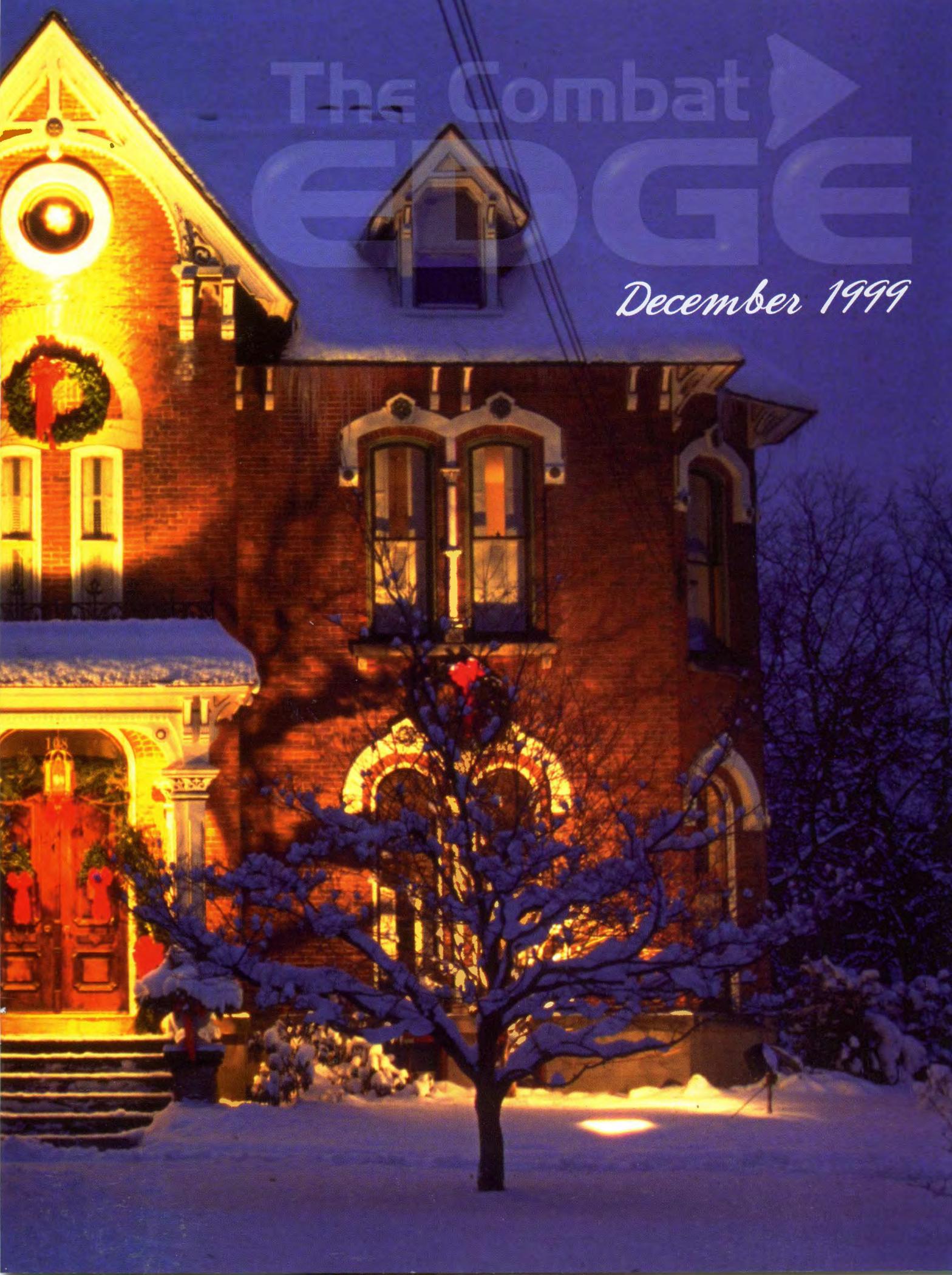


The Combat COLLEGE

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Air Combat Command's Mishap Prevention Magazine

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ACCent on Safety

The Holiday Gift

I want to wish each and every one of you the very best holiday season. The winter holiday season can truly be a joyful time, when family and friends often join together to reminisce, exchange gifts and build great memories. With that in mind, this issue of *The Combat Edge* focuses on making sure your holidays are merry and your Christmas and New Year's celebrations leave you with only fond memories.

Holiday parties are part of the fun during this time of year. You'll most likely have office parties, squadron parties, group and wing parties, as well as private and family events to celebrate the season. Most of these parties are for holiday socializing rather than gift giving. However, there is a gift you can give that costs very little and requires no shopping — it's called "taking care of your buddies."

This time of year typically causes an increase in stress. The causes are many, ranging from money problems to being away from loved ones. When the stress becomes too great, people sometimes indulge in too much holiday cheer. You've seen it happen, and chances are you'll see it again this year, which is where "your" gift comes in. Take care of your squadron mates; make sure they have a safe ride...don't let them drink and drive. No one needs memories of a DWI during the holidays, or worse, of an injury or death. Your "gift" is to ensure the memories are only good ones for your friends and fellow Air Force warriors.

We all know the various missions in the Air Force are stressful in and of themselves, but the holiday season adds many other stressors, like the few mentioned above, that can greatly influence our lives. Family separation causes significant stress for Air Force members and their families, sometimes resulting in depression that can get out of hand and have a negative impact on judgement. Please remember that the Air Force family may be the only family someone has for the holidays this year. So again, your gift....invite someone to dinner, or simply over to your house for a visit.

Sometimes the greatest gift you can give someone is to simply let them know that you care about them.

I wish you a safe and fulfilling holiday season!
Col. Greg "Vader" Alston

A Safer Home and Hearth



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

The National Fire Prevention Association's (NFPA) 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 have been 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; and
- 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 (one 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 and 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 design 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 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.

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 in the U.S. have been started by the ignition of Christmas trees (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. Candles cause an annual average of 6,700 home fires 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, 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. 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. ■

Home Y2K Tips



Safety experts don't expect widespread panic to result from Y2K computer glitches after New Year's Eve, but they do recommend preparing for the big day as you would for a major snowstorm. Here's a recommended list of supplies:

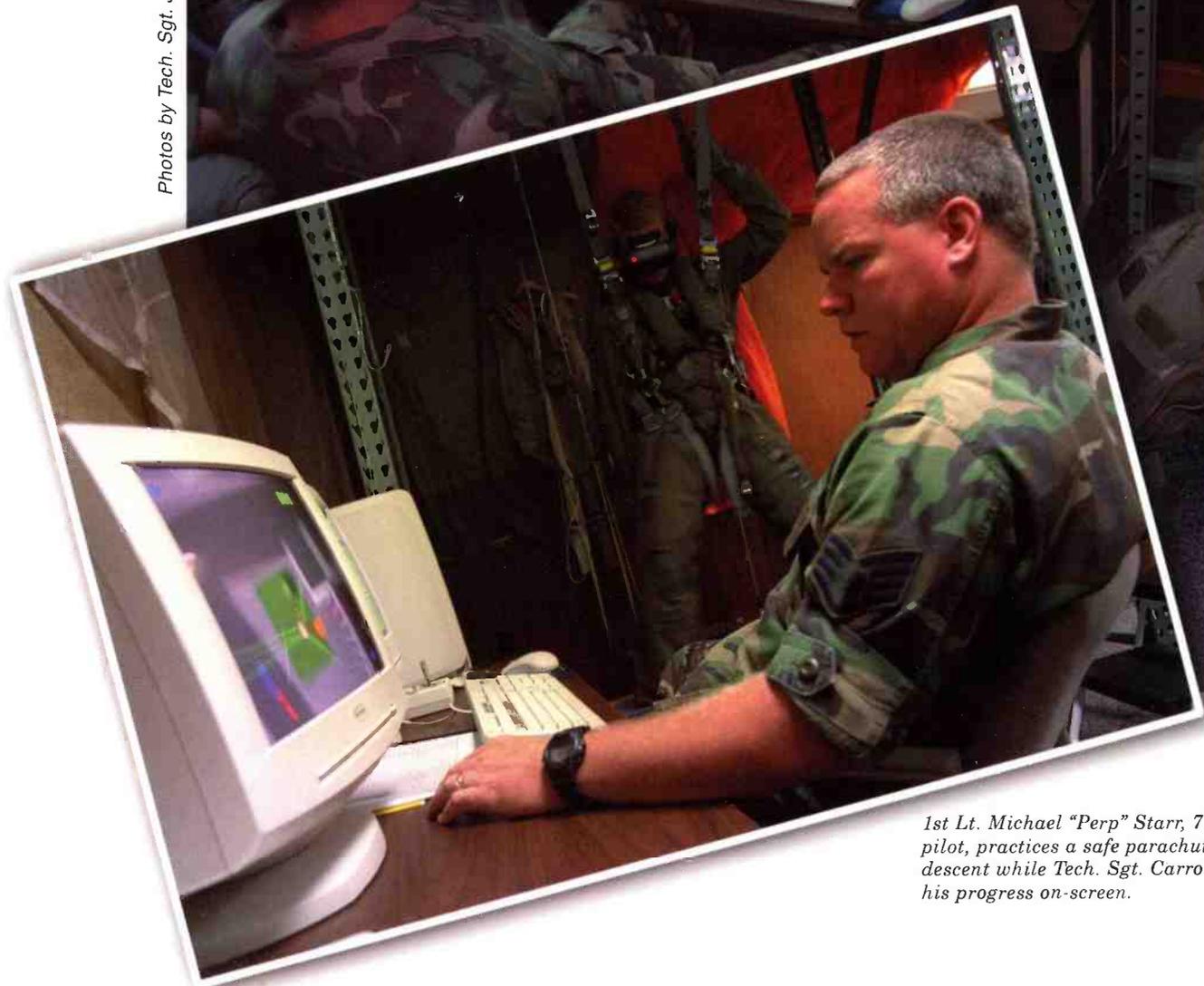
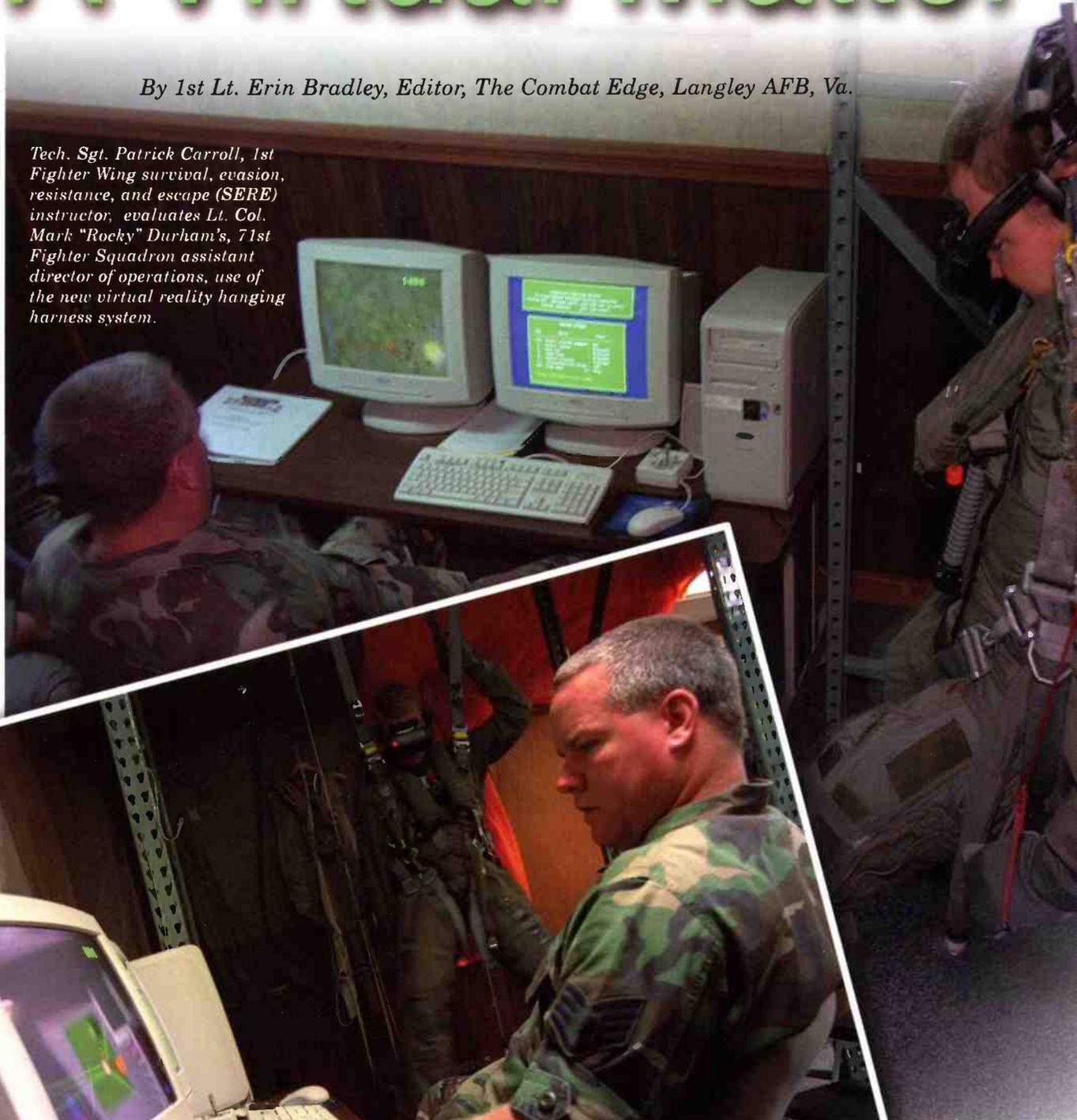
- A three-day supply of water (figuring three gallons per person)
- A three-day stock of non-perishable food (including pet food) and a manual can opener
- A first-aid kit, including prescriptions and over-the-counter medicines
- Flashlights and batteries
- A battery-operated radio
- Sanitation supplies, such as toilet paper and diapers
- Enough cash for a week
- A full tank of gas in the car
- Extra blankets and sleeping bags

A Virtual Matter

By 1st Lt. Erin Bradley, Editor, *The Combat Edge*, Langley AFB, Va.

Tech. Sgt. Patrick Carroll, 1st Fighter Wing survival, evasion, resistance, and escape (SERE) instructor, evaluates Lt. Col. Mark "Rocky" Durham's, 71st Fighter Squadron assistant director of operations, use of the new virtual reality hanging harness system.

Photos by Tech. Sgt. Jack Braden, 1st Communications Squadron



1st Lt. Michael "Perp" Starr, 71 FS F-15 pilot, practices a safe parachute landing descent while Tech. Sgt. Carroll monitors his progress on-screen.

of Life and Death



Air Combat Command has a new weapon, but this weapon doesn't take lives — it saves them.

The weapon is a new virtual reality (VR) system aircrew members use to practice fighting the dangers of ejecting or bailing out from aircraft, and it's now the closest folks can get to experiencing the real thing.

"The problem with the old system was that it was all subjective, since it was up to the experience of the trainer to determine if the trainee executed a maneuver well enough to clear the problem," said Tech.

Sgt. Patrick Carroll, 1st Fighter Wing Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) instructor. "With this system there is no vagueness; either the person does it right or the malfunction doesn't clear. It essentially allows us to 'train like we fight.'"

After investigating a rash of ACC mishaps about two years ago that resulted in several aircrew injuries, the majority of these incidents were found to be attributable to problems in training. Retired General Richard Hawley, the former commander of Air Combat Command, was offered a solution by the now-retired Senior Master Sgt. Ernest Troquille from the 366th Operations Support Squadron at Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho. Troquille demonstrated the virtual reality simulator to the General and, after an evaluation test at Mountain Home in the summer of 1998 turned out quite favorable results, he decided to buy 23 simulators and implement the system throughout all of ACC. Since ACC's purchase in Sept. 1998,

16 of the simulators have been installed, and the rest are being installed at bases at the rate of one per month.

"The differences you will see from one base to the next are generally a factor of the air frame and systems the base is working with," Carroll said. "Examples would be differences in the parachute releases used. Eagles (F-15s) use the Koch style of parachute release, while the Vipers (F-16s) use Frost style releases. The basic system remains essentially the same though, since the emergency canopy is basically the same throughout Air Force aircraft."

The new system enables aircrew members to see what a malfunction will actually look like rather than depending on their imaginations, thus ensuring that they know what they are looking at should they ever have to eject for real. This system is the closest an aircrew member can come to practicing post egress procedures prior to an actual ejection or bailout without sending them to a parachuting course, Carroll said. By reducing that need to send individuals to parachuting courses, the Air Force is able to save money on temporary duty expenses, reduce the risks inherent with such courses, and keep from trying to squeeze more duties into an already packed schedule.

"This system makes the job of teaching parachute descent training much easier since it is a process of doing more and explaining and describing less," Carroll continued. "SERE specialists assigned to any unit have only one true responsibility, and that is to take care of the aircrew members. We take that responsibility very seriously. Any system that advances our ability to ensure that an aircrew member will come back in one piece, peacetime or combat, is always a help."

Wearing a VR head-mounted tracker and display, the trainee can scan a detailed three-dimensional (3D) jump scene. This scene, which can be based on real mission terrain

digital data maps, moves in response to parachute toggle inputs and head motions. This interactive scene provides the trainee with realistic perceptions of turning, drifting and maneuvering. The trainee can look overhead and react to simulated parachute malfunctions, and scan in any direction to avoid collisions and conduct operations with other recorded or networked jumpers.

“You can learn how to handle a situation a million times in a classroom, but without having seen that situation, everything learned is extremely hard to apply due to the unfamiliarity, external stimuli,

and the fact that you just bailed out of an aircraft, which is not something we like to do on a regular basis,” said 1st Lt. Mike Starr, 71st Fighter Squadron pilot. “Having seen what things are supposed to look like before-hand makes it easier to handle the other factors that will be present, like shock, fear, apprehension, and injury.”

By using the simulator, a trainee can complete many jumps in a short time, and an instructor can use these repeated simulator jumps to focus on specific points. One of the most important skills a stu-

dent must learn is judging the effect of wind on the touchdown location. The instructor may select from a variety of wind profiles. This can provide each student with numerous and varied experiences in maneuvering to a desired touchdown spot in the presence of wind, thus developing proficiency in handling winds.

Each instructor tailors the simulator’s parameters, such as start altitude and location, to meet student needs with a wide range of situations. The instructor may freeze the simulation at any time to discuss the progress of a jump, and then may continue or end the

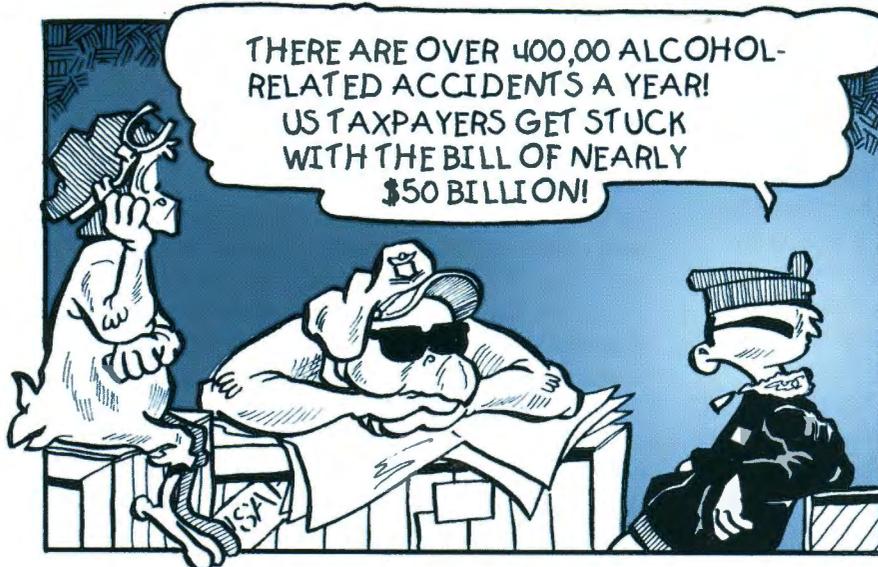
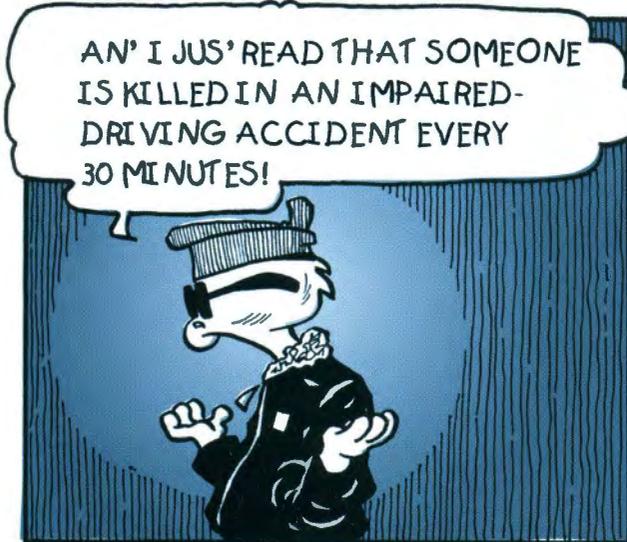
jump. The instructor records all jumps for instructor and trainee review using a playback option. The playback shows the motion as viewed by the trainee and includes a display of the trainee’s toggle inputs. The simulator evaluates completed landings. These evaluations are displayed on the instructor’s screen and can be printed to provide a report of a trainee’s progress.

“There is a definite increase in training effectiveness for several reasons,” said Capt. Damian Olivieri, 71st Fighter Squadron pilot. “First, it requires the flyer to not just recite the post-ejection checklist, but also to complete the steps. For example, the first step is to check the canopy, and the pilot must look up to see if there are any malfunctions. If there is a malfunction, he or she must apply the appropriate action to fix it. Without virtual reality, all one can do is verbally describe the malfunction and what is happening. Another significant increase in training effectiveness includes the actuation of the four-line release; that is the most often overlooked part of the checklist. Now the pilot has the capability to see that it does actually benefit him or her to activate the four-line jettison and use it.”

One of the most important results of simulator training is the increase in aircrew’s self-confidence in using their emergency parachute equipment when necessary. This decreases the natural tendency of personnel in an emergency situation to want to stay in an aircraft even beyond the point when procedures and good judgment would dictate otherwise.

“The virtual reality training cannot simulate the parachute landing fall or opening shock, but it gives one a good idea of how much descent rate affects time to turn the canopy and what one is capable of sustaining,” Olivieri continued. “I think it’s a good middle ground between not having it and the real thing. Given all the different types of malfunctions one could encounter with the canopy, recognizing and solving the problem can literally be a matter of life or death. With VR, one must complete the step successfully by thinking about the problem and using their hands to solve it.” ■

By using the simulator, a trainee can complete many jumps in a short time, and an instructor can use these repeated simulator jumps to focus on specific points.



KEEPING THE MISSION SAFE IN ICELAND

By Capt. Walt Shearer, 85th Operations Squadron , Keflavik NAS, Iceland

Having recently spent three years flying throughout Europe from Royal Air Force (RAF) Mildenhall Air Base in the United Kingdom, I thought I had seen my fair share of challenging conditions. But my first four months in Iceland showed me that I still have much to experience. I've already gotten an eyeful of sea fog, gusty winds and near-freezing wind-chill temperatures — and it's only September as I write this! Iceland is one of those places where oral history is important, so I've also received an earful about winter conditions (i.e. "I remember the blizzard of March '95 — the whiteout lasted for hours..."). To learn more, I decided to interview the commander of the 85th Operations Squadron, Lt. Col. Vinnie Constantino. Now serving his third year in Iceland, Lt. Col. Constantino has the longest continuous flying history of anyone in the 85th Group (although some who deploy here have been doing so for many years).

The mission of the 85 OS is to host the active-duty, Guard and Reserve F-15, F-16 and KC-135 units who deploy for air defense alert,

as well as the HC-130s tasked to refuel permanently-based HH-60s for combat and civil search-and-rescue operations. In addition, NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) fighters are frequent visitors for dissimilar air combat training. This entails a continuous short-response alert — any time of the day or night, quick decisions have to be made about launching aircraft. All said, the 85 OS hosts about 2,000 personnel annually. Also, since Iceland is a short-tour location, the host 85th Group experiences continuous turnover of permanent-party members. To execute the mission under normal circum-



stances would be a significant challenge, but when you combine the personnel tempo (PERSTEMPO) with the harsh weather conditions of Iceland, the task can be extremely challenging. As Col. Mike Henchey, the 85th Group commander, likes to remind us, "We are running a composite flying operation on the Arctic Circle with a skeleton crew. In this environment, ORM (operational risk management) is not a 'program,' it's a necessity."

The following words are Lt. Col. Constantino's views on ORM and deployed operations at Keflavik.

The Air Force has had a presence in Iceland off and on since 1941 — for jet fighters since 1952, tankers and AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) after that, and helicopters since '72, so there's plenty of corporate knowledge about the constantly changing conditions here. For us, identifying the hazards starts with talking to folks before they deploy, and we pay special attention to those who are coming from the warmer climates.

The biggest difference about flying in Iceland versus anywhere else is the convergence of so many hazards. Almost anywhere you fly or deploy you're dealing with something - probably a dozen factors every day - whether it's temperature or fatigue from the long deployment trip. In Iceland, consider that on December 21, for example, the sun doesn't come up until about 10:45 in the morning and sets around 3:30 in the afternoon, the few hours inside of that are pretty dusky, so the light levels are quite low. Aside from the physical limitations of being more difficult to see, it also affects people psychologically, so we constantly have to keep an eye on people's attention levels.

In the wintertime, because of the weather patterns in this part of the globe, there is a continuous freezing and thawing, so we're dealing with ice as opposed to snow. In a lot of ways snow would be easier to handle because

you can simply push it aside or pack it down and operate on top (as they do in some of the Nordic countries and Alaska). Here we're constantly dealing with ice, which is much more dangerous, for both flying and driving.

On the other hand, we typically divert more aircraft in summer than we do in the winter because of the presence of advection fog. When the wind shifts from the south and blows across the cold water, it can bring very thick mist across the airfield. Unfortunately, there are no ground monitoring stations south of Keflavik, because it's all open ocean. So, literally, the visual sighting of fog is often the first indication we have.

In the summer we also deal with light levels, but on the opposite end of the spectrum.

The sun comes up on June 21 at about three in the morning and doesn't set until about 1 a.m. the next day, so there's a physical tendency to want to stay awake. It's tough to get yourself to want to go to sleep, so we have to look at people in the morning and make sure that they've got enough rest to launch or fly airplanes. Plus, when the sun sets, it never really sets. In fact, the definition of civil twilight is when the sun drops more than six degrees below the horizon, which is the case here for a large part of the summer. So even though the sun has set, it's still fairly light out.

Another significant hazard is constant wind, which is both a physical and psychological risk, because its constancy gets to people, and it stays windy year-round here. Winds also affect the ejection situation. Even if you were not to eject over water, the terrain here is

hardened lava and very sharp. It would be possible for someone to survive an ejection only to be dragged in his or her parachute across the lava rock at 40 knots. Also, wind affects the foreign object damage (FOD) situation on the base. There are small stones just off the edges of the taxiways and the runways, and, while the Icelanders who sweep the airfield do a great job keeping those out of the

The biggest difference about flying in Iceland versus anywhere else is the convergence of so many hazards. Almost anywhere you fly or deploy you're dealing with something — probably a dozen factors every day...

way, it requires a continuous vigilance from everybody to make sure they don't get blown back onto the surface and ingested by an engine.

Some of our shelters have wind limits on the operation of the doors, so we've got to keep an eye on that. Because of the mountainous terrain and the proximity of the jet stream, we get some pretty bad turbulence and wind shear. It's not uncommon to see 50 or 60 knots of wind at instrument pattern altitude here in the winter, and it's often from a different direction than at the surface. Plus, the freezing level is usually at 1,000 to 4,000 feet — right where you'd be flying before landing. We've had volcanic activity, meteor showers — one pilot even thought he flew through one!

Some people talk about this being like another planet, with all the strange things you see — steam vents, bubbling mud, cats flying through the air...

Speaking of cats (and dogs), we have frequent precipitation, so obviously when you add wind and slick runways, you can create problems for stopping airplanes or keeping them

on the runway. The shifting wind also causes us to change runways frequently. That, in turn, creates a situation where we have to keep track of arrestment cable status, for example.

Sea states, although technically not a hazard day-to-day, go into our consideration for flying because, if an aircrew were to go down where the swells were large, it would be an extremely difficult rescue situation. In the summertime seas average 3-7 feet. In the wintertime the average height is probably 13-15 feet and we often see days where the waves exceed 20 feet or more. So, of course, we have to wrap the availability of search and rescue assets into our decisions.

Our squadron has to consider four different types of aircraft. The fighters, being short wheel-base vehicles, can have a more difficult time on ice than large aircraft, although you're still dealing with poor braking action. Once the airfield is treated, it tends to be patchy ice here, so it's more likely that a large aircraft would have one or two wheels on a dry surface, and the E-model tankers at least have reverse thrust. Obviously, the fighters have to consider the runway arrestment cable situation. In fact, there have been times in winter that, because of the braking action, we've had to recover all aircraft into an approach-end cable to safely get them on the ground.

Another consideration for fighters is that they just don't carry as much fuel and the

nearest suitable divert base is in Scotland 750 miles away.

So, the possibilities can include holding overhead for snow plowing and ice removal or simply diverting.

Obviously, as less maneuverable aircraft, the heavies — especially the KC-135s with jet engines — are more vulnerable to bird strikes, so

we keep a close

eye on that. There's obviously an active bird control program, but even so we sometimes stand-down the KC-135.

Interestingly, again because of the braking action considerations, take-off problems are often more critical in the KC-135 as their fuel load sometimes gets plussed-up due to mission requirements. Another consideration for the tankers is the possibility of having to apply deicing fluid before takeoff. The HC-130 probably has the least trouble here. Relatively speaking it's got a short take-off and landing. And obviously propeller aircraft would be somewhat less vulnerable to bird strikes, since they have a smaller intake area.



We have to consider the maintenance situation as well — that is, both the people and the airplanes. Although we have shelters for the aircraft, we do have folks — the quick-check crew, for example — who are out near the end of runway and exposed to the weather. Even on a summer day with temperatures in the 50's, the wind-chill can be sub-freezing.

What's frustrating is that weather forecasting in this part of the world is not an exact science — apparently, the quantitative models aren't very accurate at these latitudes. So, our permanent party people also have to continually assess the confidence of the weather forecast. That can be critical some days as we could have a relatively inexperienced forecaster, and maybe incomplete satellite imagery, so an experienced supervisor or aircrew can then make a judgment call about our confidence level.

We're in the hosting business in a big way, so our indoctrination program is very strong. In some cases, visitors might think it's excessive, but once they get their first dose of Iceland's weather, I think they appreciate what we do. People who come to Iceland get extensive briefings. Besides the standard briefings, like local area procedures, they get safety briefings, theater indoctrination, intelligence reports, and local survival. We keep items in our read file longer than most other units because we have people rotating through here frequently.

One of the good things about hosting is that we have sharp visitors coming and going weekly, so we get plenty of recommendations on ways to improve our operations. Over the past year, we've had PACAF (Pacific Air Forces) and USAFE (U.S. Air Forces in Europe) fighter units here for the first time ever, and they've pointed out a few items that we'd overlooked to make the process better. Also, we get flyers up here who used to be stationed at Keflavik a while back, and they sometimes remind us of some smart things that used to happen back when the air defense mission was more active.

As the hosts here and as the supervisors, we have control measures in place that have been tested over time. We're pretty confident, but obviously you can't completely eliminate the risk. By continually reevaluating and reassessing the risks, we can then modify our plan if we have to. The weather here can change very rapidly. I'm sure everybody's

heard the saying, "If you don't like the weather, just wait a few minutes." I'd say that about Iceland for sure. I'd also say, "If you don't like the weather, just look in a different direction." I've seen fog in one quadrant, blue skies in another, rain in a third, and snow on the other side. Because of all this uncertainty, we have some checks and balances. For example, if we've made a decision based on the weather forecast, but the forecast turned out to be wrong, we have situations where the KC-135 would be on a heightened alert status while the fighters are flying and could scramble quickly and get the needed fuel to fighters.

When you consider that there is some pressure in today's environment to get sorties and, because of the weather patterns in winter, people will often sit for days and not fly, that creates additional pressure when the conditions are marginal to get airplanes and people off the ground. We make those calls literally daily up here and we're not always comfortable with those calls, but that's what risk management is all about. Sometimes there are going to be marginal situations, and we then we depend on the skill of the flyers to make it happen. That's really the bottom line: professional aviating will carry the day, and we've seen that in spades up here, but you can never take the risk completely out of flying.

As a final review we do a formal step brief before people leave the building to fly. It's just our way of assuring that folks who are walking out the door have considered all the risks. We run down the airfield status, instrument approaches, navigational aids, runway condition, braking action, any Notices to Airmen (NOTAMs) that might have been missed before, we talk about winds aloft in case there has to be a divert, mission complexity, aircrew proficiency, and more. But mainly we highlight the risks of the day to see how the picture looks once they're all wrapped together.

We talk about operations at Keflavik as being a seasoning experience for most people. Pilots definitely get better at flying in tough conditions as they spend a little time here. The deployed units want their younger folks to get that seasoning, and you can't get that seasoning unless you sample the hazardous conditions. You want to give them some experience. As we become a more expeditionary force, we need to have corporate knowledge about operating anywhere in the world, no matter what the conditions. ■

By Debbie Allen and Larry Billups, 1st Medical Operations Squadron, Langley AFB, Va.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

From a Safety Perspective

It is estimated that an act of violence occurs every 15 seconds in the United States. Each year, 150,000 incidents of domestic violence in America involve a firearm and 3.9 million women in America are abused annually.

What medical experts know is that most folks want to provide a safe environment for their families, spouses and children. Yet, we also know that good intentions don't always end well. It is estimated that an act of violence occurs every 15 seconds in the United States. Each year, 150,000 incidents of domestic violence in America involve a firearm and 3.9 million women in America are abused annually. More women are beaten, raped and killed by current or former intimate partners than by anyone else.

Children who witness domestic violence suffer behavioral and cognitive problems. Boys especially are more likely to become aggressive and engage in criminal behavior. In America, the cost of treating domestic violence injuries amounts to \$31 billion per year. At least half of all battered women are

abused when they are pregnant. Virtually all females in alcohol rehabilitation programs are victims of partner or parental violence. If you see or hear an incidence of domestic violence, please report it. Men may also be victims of violence, but these situations are underreported.

What can you do? If you are a commander, consider inviting a speaker to your workplace to speak on subjects that help resolve marital and relationship conflicts. If you are a First Sergeant, remember that early intervention is critical to reducing incidents of domestic violence. If you are a supervisor, learn to recognize the symptoms of abuse and discuss a safety plan. If you are a victim, contact the local Family Advocacy Office or call 911 in an emergency. If you feel that you are losing control, GET HELP and STOP THE VIOLENCE.

IN AN EMERGENCY

If you are at home and are being threatened or attacked:

1. Stay away from the kitchen (the abuser can find weapons, like knives);
2. Stay away from the bathroom, closet or small spaces where the abuser can trap you;
3. Get to a room with a door or window to escape;
4. Call 911 (or your local emergency number) right away for help; get the dispatcher's name;
5. Think about a neighbor or friend you can run to for help;
6. If a police officer comes, tell him/her what happened; get his/her name and badge number;
7. Get medical help if you are hurt;
8. Take pictures of bruises or injuries; and/or
9. Call a domestic violence program or shelter and ask for help.

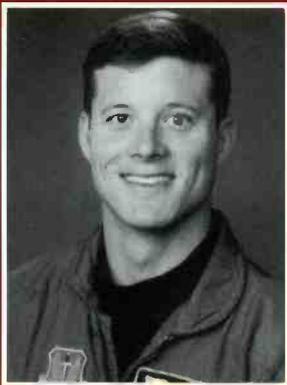
PROTECTING YOURSELF AT HOME

1. Memorize emergency phone numbers;
2. Keep a phone in a room that can be locked from the inside; if possible, get a cellular phone that you can keep with you all the time;
3. Plan an escape route and teach it to your children;
4. Pack a bag with important things you'd need if you have to leave quickly; and
5. Include cash, car keys and important information such as: court papers, passport, birth certificates, and medical records.

KEEPING YOUR CHILDREN SAFE

1. Teach them not to get in the middle of the fight;
2. Teach them how to get to safety;
3. Teach them who to call for help;
4. Teach them to stay out of the kitchen;
5. Give the principal at school or the daycare a copy of any applicable court order; tell them not to release your children to anyone without talking to you first; and
6. Make sure the school knows not to give your address or phone number to ANYONE. ■

Monthly Awards



PILOT SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*Capt. Michael J. Wang
388th Fighter Wing, Hill AFB, Utah*

After the termination of an air-to-air engagement during a large-force exercise, Capt. Wang noticed the red light in his gear handle was illuminated. Upon inspection of his aircraft, his wingman advised that his right main landing gear door was open slightly. Capt. Wang referenced the checklist and maneuvered for a straight-in landing at Hill AFB. With the gear handle down, the right main landing gear failed to come down, and the red light stayed on in the handle. Capt. Wang's wingman verified the gear door was open, but the right main landing gear was still inside the wheel well.

Capt. Hanlon, the most experienced pilot in the formation, subsequently rejoined on Capt. Wang. After recycling the gear and pulling +2.5 G to zero G, the gear still indicated unsafe. At this time, Capt. Wang had approximately 10 minutes of fuel left, and the checklist recommended that an approach end arrestment should be attempted while retaining the wing tanks.

Capt. Wang made one last attempt to free the gear with positive G's, and in so doing, Capt. Hanlon stated that it appeared the right main landing gear had come down; however, it still indicated unsafe in the cockpit. Upon closer inspection, Capt. Hanlon noticed that the main strut had sheared, and the gear was now hanging only by the lower trunnion. With the gear assembly in this position, the aircraft could ground loop upon initial contact with the runway and possibly cartwheel the aircraft. At this time, the Supervisor of Flying (SOF) initiated a "conference hotel" with the manufacturer of the aircraft, Lockheed Martin. With less than six minutes of fuel remaining, Capt. Hanlon and Capt. Wang quickly reviewed their options while the SOF conferred with the Lockheed Martin representative. Ejection was now becoming a likely result because of the position of the right main landing gear.

The Lockheed Martin engineers recommended Capt. Wang open his refueling door to decrease the pressurization in the wing tanks and take the approach end cable. Capt. Wang had less than four minutes of fuel remaining, and therefore had only one shot at the cable engagement. If there was a missed engagement the only remaining option was a controlled bailout.

Ensuring that all the possible checklists had been run, Capt. Wang lined up on final and flew a shallow, power-on approach touching down 700 feet prior to the cable. He felt the right main gear start to pull to the right, but was able to control the aircraft with aileron and rudder. As the aircraft engaged the barrier, Capt. Wang felt the sudden deceleration, and the aircraft began to yaw right. The aircraft came to rest approximately 700 feet past the cable, right of center line, resting on the left main landing gear, the nose gear, and the right ejection rack on station seven. Capt. Wang shut down the aircraft and egressed normally with the assistance of the Fire Department.

FLIGHT LINE SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*Senior Airman Travis W. Walker
94th Fighter Squadron
1st Fighter Wing, Langley AFB, Va.*

Airman Walker was performing his duty as a hot pit refuel supervisor (A-Man) May 21st. He and his crew had just attempted to service four F-15 aircraft, all of which had failed for fuel master check. After the fifth aircraft was marshaled to the hot refuel pad and also failed the same master fuel check, Airman Walker asked the refueling unit operator if it was possible that the refueling truck might be at fault. The operator agreed there was a possibility the truck may not be operating correctly, so he decided to walk over to request a new truck from his supervisor. The refueling operator, not being familiar with the hazards associated with the intakes of an operating F-15 engine, walked directly in front of the non-running number-two engine and was about to duck under the nose of the aircraft and be within inches of the number-one operating engine and a potentially life-threatening situation. Alert to the situation at hand, Airman Walker recognized the threat posed to the individual and immediately had the pilot shut the operating engine down. Airman Walker's superior situational awareness and decisive actions were responsible for not only preventing the destruction of valuable combat resources, but possible loss of life as well.



AIRCREW SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*Cpts. Robert J. Reichert, Gilbert W. Baker, Brynt L. Query, and Todd Shields, and Staff Sgt. John Anderson
963rd Airborne Air Control Squadron
552nd Air Control Wing, Tinker AFB, Okla.*

The crew of Sentry 33 departed Tinker AFB for a routine weapons training mission supporting the 366th Fighter Wing. While passing through 500 feet AGL, the crew heard a loud boom and felt an uncommanded yaw to the right. Capt. Reichert

took control of the aircraft from Capt. Baker, who had conducted the takeoff, and initiated the engine failure/fire checklist while accelerating to minimum flap retraction airspeed. The crew confirmed their E-3 Sentry aircraft suffered a catastrophic engine failure to the number-four engine. After retracting the flaps, Capt. Baker declared an emergency with approach control and requested a downwind turn in anticipation of a possible engine fire. The crew then conducted a visual inspection of the number-four engine nacelle from the cockpit to ascertain the possibility of collateral damage to the number-three engine and visible signs of fire. Determining that damage was limited to the number-four engine, the crew requested a block altitude from 7,000 to 10,000 feet and clearance to the Tinker fuel dump area to adjust gross weight. Once established in the area, the fuel dump checklist was initiated and the crew commenced to offload 70,000 pounds of fuel. This measure brought the aircraft gross weight down to maximum allowable limits for landing. Sgt. Anderson computed revised landing data for the planned three-engine recovery into Tinker and had it crosschecked by Capt. Reichert and the Supervisor of Flying (SOF). Once landing data was confirmed correct, the crew initiated the approach checklist for an Instrument Landing System (ILS) approach to Runway 17 at Tinker. From this point the crew executed an uneventful three-engine recovery at Tinker.



WEAPONS SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*Tech. Sgt. John A. Bontempo, Staff Sgt. Travis J. Bolt
355th Equipment Maintenance Squadron, 355th Wing,
Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz.*



An explosive shipment consisting of two containers of dynamite arrived at Davis-Monthan AFB via commercial truck August 20. One container held 12 sticks of Nitroglycerin Dynamite and the other held 12 sticks of Ammonia Nitrate Dynamite. Upon arrival at the

Munitions Storage Area (MSA), Sgt. Bolt conducted a receiving inspection. The containers appeared to be in good condition, but due to the lack of "lot historical records" he determined that the containers would have to be opened to verify contents and condition. After opening the container of Nitroglycerin Dynamite he removed one package of six sticks that was wrapped in barrier material. After opening the package he pulled one stick out and began to remove it from its individual barrier material. Sgt. Bolt stopped immediately when he noticed a clear yellowish colored fluid bleeding from the end of the stick. The fluid remained in a beaded state on the barrier material. At this point Sgt. Bolt made the appropriate notifications to declare a ground emergency. After Sgt. Bontempo and EOD arrived on the scene the container of Ammonia Nitrate Dynamite was opened and found to be in the same condition. Both containers were removed from the MSA and destroyed by EOD personnel. Sgt. Bontempo researched AFI 91-204 and found that this incident did not meet the criteria to be a reportable mishap. He was not satisfied and contacted Master Sgt. Solomon at ACC/SEW and asked him if there was any way to notify other bases/services. Sgt. Solomon instructed Sgt. Bontempo to do a High Accident Potential message and send it out to the military weapons community. Due to the acts of these two individuals, a 100-percent inspection of all MSA's has been directed and both lot numbers of dynamite have been destroyed.



GROUND SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*Tech. Sgt. Ted A. Scholl, Staff Sgt. Gregory S. Smith
and Senior Airman Zachary J. Moore
33rd Maintenance Squadron, 33rd Wing, Eglin AFB, Fla.*

An in-shop fire occurred during the routine maintenance practice of mating an F-15 F100-PW100 front compressor fan drive turbine module shaft (hub) Low Pressure Turbine (LPT) and the third state turbine disc, components of the jet engine. The Technical Order (T.O.) process calls for a disc heater to be inserted into the third-stage turbine and heated to 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 20 minutes. This allows the third-stage disc to expand, ensuring the close tolerance fit of the hub and disc being mated. It was during this process that the thermostat of the heater control box

malfunctioned, allowing the disc heater to rise in temperature to an estimated 600 degrees Fahrenheit. The extreme heat caused the disc heater's internal components to overheat. Amn. Moore noticed smoke billowing from the heater and, almost instantaneously, it burst into flames. Recognizing the potential for disaster, Amn. Moore jumped into action by alerting his supervisors. Sgts. Scholl and Smith responded to the incident site with a dry chemical fire extinguisher. Sgt. Scholl made an initial attempt to extinguish the flaming heater, but, due to its position five feet above the floor, the fire retardant only knocked the flames down. Sgt. Scholl locked out the heater controls power source and proceeded to alert the fire department by means of a fire pull box. The fire pull box failed to sound the alarm, so Sgt. Smith sent Amn. Moore to notify the fire department via a 911 phone call and begin an orderly evacuation of the facility. During the evacuation and while waiting for the fire department to arrive, Sgt. Smith depleted an additional extinguisher on the flaming heater, this time successfully extinguishing the flames. The aerospace propulsion specialists and apprentice acted swiftly to identify and extinguish an in-shop fire, preventing collateral damage to valuable Air Force equipment and injury to personnel.



UNIT SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*83rd Fighter Weapons Squadron
53rd Wing, Tyndall AFB, Fla.*

The mission of the 83rd Fighter Weapons Squadron (FWS) is to test and evaluate man, missile and machine. During the month of July, the 83 FWS hosted three ACC combat units. These units flew 34 combat-coded aircraft a total of 534 sorties and 614 mishap-free flying hours. Sorties included live missile firings, live air-to-air gunnery, and collateral Basic Fighter Maneuvering (BFM), Air Combat Maneuvering (ACM) and Dissimilar Air Combat Training (DACT) missions.

The squadron's combat munitions unit (CMU) is the only one of its kind in the active Air Force. The CMU maintenance personnel work in a highly demanding environment and are exposed to unique explosive hazards during the tactical to telemetry (TM) reconfiguration of missiles. This involves the removal of the warhead and its replacement with TM packs as well as the rewiring of the missile. That month, the CMU managed the breakout, inspection, transportation, loading and firing of five AIM-7s, nine AIM-9s, six AIM-120s, 8,000 rounds of 20mm ammunition, 11,330 bundles of chaff, and 5,850 flares worth over \$12 million.

The vigilance demonstrated by the 83 FWS maintenance personnel and supervisors also ensured 100 explosive missile operations and the mishap-free delivery of 40 missiles to the flight line and munitions storage area. They inspected and repacked nine shipments, weighing 8,700 pounds, of excess missile components generated during the tactical to TM reconfiguration of AIM-7M, AIM-9M and AIM-120A/B missiles, without a single weapons mishap.

The 83 FWS telemetry personnel are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of 70- and 110-foot antenna towers used to capture Weapon System Evaluation Program (WSEP) data. Training and safety are of paramount importance in this duty section. Telemetry personnel have spent over 29 man-hours climbing these towers to perform alignment and repairs on its two 8-foot dish-tracking antennas without incident.

A large part of the squadron's ground safety program is directed toward vehicle safety. The 83 FWS deployment liaison section operates a fleet of 38 vehicles and 12 bomb lift trucks, which are used by both squadron and deployed unit personnel. On an average, WSEP vehicles accumulate approximately 3,400 miles and 200 hours of use each month. Briefings by the deployment liaison flight on traffic and vehicle safety to each arriving unit directly resulted in zero mishaps this past quarter. The 83 FWS also has several active motorcycle riders, all certified and trained, who have logged hundreds of mishap-free miles.

The unit's strong safety program, of which Operational Risk Management (ORM) is a monumental part, has carried over into all squadron personnel's official and recreational pursuits. Squadron members competed in four intramural sports that month without a single injury. During that month, the 83 FWS received its annual facilities safety assessment. The overall rating of "zero findings" is a direct reflection on the unit's safety posture and pride in the workplace. The 83 FWS, with its record of zero reportable mishaps for July is proof positive that a sound safety program that the entire squadron embraces can ensure improved mission effectiveness, while conducting mishap-free mission accomplishment.



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The Sobering Facts About Impaired Driving

Chances are you, a friend or a family member have been involved in an alcohol-related motor vehicle crash, resulting in personal injury or property damage. In fact, recent studies have shown that three in 10 people will become involved in an alcohol-related crash in their lifetimes.

Last year alone, *15,936 traffic fatalities were attributed to impaired driving. Remarkably, these numbers represent a 38.4 percent decrease from previous years. While these results are encouraging, the fact remains that too many lives are lost each year to a tragedy that can be avoided. That's why the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has initiated the "You Drink &

Drive, You Lose" campaign, with the goal of reducing the current fatality rate to no more than 11,000 per year by the year 2005. Through this effort, NHTSA hopes to educate the public about the dangers associated with impaired driving, creating not only a change in attitude, but a change in behavior.

Editor's Note:

Although the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has a commendable goal of reducing the U.S. impaired driving fatality rate to no more than 11,000 by 2005 — a significant decrease — the Air Force believes that, while difficult to achieve, a fatality rate of zero is the only acceptable goal for service members.

What Constitutes Impairment?

Impairment begins with one alcoholic drink — whether it is "hard" liquor, wine or beer. Once alcohol is consumed it is absorbed by an individual's blood system, and can be measured as Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC). Studies show that even one drink decreases one's ability to react quickly — a factor that can prove fatal when an impaired individual gets behind the wheel of an automobile.

*Based on preliminary figures from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS).

How Do I Know When I'm Past My Limit?

While accepted BAC levels vary from state to state, the rate of absorption in one's body varies according to an individual's height, weight, experience with alcohol, and food consumed prior to alcohol consumption. It is a good idea to assign a designated driver and/or plan alternate modes of transportation when even a minimal amount of alcohol is consumed in any given situation.

What Will Happen to Me If I Get Caught?

If an individual is found to be impaired while driving, he/she will experience criminal repercussions. These repercussions can include fines, the loss of driving privileges, incarceration, higher insurance rates, and a criminal record. Law enforcement officers are cracking down on impaired drivers, stepping-up their policing activities on a regular basis, and implementing a network of sobriety checkpoints and saturation patrols throughout the year.

Though the question of being caught is a major factor in the impaired driving problem, the public needs, instead, to ask "what will happen if I don't get caught?" This answer is much more frightening and carries with it far more dire consequences than fines, prosecution or the loss of one's license. The destruction impaired drivers inflict upon their communities is immeasurable. Everyone is affected by the impaired driver's irresponsible and malicious behavior, whether it's from higher taxes or the emotional destruction a family experiences after losing a loved one. Because, no matter how you look at it, when *You Drink & Drive, You Lose*.

What You Can Do About Impaired Driving

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) offers the following suggestions to help fight impaired driving:

- Your best defense against a drunk driver is to wear your safety belt and be sure children are properly secured in child safety seats.
- Be a responsible host. Serve food and have non-alcoholic drinks available. Don't let your guests drive after drinking alcohol and never serve alcohol to someone under the age of 21.

- Write letters to the editor of local newspapers expressing your concern over drunk driving and underage drinking in your community.

- Never ride in a car with someone who has been drinking — call a cab or ask a friend to drive you home.

- Support measures to strengthen drunk driving and victims rights laws by contacting elected officials.

- Report drunk drivers immediately to area law enforcement from a car phone or pay phone with the license plate number, description of the vehicle, and the direction in which it was traveling. Keep a safe distance from anyone driving erratically and do not try to intervene yourself.

If you or someone you love becomes the victim of a drunk driving crash, call 800-GET-MADD or your local MADD chapter for victim assistance and support.

Tips for Party Givers

The Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), a member of the National 3D Prevention Month Coalition, offers the following ideas:

1. When your guests arrive, collect their car keys. That way, when they are ready to leave, they must get a second opinion on whether they're sober enough to drive home.
2. Always serve food with alcohol. High protein and carbohydrate foods like cheese and meats are especially good. They stay in the stomach much longer, which slows the rate at which the body absorbs alcohol.
3. Have several jiggers or self-measuring one-ounce bottle spouts at the bar to mix drinks. Guests are less likely to drink excessively when standard measures are used.
4. If you serve alcoholic punch, use a non-carbonated base such as fruit juice. The body absorbs alcohol faster when mixed with carbonation.
5. Serve non-alcoholic beverages. It is possible that some of your guests will not want to drink alcohol.
6. Do not force drinks on your guests or rush

- to refill their glasses when empty. Some guests may not wish to appear rude and will accept drinks they do not want.
7. Stop serving alcohol about two hours before the party is over. Guests then have time for their bodies to absorb the alcohol consumed. Serve coffee or other non-alcoholic beverages as well as food.
 8. If you observe a guest drinking too much:
 - Engage him/her in conversation to slow down the drinking.
 - Offer high protein food like pizza, shrimp or spareribs.
 - Offer to make the next drink, using less alcohol and mixing it with a non-carbonated base.

When the Party's Over

If one of your guests has been drinking and shouldn't drive, please don't give them back their car keys and let them drive. They could hurt themselves or others and maybe just a little persuasion from you could mean the difference between life and death.

- Suggest that you or a sober friend drive your alcohol impaired friend home. Their car can always be picked up at another time.

- Suggest that your impaired friend stay overnight in your home. This may sound inconvenient, but you could be saving your friend's, or someone else's life.

- Have your friend taken home in a taxi. Pay for the ride yourself. It's hard to object to a free ride.

- Whatever you do, don't give in. Friends don't let friends drink and then drive. In the morning, you'll have a safer and maybe an even closer friend.

REMEMBER:

One drink equals five ounces of 12 percent wine OR 12 ounces of five percent beer OR 1 1/2 ounces of 80 proof liquor. Neither coffee nor a cold shower will help sober someone up. Only time can do that.

Non-Alcoholic "Mocktails"

Thanks to the Washington Regional Alcohol Program and the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles for these recipes. . .

Designated Driver's Delight

- 2 1/2 oz. orange juice
- 1 1/4 oz. pineapple juice
- 1 1/4 oz. cranberry juice
- 2 scoops vanilla ice cream
- 3-4 frozen strawberries

Mix in a blender until smooth. Serve in a hurricane glass with an orange slice and a strawberry.

The Enforcer

- Fresh brewed coffee
- Whipped cream
- Chocolate sprinkles
- Sugar cubes
- Cinnamon

Pour coffee into a mug and stir in two sugar cubes and a dash of cinnamon. Top with whipped cream and chocolate sprinkles.

Citrus Collins

- 2 oz. orange or grapefruit juice
- 1 oz. lemon juice
- 1 oz. simple syrup*

Fill a 10-12 oz. glass with ice. Add ingredients above and then fill with club soda. Garnish with 1/2 orange slice and a cherry.

* HINT: Simple Syrup...In a saucepan, combine two cups sugar and one cup water. Bring to a boil, stirring until sugar dissolves. Boil gently for five minutes. Makes about two cups. Will keep six months in the refrigerator.

Red Delicious Punch

Pour two bottles of nonalcoholic sparkling cider into a punch bowl. Mix in one quart of cranberry juice. Float a frozen ice ring and garnish with sprigs of mint.

Faux Kir

For each serving, half fill a large wine glass with chilled white grape juice. Stir in one tablespoon nonalcoholic grenadine syrup. Fill with cold raspberry ginger ale.

New Year's Eve Kiss

Pour two oz. passion fruit juice in a champagne flute. Fill with club soda. ■

'Twas a Safe Night Before Christmas

As you celebrate the holiday season with family and friends, please do it safely. Common sense or operational risk management plays a big role in keeping us all healthy and safe. As you celebrate the holiday in your traditional manner, remember Safety's version of this classic holiday poem; it could help ensure you'll be back with us to meet the challenges of the new millennium.

By Lt. Col. Thomas Arko, 7th Bomb Wing Safety, Dyess AFB, Texas

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that Saint Nicholas soon would be there;

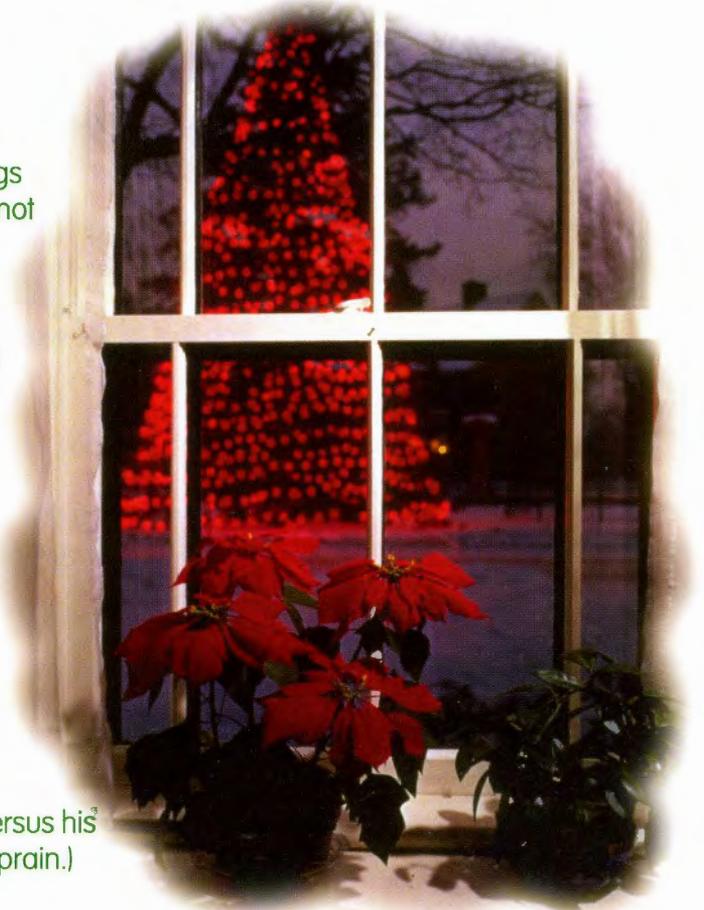
(The reason the children were sleeping so well was because mom and dad made sure that the stockings were made from fire retardant material and would not be exposed to the heat of the fireplace.)

The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;
And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled down for a long winter's nap,

(Mom and dad knew they needed a good night's sleep so they would be alert for the long drive to grandma's tomorrow.)

When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.

(Of course lifting the heavy window using his legs versus his back, but not before stretching properly to avoid a sprain.)



The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow
Gave the luster of mid-day to objects below,
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer,
With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.

(Who, by the way, was wearing his reflective belt to help him stay visible during periods of darkness.)

More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,

(But well within the posted speed limits for sleighs and appropriate for the current road conditions.)

And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name;
"Now, Dasher! Now, Dancer! Now, Prancer and Vixen!
On, Comet! On Cupid! On, Donner and Blitzen!
To the top of the porch! To the top of the wall!
Now dash away! Dash away! Dash away all!"
As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky,
So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,
With the sleigh full of toys, and St. Nicholas too.
And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.

(But Santa knew the importance of fall protection and each reindeer was decked-out in a full harness and secured to the roof.)

As I drew in my hand, and was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.

(After unbuckling his seatbelt and checking that all fire was out!)

He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;

(But Santa's personal protective equipment, consisting of a proper respirator and eye protection, kept the soot from interfering with his job performance.)

A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,

(Which wasn't a problem since he was wearing a back brace to support heavy lifting.)

And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack.
His eyes — how they twinkled! His dimples — how merry!



His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow;
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke, it encircled his head like a wreath;

(Though he knew the dangers of smoking and only smoked a tobacco-free herbal potpourri on this one special night of the year to leave a trail of good-scented cheer.)

He had a broad face and a little round belly,
That shook when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly.
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,

(But he only put on some extra pounds each year to protect himself from the harsh North Pole winters and for a "jolly" effect, and he always began a rigorous exercise program just after the holidays to maintain a healthy body weight.)

And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose;

(But not before he cleared his path of all obstructions.)

He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle.
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night."

(The elves also exclaimed wishes of good cheer as Santa, their wisely designated driver, drove them off to the post-gift distribution party.)

Hopefully our safety spin on this classic will help you have a joyous season. I use the four "R's" to keep all of the hustle and bustle of the holidays in perspective.

1. **REJOICE** for the Lord's blessings on you and your family.
2. **REFLECT** on your accomplishments and remember to thank all who helped make 1999 another good year.
3. **RELAX** and enjoy your well-earned break.
4. **REMEMBER** to BE SAFE!

May your holiday season be filled with happiness and joy.

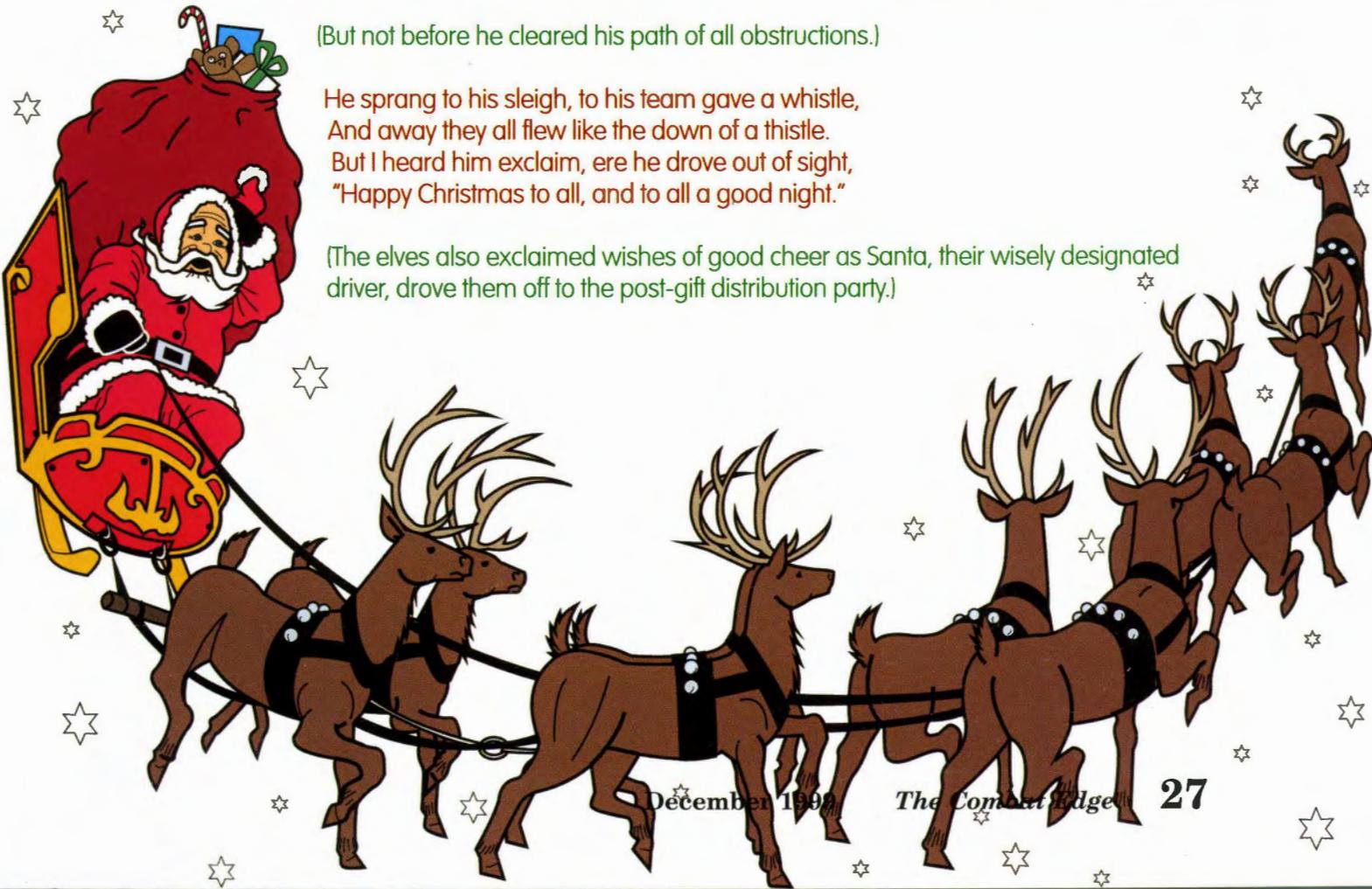


Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jack Braden, 1st Communications Squadron

UNDERSTANDING THE S

*Courtesy of the American Association of
Suicidology*

Be Aware of the Warning Signs

There is no typical suicide victim. It happens to young and old, rich and poor. Fortunately there are some common warning signs that, when acted upon, can save lives. Here are some signs to look for:

A person might be suicidal if he or she:

- Talks about committing suicide
- Has trouble eating or sleeping
- Experiences drastic changes in behavior
- Withdraws from friends and/or social activities
- Loses interest in hobbies, work, school, etc.
- Prepares for death by making out a will and final arrangements

ING AND HELPING SUICIDAL PERSON

- Gives away prized possessions
- Has attempted suicide before
- Takes unnecessary risks
- Has had recent severe losses
- Is preoccupied with death and dying
- Loses interest in their personal appearance
- Increases their use of alcohol or drugs

What To Do

Here are some ways to be helpful to someone who is threatening suicide:

- Be direct. Talk openly and matter-of-factly about suicide.
- Be willing to listen. Allow expressions of feelings. Accept the feelings.
- Be non-judgmental. Don't debate whether suicide is right or wrong, or feelings are good or bad.
- Don't lecture on the value of life.
- Get involved. Become available. Show interest and support.
- Don't dare him or her to do it.
- Don't act shocked. This will put distance between you.
- Don't be sworn to secrecy. Seek support.
- Offer hope that alternatives are available but do not offer glib reassurance.
- Take action. Remove means, such as guns or stockpiled pills.
- Get help from persons or agencies specializing in crisis intervention and suicide prevention.

Be Aware of Feelings

Many people at some time in their lives think about committing suicide. Most decide to live, because they eventually come to realize that the crisis is temporary and death is permanent. On the other hand, people having a crisis sometimes perceive their dilemma as inescapable and feel an utter loss of control.

These are some of the feelings and things they experience:

- Can't stop the pain
- Can't think clearly
- Can't make decisions
- Can't see any way out
- Can't sleep, eat or work
- Can't get out of depression
- Can't make the sadness go away
- Can't see a future without pain
- Can't see themselves as worthwhile
- Can't get someone's attention
- Can't seem to get control

**If you experience these feelings, get help!
If someone you know exhibits these symptoms, offer help!**

Contact:

- A community mental health agency
- A private therapist or counselor
- A school counselor or psychologist
- A family physician
- A suicide prevention or crisis center

The purpose of the American Association of Suicidology (AAS) is to understand and prevent suicide. AAS promotes research, public awareness programs, and education and training for professionals, survivors, and interested lay persons. AAS serves as a national clearinghouse for information on suicide. It has many resources and publications that are available to the general public and to its members. For membership, publications and resource information, contact:

American Association of Suicidology
4201 Connecticut, Ave., NW. Suite 408
Washington, DC 20008
(202) 237-2280
www.suicidology.org

Ground Safety Stats

ACC Losses for FY 99

(1 Oct 98 - 30 Sep 99)

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

Ground Mishap Fatalities

8 AF	
9 AF	
12 AF	
DRU	

NOTE: Preliminary data for FY 99

Number of Ground Mishaps/Dollar Losses

	Class A	Class B	Class C
8 AF	6/\$1,318,037	0/0	156/\$992,387
9 AF	3/\$376,125	0/0	139/\$970,842
12 AF	8/\$2,567,000	0/0	229/\$1,204,847
DRU	0/0	1/\$894,548	80/\$352,503
FY 99 Totals	17/\$4,261,492	1/\$894,548	604/\$3,520,579
FY 98 Totals (for comparison)	18/\$11,163,410	1/\$560,684	698/\$3,167,652

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

Toy Safety Tips for the Holidays

Courtesy of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)

The Matching Game

- Toys should be matched to a child's abilities. The manufacturer recommendations serve as a useful guide.
- A toy that is too advanced or too simple for a child may be misused, which can lead to injury.
- Think BIG when choosing toys. All toy parts should be larger than the child's mouth to prevent injuries, including choking.

Purchasing Tips

- Before buying a toy, read the instructions. If the toy is appropriate for the child, read the instructions to the child for proper use of the toy.
- To avoid risk of serious eye or ear injury, avoid toys that shoot small objects into the air, or make loud or shrill noises. Parents can hold the noise-making toy next to their ear to determine whether it will be too loud for a child's ears.
- Look for sturdy toy construction. The eyes, nose and other small parts on soft toys and stuffed animals should be securely fastened on the toy. In addition, avoid toys with sharp edges.

For the Older Crowd

- Never buy hobby kits, such as chemistry sets, for any child younger than 12 years old.
- Provide proper supervision for children 12 to 15 years of age.
- Tips of arrows or darts should be blunt, made of soft rubber or flexible plastic and securely fastened to the shaft.

Age-appropriate Toys

Newborn to 1-Year-Old Baby

Choose "eye-catching" toys that appeal to your baby's sight, hearing and touch.

- Large blocks of wood or plastic
- Pots and pans
- Rattles
- Soft, washable animals, dolls or balls
- Bright, movable objects that are out of the baby's reach
- Busy boards
- Floating bath toys
- Squeeze toys

1- to 2-Year-Old Toddler

Toys for this age group should be safe and be able to withstand a toddler's curious nature.

- Cloth or plastic books with large pictures
- Sturdy dolls

- Kiddy cars
- Musical tops
- Nesting blocks
- Push and pull toys (remember — no long strings)
- Stacking toys
- Toy telephones

2- to 5-Year-Old Preschooler

Toys for this age group are usually experimental and should imitate the activity of parents and older children.

- Books (short stories or action stories)
- Blackboard and chalk
- Building blocks
- Crayons, nontoxic finger paints, clay
- Hammer and bench
 - Housekeeping toys
- Outdoor toys: sandbox (with a lid), slide, swing, playhouse
 - Transportation toys (tricycles, cars, wagons)
 - Tape or record player
 - Simple puzzles with large pieces
 - Dress-up clothes
 - Tea party utensils

5- to 9-Year-Old Child

Toys for this age group should help your child promote skill development and creativity.

- Blunt scissors, sewing sets
- Card games
- Doctor and nurse kits
- Hand puppets
- Balls
- Bicycles
- Crafts
- Electric trains
- Paper dolls
- Jump ropes
- Roller skates
- Sports equipment
- Table games

10- to 14-Year-Old Child

Hobbies and scientific activities are ideal for this age group.

- Computer games
- Sewing, knitting, needlework
- Microscopes/telescopes
- Table and board games
- Sports equipment
- Hobby collections



