seen many management techniques and leadership styles come and go. They have catchy acronyms, fancy packaging, a painful and costly spin-up period, usually do more damage than good, and they have the life span of a maggot. I have to be honest here Orville; as I watch ORM making its debut, I detect a familiar “waddle” to its walk.

*Major I.C.A. Duck*

*Dear Major Duck:*

You are not the first to make comparisons between ORM and previous management and leadership programs, and you will likely not be the last. In fact, I am doing a study on a recently detected disease that appears to be infecting some units around the command; it is currently being diagnosed as the ORMWAS disease. ORMWAS stands for “ORM Wait And See.” You can tell if you or anyone in your unit is infected by the ORMWAS disease by this simple test:



- If you think that ORM is hanging charts and posters on a wall — you might have the ORMWAS disease.
- If you think that ORM is a collection of books on your shelf — you might have the ORMWAS disease.
- If you think that ORM was created in order to give the Inspector General something to replace the Quality Air Force Assessment (QAFA) — you may well suffer from the ORMWAS disease.
- If you have the attitude that you have always done ORM and there is nothing in it for you — you might have the ORMWAS disease.
- If you think that ORM is going away in your life time — you just might have the ORMWAS disease.
- And most importantly, if you think that ORM is complex, and you are going to have to master a new vocabulary — you quite likely have the ORMWAS disease.

But Major, here is the kicker; nothing could be easier than ORM — in theory or practice. Simply stated, ORM is:

1. Determining what could go wrong!
2. Determining how bad it could be!
3. Determining what you can do about it!
4. Selecting the best option from the alternatives you identified in step 3!

5. Putting your selected option into practice!
6. Making sure that your selected option is working!

That's it. No gimmicks, catches, or fine print. Anyone can do it, in whatever time they have available.

But wait Major, we have made the ORM approach even simpler. I don't know about you ... but when I am assigned a task or have a problem to solve, I want to know how other people have successfully dealt with similar issues in the past. You, too? Then read on, there's more!

To make ORM even simpler, we have assembled for your personal use an absolutely free ORM cookbook that contains only the finest, proven recipes for the successful accomplishment of each of the above, already ridiculously simple steps. The tools and techniques contained in this single-source document will literally walk you through the six steps. How do you take advantage of this once-in-a-lifetime fantastic offer you

ask? We anticipated your question and need and have, therefore, placed a copy of this valuable cookbook on the Air Force Electronic Publications Library (AFEPL). As much as we whined, they would not let us call it the "ORM Cookbook." They said, "Sorry — no exceptions." Anyway, you will find this exceptional tool under the heading of AFP 91-215 "Operational Risk Management (ORM) Guidelines and Tools" dated 1 Dec 97.

Many units in your command are already cooking up success by using the recipes in AFP 91-215. Don't be left behind by falling prey to the "Wait And See" disease. Step up to the ORM plate today, and hit a home run for you, your unit, and the command. Then tell us about it so we can share your unique recipe with others. Keep those cards and letters flying in. ■

*Orville R. Mudd  
ORM Dogfight Veteran  
ACC Office of Safety*

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# The Lowest of Low Approaches

*Anonymous*

There I was ... preparing to fly another routine B-1B Formal Training Unit (FTU) training sortie. The sortie was planned as an early morning departure for low level terrain following and simulated weapon delivery activity. The profile after low level included refueling, then return to base for an hour of beating the pattern. The

only exception to an otherwise vanilla sortie was the addition of a taxi-back landing to pick up another set of pilots to go beat the pattern for another 2 hours, then do a full stop.

The pilot team on the first half of the mission was well versed in "Bone" operations with a fully qualified, senior in-

structor pilot (IP) and a fully qualified, fairly senior, second pilot. The aft station included a senior instructor Defensive Systems Officer (DSO) who was receiving training on his initial sortie to get checked out as an Offensive Systems Officer (OSO). The last person on the





crew was myself, a senior instructor OSO charged with in-flight instruction of the student OSO.

The mission took off on time, and we flew a classic "black line" sortie that most folks just dream about. The weather was absolutely clear, and the student OSO was doing a real fine job on his initial sortie. The low level and the air refueling went as briefed, and the first hour of pattern time went by quickly. Needless to say, it was easy to relax a bit and let the student experiment with his new equipment.

The full-stop landing and taxi-back went off without a hitch. The pilots for the first half of the mission got off at the designated Engine Running Crew Change (ERCC) area, and in turn we gained two new pilots. The next IP was fairly new to the FTU, and he brought a new student pilot with him. The back half of the mission was to be used to help the student pilot work up his "aimpoint" for landings.

The next half of the mission started out well, with no real problems other than the student pilot working very hard to get his proficiency. We accomplished several instrument approaches and then went to the visual pattern to work on landings. As a technique during pattern work, I use the Central Integrated Test System (CITS) located in the aft station to back up the pilot team. The CITS can be likened to a "computerized flight engineer" and can be used to diagnose aircraft malfunctions as well as tell at a glance the status of the Bone's various

subsystems. For pattern work, I insert codes into the CITS to ascertain the position of the landing gear handle, flap setting, and the nose gear downlock. These codes fluctuate dynamically in response to control inputs and can be seen readily by both aft station crewmembers.

Approximately 90 minutes

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*We were beginning now  
to run short of ballast  
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Normal procedure called  
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aft to 20 degrees to  
compensate.*

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into our second sortie, crew fatigue was beginning to be a factor for myself and the student OSO. A full initial sortie, combined with the repetitiveness of going around the flag pole was getting to be a problem. However, the student pilot needed the work, and having a good jet and good weather seemed like something not to waste.

We were beginning now to run short of ballast fuel for Center of Gravity (CG) management. Normal procedure called for the pilots to sweep the wings from 15 degrees (fully forward) aft to 20 degrees to compensate. This procedure required me to "dump" out the three codes I had been monitoring in the pattern and insert the two codes that monitor the sweep of the left and right wing. After putting the codes in, the IP swept the wings to 20 degrees. I knew from previous experience that after sweeping the wings to 20 we would be forced to land soon due to lack of fuel. I checked my watch and saw that our scheduled landing time was in about 20 minutes. With that in mind and also the fact that I'm not required to monitor the gear handle and the other codes, I elected not to put them back in. Besides, the pilot team was doing well given the instruction that was going on. During our time in the pattern, more Bones, KC-135s, T-38s, and C-130s arrived. These extra aircraft in the pattern made for a real zoo on the radios and an extra clearing problem for the pilots since we were in the visual pattern. The student pilot had been flying the jet the entire time, and fatigue was beginning to be a problem for him as well. Conditions were now right for our near mishap approach.

We were now downwind for our umpteenth approach and landing. Approaching the perch, tower cleared us for a touch-and-go landing. The student pilot announced he was withholding the gear in order to



turn inside a T-38 on final. The IP in the left seat acknowledged the call and continued clearing left for the T-38 while the student concentrated on turning right base for the runway. Rolled out on final, the student and the IP resumed their work with shifting aimpoints and never brought their eyes back into the cockpit. I remember a "Gear, Flaps, Slats" call being done, and not paying too much attention other than check our descent rate and approach speed on final. However, we still had no gear.

Approximately 100 feet in the air, I began to realize that something was not right. I looked over at the radar set and saw it was firing down the runway. I checked the airspeed and it was right on. I now glanced back at the radar altimeter and saw 30 feet. Since the Bone has gear on the deck at 20 feet on the radar altimeter in the landing attitude, I grabbed a handhold to prepare for landing.

Almost instantly with grabbing my handhold, tower advised with words to the effect "B-1, no gear, go around!" The crew's reaction was immediate to say the least. The IP took control of the jet, applied maximum afterburner, and steadied the aircraft for the go around. In the meantime, we continued to settle onto the runway. An observer out by the old alert facility later told me that a 6-foot-tall person could not have walked under the aircraft without being struck down. The last second warning from the control tower accompanied by the immediate response of the IP with afterburner allowed us to escape

with everything — but our wits. Needless to say, our next approach was one to a full stop!

What caused this near mishap? There are several factors that I can point out.

1. **Crew fatigue.** The aft station crew members had flown a full profile sortie and were well into the third hour of tran-

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*Approximately  
100 feet in the air,  
I began to realize  
that something  
was not right.*

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sition. The student pilot was 90 minutes into an exhausting pattern ride and was trying very hard to obtain proficiency, to say nothing of a fairly new IP instructing a new student and clearing for other traffic.

2. **Channelized attention.** The pilot team was working very hard on getting good stable approaches and landings.

3. **Complacency.** The crew was a highly experienced one with the exception of the student pilot. The specific mission profile flown was frequently

used by FTU crews.

4. **Links in the chain.** All the events in the sequence were required to make the near mishap happen. Remove any link and I would not be writing this.

What can be done to prevent this type of mishap? Regardless of whether you fly a fighter, manhandle a BUFF, or pass gas, it's all the same.

1. If you're getting tired, speak up ... and call it a day. No training sortie is worth crashing a jet or introducing undue risk to you or your crew.

2. Eliminate channelized attention by pulling back and doing a "sanity" check on what you're doing. Your life may depend on it.

3. Complacency is a demon we all face after hundreds of hours in the jet. The only cure is solid aircrew discipline and communication. The jet can kill you just as dead on the 1000th sortie as on any other.

4. Doing the first three actions above will go a long way to eliminating the links in the chain. In our case, a simple "safety check" call by anyone would have gone a long way to preventing this near mishap.

Flying is an inherently dangerous business. Approach it as if your life depends on it ... because it does. **FLY SMART, and FLY SAFE!** ■



# FLIGHT SAFETY AWARD OF THE QUARTER

Maj Phillip P. Taber  
8 AF  
Barksdale AFB LA

Maj Taber's sustained superior performance in the flight safety arena has earned him the reputation as one of the most competent/qualified field mishap investigators and prevention specialists in ACC. As the Chief of Fighter Safety for The Mighty Eighth Air Force, he continually seeks fresh and unconventional ideas/programs for direct application to mishap prevention. This motivation has placed Maj Taber in the forefront of the implementation of operational risk management (ORM) for both ACC and Eighth Air Force. He was instrumental in the discovery and adoption of an automated risk assessment flight scheduling program. Additionally, the ACC-benchmarked Deployment Risk Assessment Guide that Maj Taber created was recently adopted by Air Mobility Command (AMC) as a crosstell item for all AMC units. This guide has also been integrated into numerous active and gained units across ACC. In support of the recent COMACC-directed safety down day, Maj Taber was the principal architect of the Eighth Air Force risk assessment process, which stressed individual accountability and reemphasized active participation by every member of the Headquarters Eighth Air Force staff to continually identify and mitigate existing and potential risk to both the mission and at home. As a highly effective facilitator, he carefully focused the Headquarters Eighth Air Force leadership on the ORM principles, in an attempt to develop a better understanding of ORM and thus gain tangible results/recommendations from the staff's risk assessment. Maj Taber's exceptional ORM initiative was cited by the Eighth Air Force commander as an outstanding program—a benchmark for other organizations! Result—Maj Taber's risk assessment program was utilized by numerous active and gained units across ACC during the safety down day.

An acknowledged expert and visionary within the ACC safety arena, Maj Taber was the featured author of an article published in the September 1997 *"Combat Edge."* This article addressed an innovative program designed to utilize safety-trained maintenance officers to enhance a wing's mishap investigation/prevention program. Maj Taber personifies the Air Force philosophy that mishap prevention translates directly into operational capability/success in combat employment and global force projection. He is the driving force of this highly successful flight safety program of Eighth Air Force. The positive impact of Maj Taber's leadership, expertise, and selfless commitment to mishap prevention through proactive involvement will be reaped by Eighth Air Force and ACC for years to come.





# GROUND SAFETY AWARD OF THE QUARTER



TSgt Matthew B. Calbreath  
55 WG  
Offutt AFB NE

This deeply motivated NCOIC of Ground Safety has revitalized many Offutt Ground Safety programs, including the Hazard Reporting Program as well as the 55th Wing's Master Hazard Abatement Program. He is also intimately involved with all aspects of the other ground safety programs on base. TSgt Calbreath has dedicated countless hours visiting with shop supervisors and workers to gain a thorough understanding of each abatement action and open hazard. He then utilizes this information to ensure the proper actions are taken and that useful, viable solutions as well as adequate interim control measures are in place. He maintains a close working relationship with the shops, supervisors, and workers to keep abreast of any change and render safety expertise when needed. This interaction results in strong administrative oversight which was noted as "exceptional" by the HQ ACC

IG inspector. Both of these programs were rated "Excellent" during the recent HQ ACC Ground Safety Compliance Inspection. Sgt Calbreath has significantly reduced the backlog of Supervisors Safety Training. He enabled unit schedulers to pre-plan (by scheduling their workers up to 6 months in advance of class dates) by pre-arranging and publishing training dates, resulting in a wing-wide backlog of less than five percent. Additionally, he assisted in constructing a workcenter-specific AF Form 55 Briefing Guide which gave workcenter trainers an excellent comprehensive tool by which to conduct training. This guide is very specific in what information is needed for every block on the form, thus assisting the supervisors in creating the best comprehensive tool for their needs and eliminating the confusion associated with the form itself. The Wing Ground Safety staff contributes to the quarterly "Safety Spotlight," an ACC benchmark trends analysis pamphlet. Sgt Calbreath has been instrumental in improving the ground safety analysis information within the "Spotlight," providing commanders and workers with a real-life snapshot of their ground safety mishap prevention programs. Sgt Calbreath can be counted on to put forth his best in all situations, resulting time and again in outstanding contributions to his office and the Air Force Mishap Prevention Program.



# WEAPONS SAFETY AWARD OF THE QUARTER

Capt Kirk L. Kehrley  
8 AF  
Barksdale AFB LA



Capt Kehrley's performance in the weapons safety arena is earning him a quick reputation as one of the most competent weapons safety specialists in 8 AF and ACC in a relatively short period of time. As the Chief of Weapons Safety for the "Mighty Eighth" Air Force, he continually strives and succeeds in discovering innovative ways to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working with weapons. He constantly emphasizes the importance of a solid Nuclear Surety program throughout 8 AF, the primary NAF in ACC responsible for the USAF nuclear forces. He makes nuclear surety simple. He developed an 8 AF nuclear surety guide to standardize nuclear surety programs through 8 AF. This guide is easy to understand and includes a nuclear certified vehicle checklist giving references to major inspections areas dealing with that equipment. He created a briefing on nuclear surety workgroups which he presented to attendees at the recent ACC-sponsored 1997 Safety Conference. Additionally, he developed some simple programs to standardize nuclear surety programs throughout all 8 AF dual-tasked units. These programs included a single-page inspection matrix ensuring annual inspections are easily complied with. He established a method for all Weapons Safety Managers (WSMs) to annually document the review of checklists, instructions, procedures, and plans affecting nuclear surety during annual inspections. Capt Kehrley's innovative initiatives carry over into other areas of safety. He disseminated a standard single-page handout that covers all areas of information necessary for personnel who handle "Limited Use Reports." He established a database for 8 AF "Best Practices" that is available for everyone. He established glass hazard and personnel assessment procedures for 8 AF site plans after researching with ACC and AFSC personnel. These procedures give wing personnel more specifics on the "who," "what," and "where" for items that are not clearly outlined in current instructional guidance. He continually researches better ways to do safety. He researched and contacted the US Army Engineering Division in Huntsville, Alabama, to get guidance on igloos not reflected in directives; developed guidance on 7 bar or 3 bar recognition of some weapons storage igloos not contained in the current explosives directives.

Capt Kehrley is rapidly becoming an acknowledged expert within the ACC safety arena. He has already authored several articles dealing with nuclear surety and ORM for the AFSC Weapons Journal and ACC's *Combat Edge* magazine. The AFSC article addressed workgroups and how a workgroup can maximize wing nuclear expertise. The *Combat Edge* article provided some practical examples on how effective ORM can be in the workplace.

Capt Kehrley is actively involved with making safety work at all levels. He is the driving force of the highly successful weapons safety program of 8 AF. Capt Kehrley is committed and devoted to mishap prevention throughout 8 AF and ACC. His Herculean effort in nuclear surety will reap big dividends for the "Mighty Eighth" and ACC for years to come.



# Airman Convicted of Drunken Driving Tells His Story . . .

From Behind Bars

Ramirez, an airman previously assigned to Travis AFB CA, suffered the consequences of choosing to drive after drinking alcohol. His choice cost him freedom and the life of his best friend, a passenger in the car. "What I did was horrible," . . .

*SSgt James Brabenec  
9 RW/PA  
Beale AFB CA  
(ACCNS, 21 Nov 97)*



**S**ilence surrounds a drab compact building off by itself. Barbed and razor wire-topped 10-foot-high fences separate the inhabitants within from passersby. Visitors must call in to gain access through an electronically secured door. Once inside, highly polished black tile floors call out: "This is a place of discipline." Those held at the 9th Security Forces Squadron confinement facility are there for a variety of misdeeds. But one individual, Eduardo Ramirez, took a road too commonly traveled by many, unaware of the grave consequences which lie just beyond.

Ramirez, an airman previously assigned to Travis AFB CA, suffered the consequences of choosing to drive after drinking alcohol. His choice cost him freedom and the life of his best friend, a passenger in the car. "What I did was horrible," said Ramirez. "Nothing can bring back one of the nicest guys I have ever known and someone who did not deserve to die so young." Despite happening over a year ago, Ramirez recalled the day started just like any other.

"When I awoke on November 25, I was just another airman first class with the normal day-to-day joys and struggles," said Ramirez. Little did he know in less than 24 hours, his world would be turned upside down.

Ramirez and his suitemate were the best of friends — inseparable during off-duty time. Following a day spent planning a move off base and an evening of small talk, everything pointed to just another ordinary day until the remains of a late-night party were found in the dayroom.

"We were looking around the dorm for someone to hang out with when we noticed four unopened beers in the dayroom," Ramirez said. "Because we were on bay orderly, we cleaned up the mess and then took the beer back to my room." The two

"It's an easy place to get a negative attitude about things," he said. "I thank God for giving me the strength to stay positive. Besides, I don't want what happened to go for nothing." In an effort to teach others not to make similar mistakes, Ramirez has already spoken at commander's calls and squadron functions at Travis AFB and has volunteered to do the same at Beale.

of them sat down and, over a 30-minute conversation, consumed the beer; then they decided to head off base for some food before going to bed.

While traveling down a back road at a higher than posted speed, Ramirez slowed down to negotiate a sharp curve. However, he turned too late, left the road, and struck a tree — resulting in his friend's death a short time later. Ramirez waited 8

months for his court-martial hearing and is now serving a 1-year prison term. At times, the pain is almost unbearable; but his faith in God has helped him to endure.

"It's an easy place to get a negative attitude about things," he said. "I thank God for giving me the strength to stay positive. Besides, I don't want what happened to go for nothing." In an effort to teach others not to make similar mistakes, Ramirez has already spoken at commander's calls and squadron functions at Travis AFB and has volunteered to do the same

at Beale. "Before you decide to take a chance you might regret, evaluate your life and the people you care for. What you do affects others, so why take a needless risk? It just isn't worth it," Ramirez said.

With good behavior, his time could be cut by several months. Instead of separating, he has submitted paperwork to return to active duty. "We

had dreams to excel in the military, and I want to continue toward that goal as much for him as for me," he said. As he bides his time, Ramirez said the forgiveness of his friend's family has helped him live with the pain he inflicted. "Their compassion has been unbelievable," he said. "Everything I am doing, I do for them." ■



To Climb The  
re



Golden  
Legacy . . .







# Sky

There is in time a line that separates the past from the future.

For those who fly, it begins in the fluid grace of tall-grass prairie and reaches back ... back across the Appalachians to the eastern sea.

It is a line anchored firmly in the mythic places of America ... of one Ohio town ... its people, plain-spoken, mid-west tempered ... a town of open doors, tree-lined streets, and simple pleasures.

It was from such a town as this they came, these preacher's sons ... two who left behind their heartland home to go eastward ... to the sea, to the sky, and beyond ... to a place of high dunes braced against a shifting shore ... of ancient surf smoothed stones brushed by the edge of an endless ocean ... a vast blue-green rolling seascape that touches other older shores that once were ours, now lost beneath the distant line of sky. On this, our own ocean's edge, the winter's wind blows strong and constant, now as it did at that long ago beginning, when persistent genius first reached and climbed and soared ... on one cold December's morning ... at a place ... called Kitty Hawk.

Here, with hands coarse rubbed by blowing sand and salt brine air, they learned to climb the sky ... to lift themselves on untried wings of cloth and wood, the stuff of older ships, now shaped and bent anew to sail a higher sea.

Here it was they launched themselves against the wind ... to fly ... to rise on up with awkward grace ... and give to flight a human face.

Where once but two, their tracks are many ... white scars against the darkening blue that ride the rising Doppler pitch of metal engine's whine high among the clouds.

Up, up there, beyond the dream of pioneer, ever higher now, a newer breed of airmen soars ... to make of older dreams a new tomorrow. In flight and squadron organized ... they come to push through time the line that moves more quickly now ... to sail on wings of form and kind unknown to those who first rose up to see the sanded hills slip by beneath.

Higher ... faster ... farther ... they come in winged echelon ... to catch the wind in silver jetted ships ... born up as sentinels ... to stand the guard at Freedom's gate, with vectors straight and true ... as guardians of the nation ... a flight of Air Force blue.

Golden legacy ... boundless future. For those who share this vision, one line through time is two ... and on them they take the oath ... to fly ... and keep 'em flying ... on heading and on course ... all those who wear the colors of your ... United States Air Force.

Colonel Jay B. Welsh, USAF (Retired)



# Annual FY97 ACC Awards



## **COMMANDER'S AWARD FOR SAFETY**

9th Air Force  
Shaw AFB SC



## **SAFETY SUSTAINED SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE AWARD**

TSgt John G. Morrison  
505 CCEG, 505 TSS  
Hurlburt Field FL



## **SAFETY OFFICE OF THE YEAR AWARD - CATEGORY I**

Air Warfare Center  
Nellis AFB NV



## **SAFETY OFFICE OF THE YEAR AWARD - CATEGORY II**

33d Fighter Wing  
Eglin AFB FL



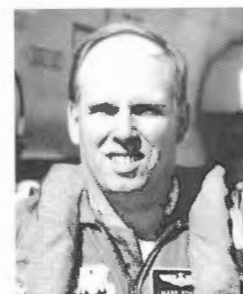
## **DISTINGUISHED CHIEF OF SAFETY AWARD**

Lt Col Robert P. Otto  
33 FW  
Eglin AFB FL



## **DISTINGUISHED PILOT SAFETY AWARD**

Maj Mark A. Ronco  
442 FW  
Whiteman AFB MO



## **DISTINGUISHED AIRCREW SAFETY AWARD**

Lt Col Patrick J. Thomas\*, Maj Ronald J. Sanders,  
Maj Craig S. Girard\*, Capt Robert N. Burgess,  
Capt James R. Bortree, Capt Brian A. Tom  
23 BS, 5 BW  
Minot AFB ND



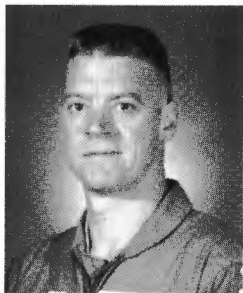
## **OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT SAFETY AWARD**

27th Fighter Wing  
Cannon AFB NM  
  
93d Air Control Wing  
Robins AFB GA



\* not available for photo





### **DISTINGUISHED FLIGHT SAFETY OFFICER AWARD**

Capt David R. Pedersen  
27 FW  
Cannon AFB NM



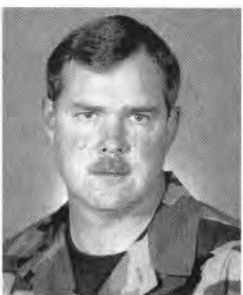
### **DISTINGUISHED FLIGHT SAFETY NCO AWARD**

SMSgt Robert S. Hamlett  
20 FW  
Shaw AFB SC



### **DISTINGUISHED CREW CHIEF OF THE YEAR AWARD**

SrA Michael Bush  
523 FS, 27 FW  
Cannon AFB NM



### **DISTINGUISHED FLIGHT LINE SAFETY ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

SMSgt David P. Sando  
429 ECS, 27 FW  
Cannon AFB NM



### **DISTINGUISHED GROUND SAFETY ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

MSgt Harold W. Poe  
41 AS, 23 WG  
Pope AFB NC



## **EXCEPTIONAL GROUND SAFETY LEADERSHIP AWARD**

TSgt Barbara G. M. Fredricksen  
33 FW  
Eglin AFB FL



## **SUPERIOR PERFORMER IN GROUND SAFETY**

MSgt Bryan A. Puttonen  
509 BW  
Whiteman AFB MO



## **CMSGT PAUL A. PALOMBO AWARD FOR DISTINGUISHED GROUND SAFETY NEWCOMER**

TSgt John F. Capers  
AWFC  
Nellis AFB NV



## **ANNUAL UNIT GROUND SAFETY AWARD - CATEGORY I**

4th Fighter Wing  
Seymour Johnson AFB NC



## **ANNUAL UNIT GROUND SAFETY AWARD - CATEGORY II**

53d Wing  
Eglin AFB FL







## **EXCEPTIONAL WEAPONS INDIVIDUAL AWARD**

SMSgt Brian D. Prucey  
2 BW  
Barksdale AFB LA

MSgt Rodney N. Wilson  
33 FW  
Eglin AFB FL



## **DISTINGUISHED WEAPONS SAFETY ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

SrA Donald T. Dickens  
78 FS, 20 FW  
Shaw AFB SC



## **OUTSTANDING UNIT WEAPONS SAFETY AWARD - CATEGORY I**

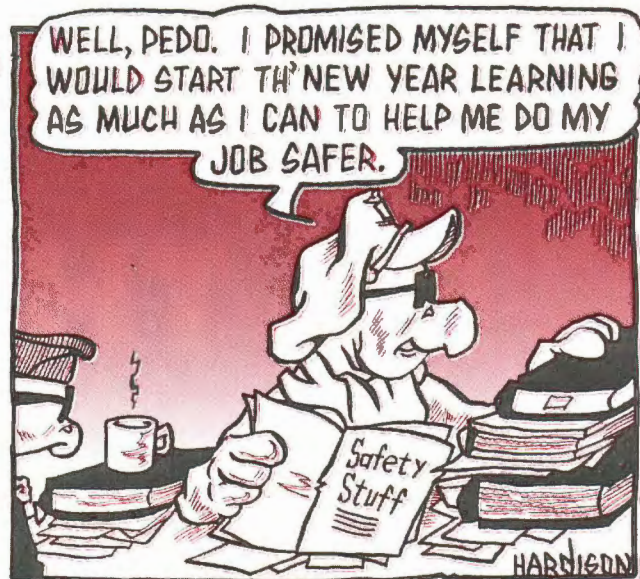
509th Bomb Wing  
Whiteman AFB MO



## **OUTSTANDING UNIT WEAPONS SAFETY AWARD - CATEGORY II**

33d Fighter Wing  
Eglin AFB FL







# TRAINING BY THE BOOK

*SMSgt Bart A. Ivy  
HQ ACC/IGIL-B  
Langley AFB VA*

To save a little time, we took a MK-13 Mod 0 signal — which by the way is filled with red phosphor — and dented the casing to create a major defect. Looking back, if I had known what could have happened if the casing was punctured, I do not think I would have accepted it as standard practice.

Sitting here with over 20 years of service and a coffee mug in my hand, I feel the need to tell a few war stories. Have you ever shown a young troop how to cut banding with a claw hammer? Have you ever stood in front — or behind — a BDU-33 while putting in a MK-4 (spotting charge)? Yes? Me, too. First, let me tell you a true story about a young ammo troop I used to work with.

At Grand Forks AFB ND in the late seventies, I was in training to be a munitions inspector. My trainer was a staff sergeant and whatever he said was law. We were inspecting MK-13 Mod 0 signals that were within 1 month of service life expiration. Back in those days, once the service life expired ... they were unserviceable. (Now



I really feel old.) The boss told me to, "Hit it on the side of the table — like this!" causing a dent and creating an unacceptable defect. Then we would not have to inspect them again in a month to change condition codes again. I just assumed that's the way things were, and we did it a lot!

Now, let's take a closer look at this situation. To save a little time, we took a MK-13 Mod 0 signal — which by the way is filled with red phosphor — and dented the casing to create a major defect. Looking back, if I had known what could have happened if the casing was punctured, I do not think I would have accepted it as standard practice. We were fortunate, not smart. Hindsight is always 20/20.

Ten years later, I was running a maintenance section — which brings me to another fond memory of processing 20MM rounds. No, this is not the one about banging the projectile on the edge of the table to ensure it was really loose ... not that anyone ever did such a thing. My 20MM crew was processing an ammunition loading system (ALS) when the target practice (TP) rounds jammed in the replenisher chute. This was before they had the removable plate. The crew chief deferred to a higher authority to figure out how to fix this problem. After careful study, I decided that the specialized ammo tools (big hammer and 12 inch screwdriver) could not fix it. So, I took a 3/8-inch extension and placed the open end over the projectile and gave it a calibrated whack causing the round to pop back

in place. It worked great, and the problem was solved.

About a month later, one of my crews was processing 20MM high explosive incendiaries (HEI) and experienced another jammed round. One of my young airmen who wanted to demonstrate his prowess as a seasoned ammo troop thought he knew how to fix the problem. He was just about to apply that calibrated whack when, just by coincidence, I walked into the bay. Seeing what was about to happen, I stopped the crew and

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In the old days, we would look at what needed to be done; then if we figured it was safe, we did it.

Today, the process has not changed. We just have a new name for it — Operational Risk Management (ORM).

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asked, "What in the world are you doing?" My well-seasoned troop said, "Exactly what you taught me." Then I told him, "I had meant for that to be done only on TP rounds!" His response was, "You never said anything about that." Now, I knew that hitting the solid metal, inert, TP projectile would not cause any harm; but the HEI is a totally different matter. I have to admit that he was

right in that I did not explain to him the cautions associated with live rounds. As a result, all my young troop learned was that "if a round jams, get a hammer and extension, and adjust it." Lesson learned!

Ammo troops know that not everything is in the book, and some things just need to be done. In the old days, we would look at what needed to be done; then if we figured it was safe, we did it. Today, the process has not changed. We just have a new name for it — Operational Risk Management (ORM). The most important thing to remember is to make sure the troops understand the risks and hazards of the job and why their work needs to be done according to established procedure. Training is an everyday experience. There is more to it than just showing someone what to do; they also need to know who, why, where, when, and how.

In summary, my point is we react and do things the way we were trained or by imitating others. It's never too late to change bad habits, especially if it's going to hurt or kill you and/or someone else. Before you show someone how a job is done, be sure you think about what message you're sending. It's better to be known for being the one who gets things done by the book than just someone who gets things done by taking risks.

As ammo supervisors, you carry the weight of your troops on your back. They believe unconditionally that you will take care of them and not let them do anything unsafe. Watch and learn; and stick to the books — they're here for a reason! ■



# Accolades

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS  
CONCERNING DATA ON THIS  
PAGE SHOULD BE  
ADDRESSED TO HQ ACC/SEF,  
MAJ "E.T." MOORE  
DSN: 574-8816

	TOTAL			ACC			CANG			CAFR		
	DEC	THRU DEC		DEC	THRU DEC		DEC	THRU DEC		DEC	THRU DEC	
		FY98	FY97		FY98	FY97		FY98	FY97		FY98	FY97
CLASS A MISHAPS	1	3	3	1	2	0	0	0	2	0	1	1
AIRCREW FATALITIES	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
* IN THE ENVELOPE EJECTIONS	0	2/0	3/0	0	1/0	0	0	0	3/0	0	1/0	0
* OUT OF ENVELOPE EJECTIONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

\* (SUCCESSFUL/UNSUCCESSFUL)

## Class A Mishaps Comparison Rate

(CUMULATIVE RATE BASED ON ACCIDENTS PER 100,000 FLYING HOURS)

ACC	FY 97	0	0	0	0.6	1.0	0.8	1.6	2.1	2.1	2.3	2.2	2.6
	FY 98	0	1.6	2.3									
8 AF	FY 97	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.2	1.1	1.0	0.9	1.6
	FY 98	0	0	0									
9 AF	FY 97	0	0	0	1.7	1.4	1.1	2.9	2.5	2.3	2.7	2.5	2.3
	FY 98	0	3.4	2.3									
12 AF	FY 97	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.0	1.7	1.5	2.0	1.8	2.3
	FY 98	0	0	2.4									
DRU	FY 97	0	0	0	0	5.7	4.7	4.0	3.5	6.4	5.8	5.3	4.9
	FY 98	0	0	0									
CANG	FY 97	0	3.8	2.6	3.3	2.7	3.0	2.6	2.2	2.0	2.2	2.0	2.2
	FY 98	0	0	0									
CAFR	FY 97	0	6.3	4.2	3.1	5.2	6.1	5.3	4.7	4.2	4.1	4.0	3.9
	FY 98	0	6.3	4.2									
TOTAL	FY 97	0	1.9	1.3	1.7	1.9	2.0	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.5	2.3	2.4
	FY 98	0	1.3	1.3									
MONTH		OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP



# Monthly Awards

## UNIT SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*55th Computer Systems Squadron*

*55 WG*

*Offutt AFB NE*

The 55th Computer Systems Squadron successfully completed a potentially hazardous self-help move of approximately 60 employees and over 200 pieces of equipment with no mishaps or injuries, saving \$6,175. It was placed on the National Seat Belt Gold Plus Honor Roll by the National Safety Council for 99% seat belt usage within the squadron. Unit accomplishments are as follows: Received letter of recognition from the Nebraska Office of Highway Safety for outstanding effort and achievement in increasing safety belt use within the squadron. Recognized by the US Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration for taking a leadership role in highway safety and efforts with traffic safety awareness training. Developed an anti-drinking-and-driving campaign composed of briefings and literature on both the physical dangers and legal ramifications, resulting in no alcohol-related traffic mishaps for the year. Conducted a winter vehicle inspection point—performed a 17-point inspection to identify any mechanical deficiencies with the owner's vehicle. Developed and distributed a pamphlet detailing a winter safety kit that should be included in vehicles. Personally advised newly assigned base personnel on the hazards of winter driving in the local area. Met and exceeded the ACC mishap reduction goal for the fiscal year, reducing mishaps by 56%. Performed over 260,000 man-hours without a work-related safety mishap. Received an "Excellent" rating on the annual Wing Ground Safety Inspection and Assessment for 1997. Commander and unit Safety Representative support and involvement were recognized as laudatory. Mishap Prevention Program was identified as "Exceptional." Spot Inspection Program was highlighted as laudatory. Distinguished by having no reportable mishaps or injuries during 1997. Wing Safety debriefed unit safety program as a "Superior Performance." Constantly striving for new and innovative ways to enlighten unit personnel about the importance of safety. Incorporated a safety obstacle course during the spring ACC Safety Day; enabled unit personnel to inspect a work center and identify safety discrepancies put there by flight safety representatives; promoted a sense of safety teamwork. Identified a need, then designed a web-based computer system to automate squadron safety programs. Developed an automated mishap call-in log management system to show trends in safety mishaps, reducing telephone and e-mail traffic and allowing a visual representation of individual mishaps. Created an interactive inspection management system; enables tracking of inspection results and deficiencies by all personnel in a visual representation. Composed a modifiable computer AF Form 55 computer training site, allowing for real-time changes of updates; enables immediate compliance with ever-changing TOs. Designed a safety risk identification management system for the squadron LAN to enable squadron personnel to identify potentially hazardous areas within their work center, report them to the Unit Safety Representative, receive results of actions being taken to correct the unsafe area, and track areas identified. Created a real-time QPM tracking system for mishap totals, types, and classes; automatically updates and continuously allows personnel access to view current status of safety mishaps. Designed a safety briefing database, allowing for continuous access of pertinent safety briefing data. Designed an Operational Risk Management tracking system, ensuring all current and newly assigned personnel meet the awareness-level requirement for training. Entire system adopted for use on the 55th Wing LAN.



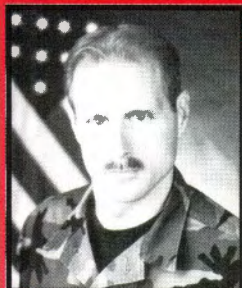




## GROUND SAFETY INDIVIDUAL AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*SrA Thomas B. Grandstaff, A1C Shane L. Barker,  
A1C Thomas G. Hamilton  
357 FS, 355 WG  
Davis-Monthan AFB AZ*

During a routine weapons loading operation at the live load area, SrA Grandstaff, A1C Barker, and A1C Hamilton were tasked to download the munitions from aircraft 80-281 and reconfigure the aircraft for the next flying day. After they downloaded the inert munitions from the aircraft, they downloaded the Training Guided Missile (TGM-65A/B) and began to remove the LAU-117 missile launcher from the TGM. A few moments later, Amn Barker noticed black smoke and flames pouring from the back of the nearby bomb lift truck. Immediately, Amn Grandstaff directed Amn Hamilton and Amn Barker to fight the fire from the rear of the bomb lift truck. He then ensured all live munitions were moved out of the immediate area and got the attention of the specialist expediter who notified the Production Superintendent and Maintenance Operations Center. Amn Grandstaff then directed all nonessential personnel to retreat to safe withdrawal distance, while Amn Hamilton and Amn Barker continued to extinguish the fire. Wing Safety and the Fire Department arrived on the scene within 5 minutes, but the fire had been extinguished and the danger already eliminated. The quick response of these three individuals saved a valuable piece of equipment, averting the potential dangers to the aircraft, personnel, and the live munitions loaded on trailers.



## WEAPONS SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*MSgt Jeffrey G. Fox  
55 SFS, 55 WG  
Offutt AFB NE*

MSgt Fox has established an effective and well organized Nuclear Surety Program within the unit. His program has been used as a model for other organizations within the wing. He received zero write-ups during the annual Wing Nuclear Surety Management Inspection and Assessment; the 55th Wing Chief of Safety rated the 55th Security Forces Squadron Nuclear Surety Program as "Exemplary." He has used his knowledge of computers to develop a database for tracking the annual nuclear surety training for all personnel within the unit. This has enabled the unit to immediately identify those individuals that are no longer qualified to perform nuclear related duties as a result of not completing their required refresher training. Sgt Fox developed a Nuclear Surety Knowledge Question Guide to ensure all aspects of nuclear surety are covered during the spot inspections. He has included checking the unit PRP program during spot inspections to ensure proper documentation of suspension/decentralization paperwork and documentation of the PRP dates; this contributed to unit PRP program receiving an "Excellent" rating during the October 1996 ACC Nuclear Surety Inspection. In an effort to enhance the 55 WG Personal Reliability Program (PRP), he developed in-depth lesson plans and tests for both nuclear surety and the PRP to ensure complete and accurate training of unit personnel. As a functional expert, he monitors and conducts the nuclear surety training for approximately 280 personnel in the unit (the largest PRP/nuclear surety unit in the 55th Wing). His outstanding performance resulted in accolades from 12th Air Force Safety Staff Assistance Visit team during their visit in May 1997 and his selection as a "Superior Performer" during the ACC Nuclear Surety Staff Assistance Visit in July 1997. His meticulous attention to detail has directly contributed to the 55th Wing receiving an "Excellent" rating on every ACC Nuclear Surety Inspection since 1995.



## AIRCREW SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*Lt Col Mike J. McDonald, Lt Col Harvey D. Johnson, Capt Buel J. Dickson  
120 OSF, 120 FW  
Great Falls IAP MT*

Leading a flight of two F-16s back to base after an uneventful training mission, Lt Col McDonald was 60 NM from the field when he began experiencing difficulties. He noticed a multitude of seemingly unassociated flight control warning lights accompanied by light to moderate uncommanded aircraft oscillations in roll and pitch. Declaring an emergency, Lt Col McDonald, Lt Col Johnson (chase), and Capt Dickson (SOF) worked together to analyze the problem. After following checklist guidance, all warning lights were extinguished; however, the oscillations in pitch and roll continued. When the incident aircraft was 20 miles from the field, the SOF directed completion of a controllability check. Ten seconds after successfully lowering the landing gear an explosion occurred. A panel was blown from the aircraft and the tail section was engulfed in flames. Simultaneously, oscillations in pitch and roll increased to the limits of controlled flight. Col Johnson notified Col McDonald of the fire, monitored the flight path, and commanded "bail out." Col McDonald turned toward an uninhabited area to ensure the wreckage would not injure anyone, stating: "Bailing out in 10 seconds." Seven seconds into this countdown, Col Johnson informed Col McDonald that the fire was subsiding. As Col McDonald continued to avoid rural residences, the flames extinguished.

Col McDonald determined that the aircraft could be controlled through landing at a higher than normal landing speed and maneuvered his aircraft for an opposite direction landing to avoid over flight of the city. He stopped the aircraft before the departure-end cable with emergency braking only and successfully egressed the aircraft. Post incident investigation revealed that a wire bundle had chafed against a hydraulic line, arced, and caused a pin-hole leak. The spray of hydraulic fluid ignited, and the resulting fire superheated a hydraulic accumulator until it burst causing the explosion and near loss of the aircraft. The superb teamwork of Col McDonald, Col Johnson, and Capt Dickson resulted in the successful recovery of this uniquely damaged F-16.



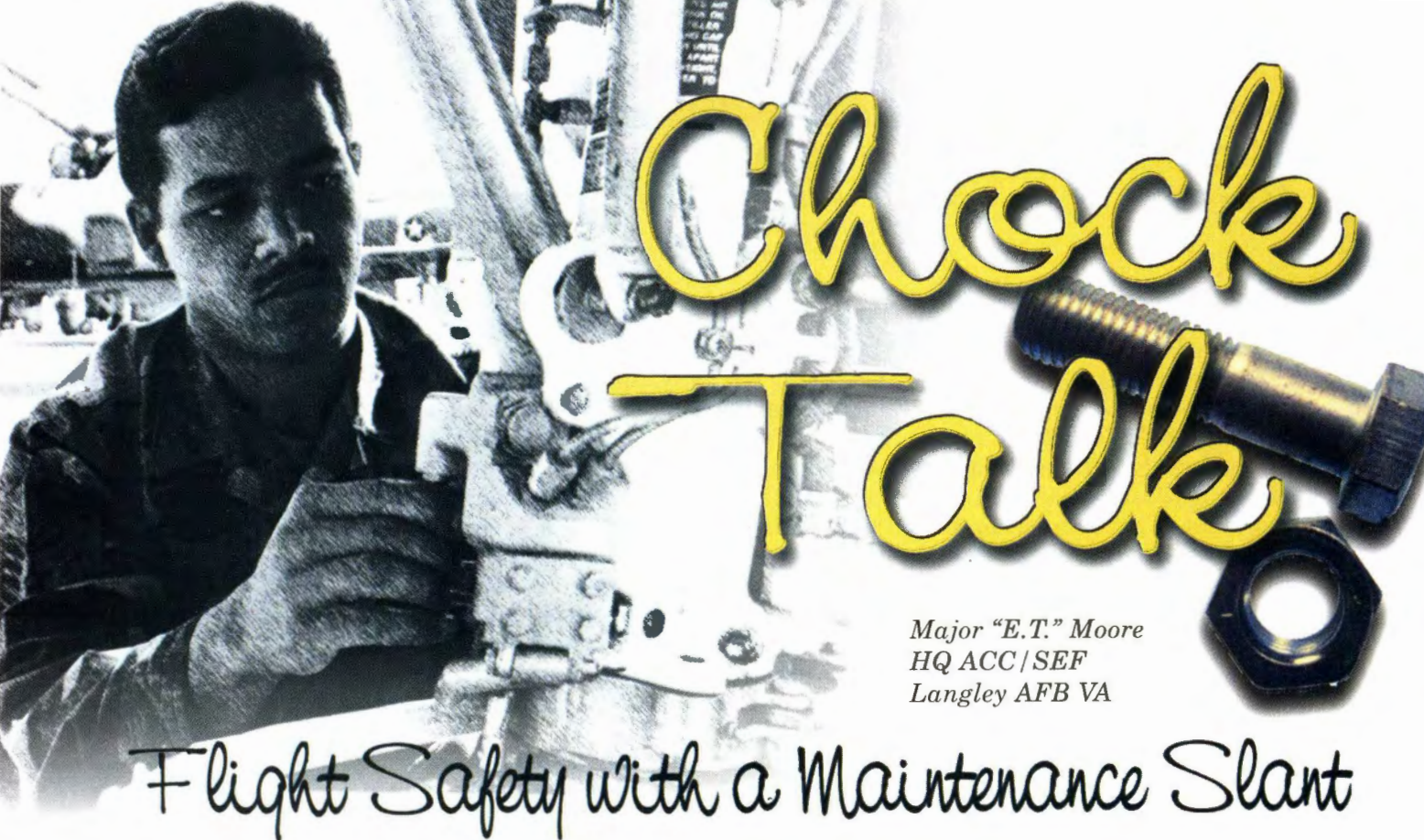
## FLIGHT LINE SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*TSgt Michael Robertson  
159 MXS, 159 FW  
NAS JRB New Orleans LA*

During a launch sequence for Louisiana Air National Guard F-15A aircraft, TSgt Robertson demonstrated excellent situational awareness and a proactive attitude toward mishap prevention as he made an informal visual inspection of aircraft starting engines on the ramp. He noticed a misshapen exhaust nozzle on one of the running aircraft. The appearance of daylight visible through the divergent section caught his eye, and further investigation indicated several broken pushrods on the nozzle section. Recognizing the potential hazard, he brought the abnormal appearance to the attention of the crew chief. The crew chief subsequently noted grinding noises in the augments section and directed a shutdown of the engine. Close visual inspection eventually revealed a missing divergent seal in the augments, as well as significantly deformed finger seals in the system which would have probably resulted in a burnthrough and possible aircraft fire when afterburner was selected on the upcoming flight. Normal preflight activity did not detect the problem; only the sharp eye of a distant observer was able to keep the aircraft from launching and suffering a potentially serious mishap.







Major "E.T." Moore  
HQ ACC/SEF  
Langley AFB VA

## Flight Safety with a Maintenance Slant

### FAREWELL AND GODSPEED

**A**s I sit in front of my computer to compose my last monthly Chock Talk article for *The Combat Edge*, I tried to come up with yet another article highlighting maintenance lessons learned from past flight mishaps. Then, I thought, "Hey, since this is your last Chock Talk article, why not take this opportunity to reflect on 18 years as an Air Force maintainer? Surely you have some parting thoughts after 6 years as a flight line hydraulic troop and 12 years as a fighter maintenance officer." So, with the editor's gracious permission, I take this opportunity to reflect on my experiences and bid farewell to my fellow maintainers.

When I enlisted in the Air Force in 1979, I was thrilled about the prospect of working on fighter aircraft. After all, here I was, a 17-year-old kid from the streets of Brooklyn NY, 2 weeks out of high school, and still not shaving. I guess that excitement remained until I arrived at Holloman AFB and had the opportunity to remove and replace my very first Utility Hydraulic System Accessory Manifold. Some of you out there know what I am talking about. My highly starched fatigues soon bore the telltale marks of a hydraulic mechanic, deep red stains that never totally came out, and the smell ... oh, the smell! My spit-





shined boots turned a very dull off-black color (you know, that color just before the black dye of the boot is eaten away and the natural color of the boot reveals itself). My hair was soaked with the stuff — it took about a week of washing until it all finally came out. Oh yes, and it was probably a good 110 degrees on the flight line ... and the replacement manifold had to be cannibalized from another jet ... twice the work!

Where was the glory? Where was the "overtime pay" for the 12-hour days and weekends? What did I get myself into? Why didn't I become a finance clerk? Yes, the reality of flight line maintenance sunk in. But my downcast spirit didn't last long. You see, the very next day (12 hours later to be exact), I came back into work and saw something that quickly changed my attitude about flight line maintenance. It happened right in front of my eyes.

That jet I worked on, sweated on, and yes ... even bled on ... was now being strapped on by one of our pilots. That's when it hit me. That lieutenant climbing into the cockpit had total trust and confidence in the work that a young, 17-year-old kid fresh out of high school had performed on his \$20 million jet the day before. Wow! There was nowhere else in the Air Force that I was going to have that kind of responsibility. It was at that moment I knew that an Air Force career in aircraft maintenance was my calling.

I write these words not to the senior NCOs and officers out there who have already made aircraft maintenance their profession, but to the young enlisted troops who find themselves

asking the very same questions I asked. You, too, have this very special calling should you choose to answer it. You, too, are trusted by each aircrew that steps up to a jet. You must have the integrity it takes to do the job right each and every time. That aircrew and their families have faith in that signature you just put on the aircraft forms. There is probably not another career in the Air Force where a minor mistake can result in catastrophe. Pay errors can be remedied, wrong items received from supply can be turned in, mistakes on performance reports can be corrected. However, a mount bolt mistakenly left off of a critical flight control component cannot be repaired at 30,000 feet. If that component fails, we have a multi-million dollar aircraft destroyed and lives forever shattered. This is the nature of your job. This is why you are a maintenance professional.

I like to believe that I carried this same attitude of maintenance professionalism to the flight line when I was commissioned; at least I hope I did. There are many things I'll miss in aircraft maintenance. The camaraderie with those that I've served with being foremost in my mind. To every senior NCO that has ever worked for me or with me, I thank you. You are the people that make things happen. It was you that I called on at 0400 to get the jets ready for a real-world contingency deployment. It was you that worked the weekend before a major deployment to prep the jets. It was from you that I always heard the words, "No problem, sir! We'll make it happen!" But most of all, it is from you that I learned how to be

a maintenance officer. And more so, it is to you that the young troops will look to for guidance and leadership. Set the example; be a pillar of integrity. Accept nothing less than by-the-book performance from your troops. The costs are way too high to accept anything less.

To each and every person wearing a maintenance badge, I bid you farewell and Godspeed. ■

**"Not a single sortie we fly is worth compromising the integrity of an aircraft or the life of an airman."**

*Major E.T. Moore has applied for early retirement after more than 18 years of dedicated service to his country. Major Moore enlisted in the Air Force in 1979 as an Aircraft Pneudraulic Systems Mechanic where he worked on the F-15 aircraft at Holloman AFB NM. He was commissioned in 1986, completed the Aircraft Maintenance Officer's Course at Chanute AFB IL, and returned to the place he loved most, the flight line. His assignments included: Shaw AFB SC where he was an F-16 Aircraft Maintenance Unit OIC, Kunsan AB ROK where he was a Sortie Generation Flight Commander (and a "Juvat" as he is quick to point out), and Langley AFB VA where he served as an F-16 Maintenance Manager as well as his current capacity as a Flight Safety Officer. Major Moore's monthly contributions to this magazine will be sorely missed, as will his dedication to the men and women of the aircraft maintenance community. His current plans are to remain in the Hampton Roads area.*

- Ed.



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