

The Combat EDGE

JUNE 2000

The Combat Edge June 2000



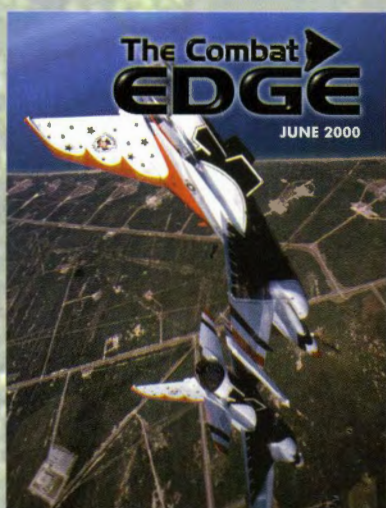
The Combat EDGE

Volume 9 Issue 1
June 2000
ACC SP 91-1

Air Combat Command's Mishap Prevention Magazine

GENERAL JOHN P. JUMPER, COMMANDER

COL. GREGORY A. ALSTON, CHIEF OF SAFETY



*Front Cover Photo By
Staff Sgt. Kevin Gruenwald*

"Get-home-itis" 4

It's Your Night Out 6

On the Edge of Life 8

Stop and Think 10

That Sinking Feeling 12

Don't Get "Ticked"! 16

Attention to Detail 19

Be Prepared for the Unexpected Emergency 21

Departments

Awards.....22, 23

Fleagle.....15

Safety Stats.....18

DUI 26

Hearing Conservation Program 28

Bargain Hunters Beware! 30

RON SMITH
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

1ST LT. ERIN BRADLEY
EDITOR

BARBARA TAYLOR
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

MASTER SGT. HENRY BLANCHARD
DESIGN & LAYOUT

The Combat Edge (ISSN 1063-8970) is published monthly by the Air Combat Command, HQ ACC/SEP, 175 Sweeney Blvd, Langley AFB VA 23665-2700. Periodicals postage paid at Hampton VA and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Combat Edge*, HQ ACC/SEP, 175 Sweeney Blvd, Langley AFB VA 23665-2700.

DISTRIBUTION: F. OPR: HQ ACC/SEP. Distribution is based on a ratio of one copy per 10 persons assigned. Air Force units should contact *The Combat Edge* staff to establish or change requirements. Other Department of Defense (DoD) units have no fixed ratio and should submit their requests to the OPR.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS: Available to non-DoD readers for \$35.00 (\$43.75 outside the U.S.) from the Superintendent of Documents, PO Box 371954, Pittsburgh PA 15250-7954. All subscription service correspondence should be directed to the Superintendent, not HQ ACC/SEP.


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

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

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

The editors reserve the right to edit all manuscripts for readability and good taste.

DISCLAIMER: This magazine is an authorized publication for members of the DoD. Contents of *The Combat Edge* are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the DoD, or the United States Air Force. Information contained in any article may not be construed as incriminating under Article 31, UCMJ.

 Denotes images digitally manipulated.



SUMMER RISKS


Summer is now upon us. We're well into the "101 Critical Days of Summer," a period from Memorial Day through Labor Day weekends during which the majority of our ground mishaps occur. Historically, the Air Force experiences a greater than normal amount of fatalities during this time of year. Last year, ACC had four fatalities — one on duty and three off duty. All four could and should have been prevented.

The higher risks are readily apparent when you think about the wide variety of outdoor sports and activities that Air Force members enjoy. Mountain climbing, dirt biking, boating, hiking, and even the all-American sport of baseball pose high risks of injury or death. Even with the higher risk activities, the goal of zero mishaps during the 101 critical days is possible. Take note that between December and April, ACC went 105 days without a ground Class A mishap. It is possible! However, to achieve the same success during the summer months, we all need to heighten our awareness of the possible risks. Commanders can't do it alone — too many Air Force people are killed without a commander or supervisor around at the time. Sometimes, however, a friend or associate is nearby who could have pointed out unnecessary risks and helped avoid the mishap.

Recently, Col. Ted Thompson, 12th Air Force Chief of Safety, told me of a technique that Lt. Col. Larry Thompson, 4th FS commander, Hill AFB, shared with him during a staff assistance visit. The commander called it his "Can I explain this?" technique. If a pilot cannot explain why he or she did something, it should not be done. In some of ACC's fatal mishaps, the person killed could have asked that question and lived. When a friend was nearby, either of them could have asked, "Can we explain why we're driving 100 mph on a wet road?" There's no acceptable explanation.

Though lapses in good judgment are always a potential hazard while enjoying summer activities, especially if alcohol is present, we can improve our odds of a fatality-free summer by all remaining fully engaged. You've heard the slogan, "Friends don't let friends drive drunk." But I submit that friends don't let friends put themselves at risk either. Don't let your friends drive at excessive speeds, or without seat belts, or helmets, if riding motorcycles or driving all-terrain vehicles. Don't let them boat or ski without life vests, or roller-blade without helmets and elbow pads. The list goes on. If you are on the scene, you have a responsibility to take care of your buddies. We can all play smart this summer.

Col. Greg "Vader" Alston
ACC Chief of Safety



*By Lt. Col. Grant Bruckmeier
4th Fighter Squadron Safety
Hill AFB, Utah*

"Get-home-itis"

Years ago, when I was an F-15 pilot at Langley AFB, the big news in the area was that a carrier battle group was returning to Norfolk after a 6-plus month deployment. The reason it was big news was they had no major accidents during the entire cruise. For the Navy, on a long cruise, this was a real feat. Navy Atlantic Command announced that the skipper of the carrier was to be decorated for attaining such an (almost) unheard of goal. Well... during the approach to the docks in Norfolk, the carrier rammed another ship, causing extensive damage to both boats. Luckily, no one was killed. The captain went from hero to goat in a heartbeat. I did not get to read the report, but the speculation was those in control of this behemoth of a ship were not

completely focused on their task at hand. Rather, they were looking forward to the long-awaited reunions with families and loved ones.

Going back further... I was returning from a cross-country sortie back in my lieutenant days. I was in a T-33 with an electrician in my pit. We were returning to Tyndall AFB from Sheppard AFB after fixing a jet that had broken there. At a fuel stop in England AFB, I checked the weather and saw a line of thunderstorms between us and Tyndall. No problem. With a few good vectors from center and my own flying skills, I could avoid bad cells. Besides, I had a date and really wanted to get home. After reaching my cruising altitude I went into the clouds, but they were pretty thin. Then, without warn-

ing, things got so dark that it seemed like nighttime. The jet started to shake and we were instantly pelted by heavy rain and very large hailstones. We were getting tossed around so badly that I was unable to focus on the instruments. I got caught in an updraft and, even with full forward stick, was unable to keep from climbing. Did I mention the lightning? Luckily we didn't get hit, but it was all around us. After what seemed like an eternity (actually just a couple of minutes) we were spit out the side of this monstrosity. When I looked back, I saw that I had flown right through the middle of a typical, southeastern U.S., 50,000-foot thunderstorm. When I looked at my jet, I saw no paint left on any leading edge surface and numerous dents on the leading edges of the wings and tip tanks. I don't know how much damage I caused, but I do know that a lot of people were unhappy with me. The unsuspecting electrician? He said it was better than Space Mountain at Disney World. Like they say, ignorance is bliss. Oh, yeah — my date — she wasn't worth it!

As I write this article, our squadron is well into the second half of our deployment in Kuwait. Even those of us who came over for the last 45 days have passed our halfway point. When nearing the end of a deployment, a common tendency is to begin to focus more on leaving than the tasks at hand. While that may not be much of a problem in a resort area such as this, we still must guard against it nonetheless. Everything we do on a daily basis is "old hat" ...right? We all know the procedures so well we don't need to reference technical orders (TOs) or checklists...right? WRONG!! The moment you think you know it all, something happens to prove just how much you don't. Murphy (you've heard of his law?) is alive and well and living in Kuwait.

Many people have been hurt, many jets have been bent, and untold amounts of money have been wasted by those who fell prey to the disease of "get-home-itis." The closer you get to leaving, the more susceptible you become. If you are within a week of departure, your body's and mind's defenses have been whittled away to the point that, if

you don't make a conscious effort to guard against this affliction, you will fall prey to it. The symptoms are very insidious. You've got a simple fix on a preflight problem that you've done a hundred times, and you just don't feel like digging for your checklist. It goes fine. You followed all the steps and didn't miss a thing. The checklist was (you convince yourself) unnecessary. A few more incidents along those lines and you're lulled into a false sense of security. Suddenly there's a pilot who has to jump to a spare and needs a preflight fix in the arming area... NOW!!! He doesn't care how you get the job done, just as long as you get it done quickly. This is war! So, you take care of the problem from memory. He runs the bit and the malfunction clears. He blasts. Driving back to the hangar, you go over the checklist and find a step you missed. No big deal; the jet is airborne and it wasn't anything that poses a safety concern.

See how you can dig a hole that will be hard to get out of? In the fighter business we live by habit patterns. When a decision needs to be made quickly, it's those good habit patterns that will save the day. Once you get into the habit of taking short cuts, it's difficult to break. If you've ever been interrupted in the middle of doing a task, and then referenced the checklist only to find a step you've missed, you know what I mean. Referencing the checklist, no matter how mundane the chore, can save your, or someone else's, life.

And one last story... Before my Eagle days I flew F-106's (yes, I really am that old). A couple of our maintenance troops were rushing to break down a wheel to change the tire. They had done it a hundred times before. Checklist? Forget it. This was a piece of cake! The human brain is a marvelous piece of work. In times of crisis, it can process information at an incredibly fast rate. When the fully inflated wheel/tire assembly exploded, I'll bet the maintainer actually had time to think, "I thought you deflated the tire," before the bolt that killed him found its mark.

Remember, the most important task is the one at hand. Y'all be safe. ■



It's YOU

*By Master Sgt. Peter L. Maas III
18th Wing Safety
Kadena AB, Okinawa, Japan*

It's 1 a.m. and you've got to be up and at 'em by 7 a.m. The problem is, you're "toasted." Yep. You've had the time of your life and enough alcohol to keep you happy until 10 a.m. the next day! Somewhere in the fog, reality strikes. You've got to get home. You look around. Your friends are toasted too. You draw sticks and hope for the best. Darn, you "won." You're thinking it's only a couple of "clicks" to the front gate and you don't feel THAT drunk. You toss a stick of chewing gum in your mouth and off you go.

As you approach the gate you fumble for your identification. You're thinking that if you can just get through the gate you'll be home free! You're hoping for that quickie ID check and a friendly wave

r Night Out

to proceed. As you hand the guard your ID card he's observing your every move. He notices the way you approached the gate, weaving (because you were fumbling for your ID card, of course). He notices your glossy pupils and the way your eyes fail to focus. He notices the slur of your speech when he asks you how you're doing this nice Okinawan evening. All of your actions tell him to check you out a little closer. He can smell the alcohol emanating from your breath. He knows there's no such thing as Juicy Fruit alcohol-flavored gum. You're busted!

This is an all too common occurrence. Time after time, people are caught drinking and driving. Why? Because they fail to plan. They fail to assess the risks associated with drinking and driving. If you take a minute or two to plan the evening, you can save yourself great embarrassment, your career, and most importantly, you can live to enjoy another one of those great nights out.

While many of us have heard of Operational Risk Management, or ORM, many of us don't think it applies when we're off duty. This common misconception is worth exploring. Let's see how we can apply ORM to the scenario above. The Air Force has a six-step process:

ORM - DRINKING & DRIVING

1. Identify the Hazard
 - Drinking alcohol and operating a motor vehicle is a hazard!
2. Assess the Risk
 - I could get caught, end up in jail, and destroy my career.
 - I could get into an accident and kill myself or someone else.
3. Analyze the Control Measures
 - I could walk.
 - I could take a taxi.
 - I could find a designated driver (hint: one who won't drink alcohol).
4. Make Control Decisions
 - The walk is too far.
 - Taxis cost money, but we could all pitch in and lower the cost.
 - Hey, Ken can't get a date, but he's reliable. Let's see if he'll be our designated driver.
5. Risk Control Implementation
 - Ken's the choice! He's free and reliable.
6. Supervise and Review
 - Once you're sober, evaluate how well your activity went. Adjust as needed.

Editorial Note: If you are an ACC warrior, don't forget A.C.T., the simplified 3-step ORM process that easily applies to our off-duty activities. If you are not already familiar with it, check out the centerfold in the January 2000 "Back to Basics" issue, contact your unit safety office, or review the ACC Safety Web site.

There are alternatives to drinking and driving. Just take a moment and apply the ORM process. Drinking and driving is a choice. Don't make the wrong one! ■

On the Edge of Life

The Psychology and Physics of Seat belts

By Maj. Randy Witter

552nd Equipment Maintenance Squadron Commander

Tinker AFB, Okla.

How many of you have visited some of our world's great attractions, such as the Grand Canyon, Hoover Dam, Royal Gorge Bridge, Eiffel Tower, Space Needle, or Empire State Building? Most of us have been in situations where we experienced some form of vertigo. Now imagine that same situation without a rail, and you're standing inches from the edge. Just thinking about the situation probably causes your heart to skip a few beats per minute. We don't trust our balance, we don't trust the wind, and we don't trust our loved ones standing next to us. Isn't this amazing? The paranoia associated with the possibility of falling and the reality that the fall will cause death can literally bring some of us to our knees.

How does this relate to seat belts, you ask? When you're driving without a seat belt, you've not only stepped off the cliff's edge — you've begun to fall! If you're driving at a speed of 60 miles per hour, and a car traveling in the opposite direction is as well, you are falling at 120 miles per hour. This realization makes it unbelievable to me that we would grab a railing so tightly at the edge of a cliff, when we have so much more control over the outside influences. In comparison, we will nonchalantly drive down a highway, while talking on the cell phone, with a drunk possibly barreling at us in the oppo-

site direction, while negotiating a tight corner with one hand on the wheel, and think nothing of it! So much so, that some of us won't even put on a seatbelt!

The psychology of the car is amazing. You're holding a steering wheel so you won't fall off the cliff — but guess what? You're already falling and the railing is falling with you! Not much good any more, is it?

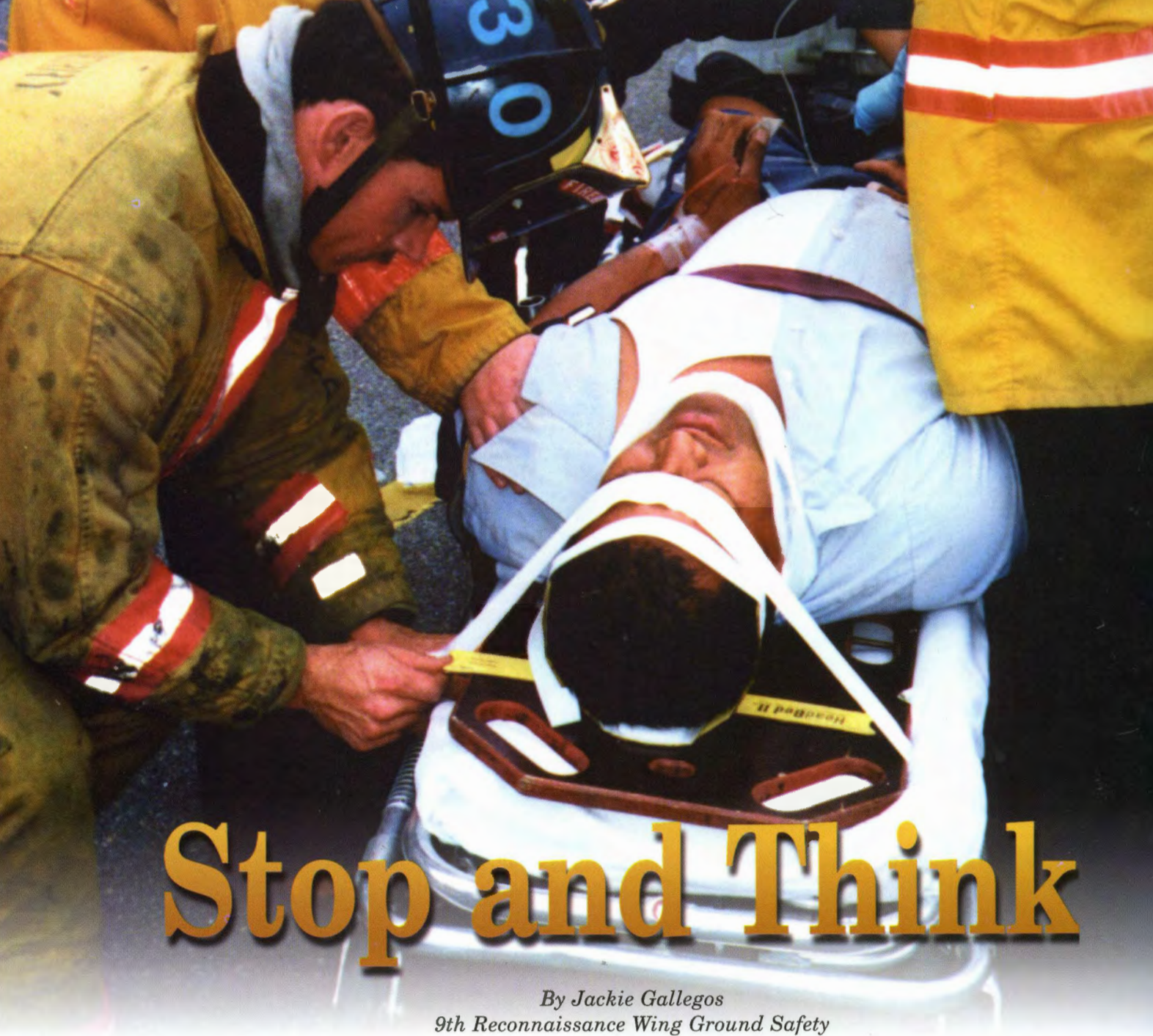
I can see one of you rationalizing this now — "I wear my seat belt on the highway. Who needs it if I'm only traveling 20 mph on base." Now let's look at the physics of the matter. How many of you remember jumping off that 10 foot wall when you were younger, only to have your legs collapse under you and smash you in the chest as you rolled to the ground? Now imagine making that same jump head-first and stopping yourself with your out-stretched arms. Can you visualize

the results? Would you be surprised if I told you that you would be traveling only 19 miles per hour at impact?

I'm raising these points because a large percentage of you still don't get the picture and are not wearing your seat belts. Some of you wear your seat belts only on base because you were ordered to. There is even a small population of you that make the additional effort to actually remove your seat belts when you leave the base, despite state laws. Hello?! Anybody in there?!

You can't imagine how ill I feel on the few occasions I am able to pick up or drop off my kids at school, only to see other parents driving with their kids standing on the front seat. Would you throw your kids off of a cliff, or even a 10-foot wall?

Please, please, please... don't let the psychological security of the inside of your car fool you. The reality of physics will always prevail. The minute your car starts rolling, you just stepped over the edge of the cliff. Grab on to your seat belt, hold on tight, and enjoy the ride of a lifetime... just don't pay for it with your life! ■



Stop and Think

*By Jackie Gallegos
9th Reconnaissance Wing Ground Safety
Beale AFB, Calif.*

Get them swimming trunks out, dust off your boat, and pull out the grill because it's that time of year again! Time for family gatherings, picnics, baseball, swimming, boating, vacations, parties, and loads of things to accomplish around the house. It's the beginning of an endless list of many activities when the skies are blue and the sun shines like gold. We all want to have fun and enjoy life to its fullest.

Unfortunately, this particular period of time between Memorial Day and Labor Day, better known to the Air Force community as "101 Critical Days of Summer," brings the increased risk of injuries, or possibly even worse. Air Force mishaps rise dramatically during this period compared to the rest of the year. It's a time when fun can turn into terrible tragedies. However, we know it doesn't have to be that way. We can have fun and be safe at

the same time. STOP and THINK! No matter what the activity might be, always plan ahead.

The number-one cause of serious injuries and fatalities to Air Force people during this time of year is traffic mishaps. Many factors are involved in these mishaps, such as speeding, driving under the influence, not using seat belts, and driving when fatigued. When planning a trip, whether it is a short or long one, take the necessary precautions for being safe. Make sure you are rested, obey the laws, ensure your vehicle is in good operating condition, check the weather, have an emergency kit in the trunk, and let someone know your destination with the travel route. It also wouldn't hurt to pack a variety of snacks to nibble in case of delays. But above all, remember to use safety belts! You never know what can happen, so be prepared.

The second major cause of fatalities is from drowning. Boating, swimming, scuba diving, and white water rafting mishaps have cost many lives. Most water safety tips involve common sense — wear Coast Guard-approved life preservers on boats and on the docks. Remember, STOP and THINK! When swimming, know your limits — don't swim beyond your capabilities and never swim alone. Never dive into shallow water or water of unknown depth. Supervise children at all times around water, including backyard wading and swimming pools.

If you are planning to serve alcoholic beverages at parties in your home, ensure your guests have designated drivers, provide non-alcoholic drinks, serve plenty of high-protein food, and watch out for salty snacks that speed up the absorption of alcohol into the bloodstream. You also might want to take everyone's car keys as they arrive and return them only to designated drivers. STOP and THINK — friends don't let friends drink and drive.

The summer months should be fun memories versus tragic ones. These are times for families to reach out to each other, and to share magic moments with friends. Hopefully, everyone will include the "what ifs" as they create a mental or written checklist of planned activities, and not just plunge ahead. There are many important questions to ask before tackling something. Are you familiar with the activity? Are you physically fit? What is the condition of the equipment? What are the capabilities of other participants? What does the location look like? These details determine the atmosphere of safety. We learn from the mistakes of others only when we incorporate them into our own plans, preventing needless injuries and tragic loss of life.

Common sense plays a major role in safety. There are situations that require personal judgment to assess the risks and personal limitations. Everyone must accept responsibility for safety. No one lives or works entirely alone. We are involved with all people — touched by their accomplishments and marked by their failures. If we fail the person beside us, we fail ourselves, and both will share the burden of that loss. A true horror in life is the stark realization that we have caused a preventable mishap to ourselves, or even worse, to someone else. Most mishaps are conceived by improper attitudes and born in moments of action without thought. Mishaps will be minimized only when informed personal awareness creates the right attitude that is strong enough to prevent or control the act. The prevention of mishaps is an objective, which should touch all people at all levels. A concerted effort by everyone to emphasize self-discipline and common sense can help save a life. STOP and THINK — isn't a life worth saving? ■



*By 1st Lt. Harry Dyson
ACC Maintenance Operation Division
Langley AFB, Va.*

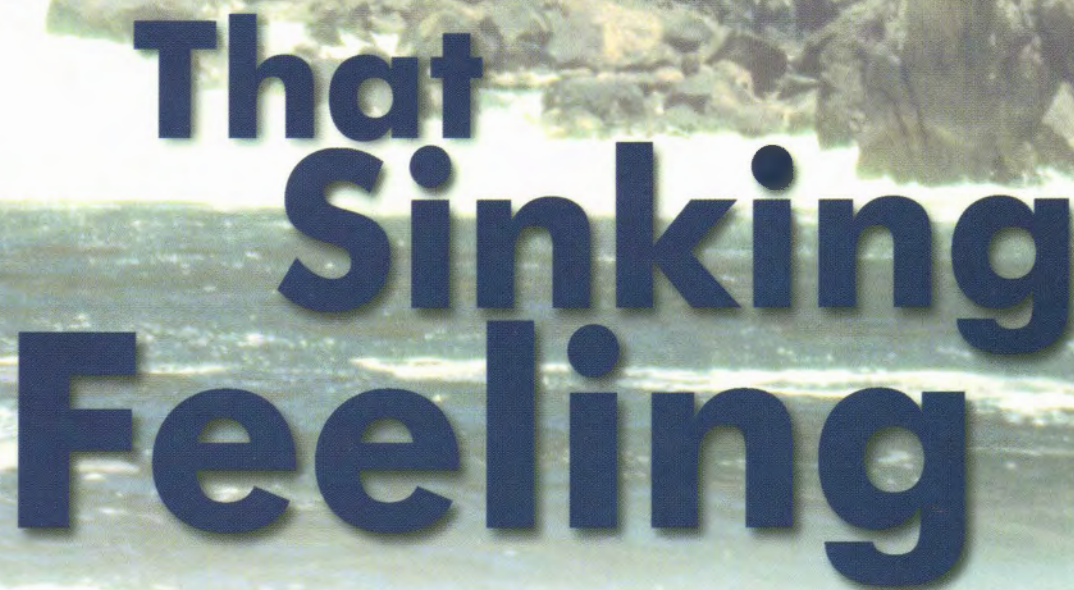
Everyone has a favorite sport or activity. For me, it's white water rafting, hands down. While I was stationed at Mountain Home AFB, Idaho, I spent a year as a white water rafting guide. Just about every weekend I was in town that summer, I was on the river. If you have never been white water rafting, you will just have to believe me when I say there is no greater thrill on the water. You can water ski, surf, or scuba dive (all of which are great sports), but there is something about white water that is beyond comparison. However, like any other thrill, the excitement is largely because of the inherent danger involved. That was something I lost sight of in my enthusiasm.

Late one July, I was taking a raft full of customers down the middle fork of the Payette River. It was something I had done dozens of times before. My enthusiasm really started to rise when we rounded a curve in the river and came to my favorite rapid on the river, called "Two Dogs." This was white water at its finest. The flow of the river was perfect, the weather was beautiful, and my raft was fired-up after a great day on the river. Two Dogs itself is a beautiful Class IV rapid. Directly upriver from the Two Dogs, the Payette bends and then gets very

narrow where another tributary enters it. During the right time of the summer, the two sources clash, throwing water and rafts back and forth in an amazing white water ride.

About 20 feet before we hit the really rough water I gave my crew the "all forward" command, and they started to push the raft towards the rapid. Normally the course of events is a simple one; the raft picks up speed as the six people in front start rowing forward. As the guide, I remain in the back and use a slightly longer oar to guide the raft and call out commands to them. From the back of the raft I can see when things are going well, and I also have a bit of forewarning when they go wrong. On this particular run, things were about to go very wrong.

Our raft hit the white water and the nose shot up a foot off the water before plowing down through the first portion of the rapid. Two things happened at that point. Two Dogs was very impressive that day and the crew up front got excited as they looked down at the fury of the rest of the rapid, which made them stop rowing. Our speed dropped off. Then the flow of the tributary hit the side of the raft like a charging bull. In a perfect situation, everyone in the raft



That Sinking Feeling

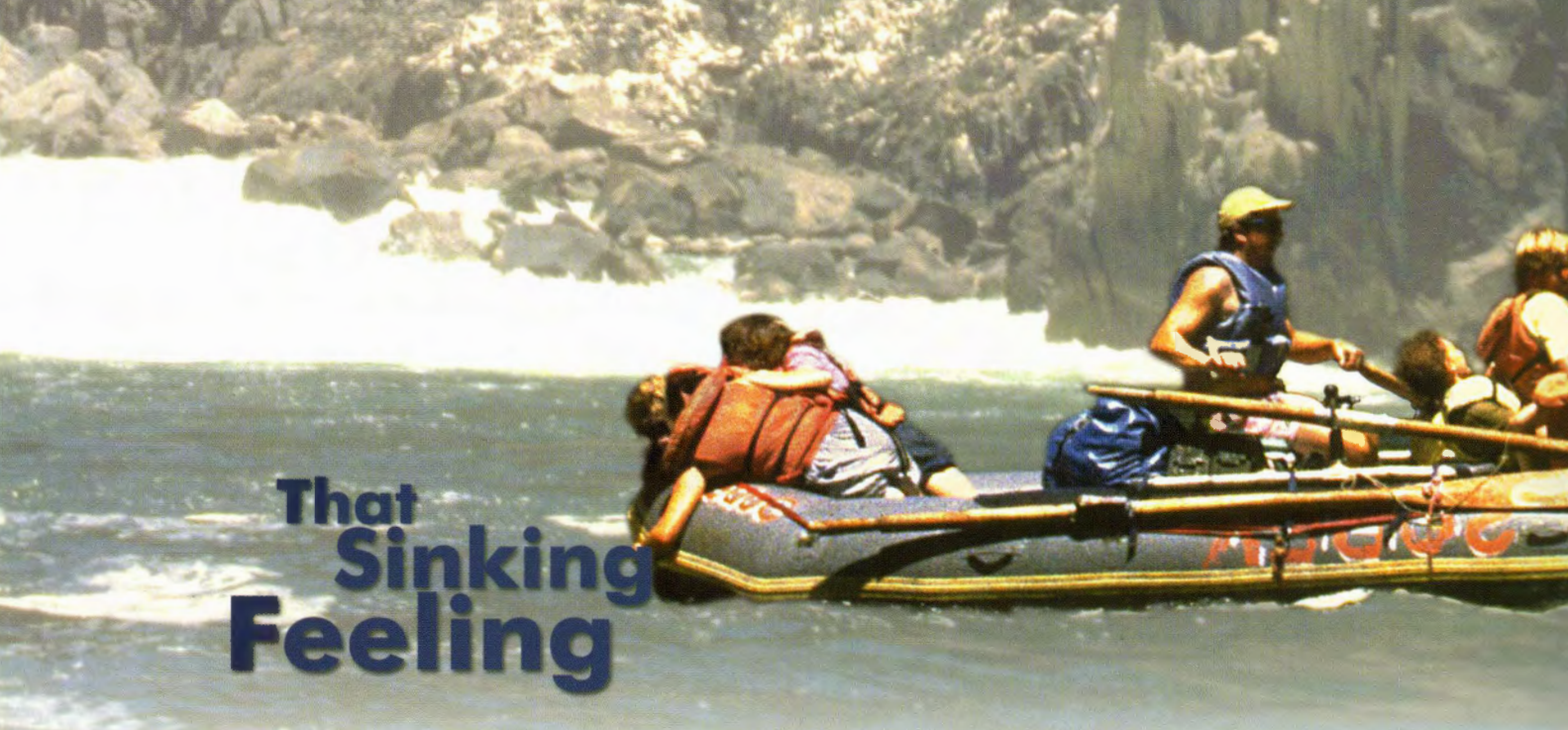
would lean into the wave so all of the weight is holding down the side of the raft that the water is trying to push up. But in this situation, reflexes took over and the crew on the right side of the raft leaned away. The right side of the raft popped up and caused the crew on the right side to fall into the middle of the raft. The sudden loss of weight on that side left the raft unbalanced, and the river drove through it, sending all of us hurtling into the water in the middle of the rapid.

While being in the back of a raft provides you with a much better view of the river ahead, it does you no favors if you are thrown from the raft. As I tumbled into the water, I immediately tucked into a ball to avoid any of the rocks that might be passing under the raft. Water moves faster below the surface, so as the force of my ejection sent me through several layers of water moving at different speeds, I was flipped head over heels two or three times. We had been trained for such situations and I knew if I just remained calm and did not try to fight the river, my life vest would eventually turn me right-side up and I would surface.

After what seemed like minutes I felt myself right and I floated upward. But instead of the air I was looking for, I hit the

bottom of the raft. When I was plunged from the back of the raft into deep water, the faster-moving water below gripped me and propelled me underneath my raft. The only problem was that I had no idea if I was near the front of the raft or the back. Plus, I was surrounded by the kicking feet of the rest of my crew, who, fortunately, had surfaced and were hanging onto the sides. Not quite panicked yet, I pushed away from the bottom of the raft in an effort to resurface on the side. But as I floated up the second time, again I felt hard rubber instead of the welcome break in the surface. Dangerously low on air and quickly losing strength from the bitterly cold water, I pushed away again. Proving that fate has a sense of humor, I floated up and hit the bottom of the raft a third time.

Looking back now, I realize that I chose the wrong direction and actually traveled the entire length of the raft before I found a way out. I am sure there was a better way to have handled the situation, but at the time it certainly didn't occur to me. My third push-off finally sent me away from the raft and I broke the surface. I had not gotten a full breath before being thrown into the water, so, as soon as I hit the surface, I reflexively took in a large breath... just as a wave swept



That Sinking Feeling

over my head. Scared, physically spent and choking down water in an effort to breathe, all I could do was allow my vest to take over and hope that I did not have any other problems before I could recover. Fortunately for me, there was a lull in the river and I had a chance to clear the water out of my throat and start to breathe again.

Swimming rapids is not an everyday occurrence, but it is a part of rafting. Normally, as the guide, I was the first one back in my raft so that I could help the customers back in. As the head guide, Mike, watched the scene from his raft, he noticed that I was not clambering back into my raft — I was just floating down the river coughing up water. One of the finest oarsmen I have ever met, Mike had his raft by my side in less than a minute. He dragged me into his raft and then jumped into mine to help the rest of my crew. I was pretty shaken up for the rest of the day, but Mike put me right back in the saddle and made me stick with it.

Within a few trips I was back to feeling confident as a guide, but I reinforced some valuable lessons that day. There were several trips that summer where we would watch other rafts full of people who weren't wearing life vests or who had a cooler full of beer seated in between them. I never gave it a lot of thought other than to notice it and think it wasn't safe. But after my experience I can tell you two

things with absolute certainty. If I had been drinking that day or if I had not had my life vest on, I would not be here charming you with stories of a sunny day on the river.

Rather than give you the standard admonishments about the importance of being sober and wearing flotation devices during water activities, let me tell you exactly why they were crucial to me. While I was tumbling head over heels under the raft, the only thing that gave me hope was the knowledge that eventually my life vest would right me and head me towards the surface. In white water you cannot hear, you cannot see, and you cannot sense where you are. If I had blindly chosen a direction based on what I thought was up, it is very likely that I would have started swimming in the wrong direction, possibly even down towards the rocks that the river was pushing me past. And had I been drinking on the river that day and not had all of my wits about me, or even just been delayed in analyzing what was happening to me, I may not have made it to the surface in time.

You may go on the river a hundred times when you will not seem to need that life vest, or when that extra beer won't seem to make a difference. But believe me, if you have even one instance when you need a clear head and a life vest, it will be well worth the extra precaution. ■



Don't Get

*By Airman 1st Class Ray Sinclair-West
1st Aerospace Medicine Squadron
Langley AFB, Va.*

With the arrival of summer, it is time once again to think about regularly checking your body for ticks. Ticks are not just unappealing insects — they can transmit diseases, including Ehrlichiosis, Lyme disease and even Rocky Mountain spotted fever. In addition, some people can have allergic reactions to the tick bite itself. What can you do to avoid these creatures? When going into wooded areas, wear clothing that will cover most of your skin (long-sleeved shirts and long pants). Light colored clothing will help you to spot the ticks and remove them before they reach your skin. Tuck the bottom of your pants into your boots or socks and apply insect repellent that contains DEET around that area and to your exposed skin. Prevention is the best method of avoiding disease.

If you find a tick on you, follow these steps in removing the tick:

- * Use blunt forceps or tweezers.
- * Grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible and pull upward with a steady even pressure.
- * Try not to squeeze, crush or puncture the tick.
- * Do not handle the tick with your bare hands because infectious agents may enter via mucous membranes or breaks in the skin.
- * Do not try to kill the tick with alcohol or smother it with lotions or any other such products. This will cause the tick to get agitated and release infectious agents as it tries to escape.

* Likewise, do not try to make the tick detach itself by using extreme heat from a match, lighter, or cigarette as this will most likely cause injury to yourself.

* After removing the tick, thoroughly disinfect the bite area with antiseptic and wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water.

* Try to keep the tick. Place the tick in a small sealed container and bring it to your local Public Health office or primary care manager for identification. If the tick is alive, it can be sent to a lab for testing to see if it does, in fact, carry any infectious bacteria.

One of the most common diseases ticks carry is Lyme disease. The classic initial



"Ticked"!



symptom of Lyme disease is a small red spot that expands, producing a "bull's-eye" lesion. Some other

symptoms of Lyme disease are rashes, muscle and joint aches, stiff neck, fatigue, fever, facial paralysis (Bell's palsy), meningitis, and joint pain or swelling. If you feel you may have Lyme disease, see a physician promptly and get checked out. Treatment is with antibiotics. The "deer" tick, which normally feeds on the white-tailed deer and other mammals or birds, is responsible for transmitting Lyme disease bacteria to humans in the northeastern and north-central United States. On the Pacific Coast, the bacteria are transmitted to humans by the western "black-legged" tick. Researchers widely believe the tick must be attached for at least 24 hours before it will transmit disease, so frequent body checks and quick removal are important to prevent disease.

In the southeast, Rocky Mountain spotted fever is transmitted by the "American dog" tick, the "lone star" tick, or the "wood" tick. The disease name is actually a misnomer because North Carolina reports the most number of cases. The tick must be attached for 4-6 hours before transmitting the bacteria that cause the disease. Symptoms usually show up 3-14 days after the tick bite, and can include high fever, deep muscle pain, severe headaches, malaise, and a red rash, beginning on the extremities. Again, if you have these symptoms, you should visit your primary care manager.

Ehrlichiosis, or HME (Human Monocytic Ehrlichiosis), as it is sometimes called, is an emerging disease caused by bacteria, and is believed to be transmitted by the "lone star" tick. Most confirmed cases come from the southeastern and south-central United States, with the most recent cases being reported in the Maryland and Chesapeake Bay areas. Symptoms of the infection include nausea, aches and pains, vomiting, diarrhea, and a nonproductive cough. Any suspicion of HME should be quickly treated by your doctor, even before serological testing confirms infection.

For more information on these diseases, visit the Web site www.cdc.gov/ncidod/ and click on vector-borne infectious diseases. Also, find out more about Ehrlichiosis at www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/disinfo/disease.htm and Rocky Mountain spotted fever at www.astdhphe.org/infect/rms.html. Check the links for specific information, or call your local Public Health office or primary care physician. ■





Ground Safety Stats

ACC Losses for FY00

(1 Oct 99 - 31 Mar 00)

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

Ground Mishap Fatalities

| | |
|--------------|---|
| 8 AF |  |
| 9 AF |  |
| 12 AF |  |
| DRU |  |

Number of Ground Mishap/Dollar Losses

| | Class A | Class B | Class C |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 8 AF | 1 / \$185,700 | 0 / 0 | 53 / \$160,395 |
| 9 AF | 2 / \$250,000 | 1 / \$250,000 | 83 / \$352,248 |
| 12 AF | 3 / \$1,369,640 | 0 / 0 | 88 / \$280,638 |
| DRU | 2 / \$250,000 | 1 / \$164,660 | 25 / \$135,254 |
| FY 00 Totals | 8 / \$2,055,340 | 2 / \$414,660 | 249 / \$928,265 |
| FY 99 Totals (same period) | 8 / \$2,610,570 | 1 / \$894,548 | 302 / \$1,819,468 |

Class A - Fatality; Permanent Total Disability; Property Damage \$1,000,000 or more

Class B - Permanent Partial Disability; Property Damage between \$2,000,000 and \$1,000,000

Class C - Lost Workday; Property Damage between \$10,000 and \$200,000



ATTENTION TO DETAIL

*By William M. Curtis II
347th Wing Weapons Safety
Moody AFB, Ga.*

DoD Photo by Tech. Sgt. Lance Cheung

Throughout my 17 years in the Air Force I have seen many accidents/incidents that could have been avoided by "Paying Attention to Detail." For example, during Operation DESERT STORM, I saw what the GBU-24 fin assembly could do if it was initiated while still on the aircraft. Someone failed to read the technical data, which provides instructions on how to install a safety device before downloading the munition. All personnel must review job-related technical data for periodic changes. Failing to read technical data for warnings and cautions can result in death or injury.

If you haven't performed a job task in a while, pick up the job guide or technical order and ensure you are knowledgeable about recent changes. There is a possibility something has changed since the last time you performed the task. Technical data or job guides are constantly changing because personnel find better ways of doing things or they find something that is hazardous. In most cases of hazardous situations, warnings, cautions, or notes are added to protect people.

The following is an example where technical data was not properly followed during a training deployment. The task was to load 16 MK-82 AIRS with FMU-139 fuzes. After the bombs were released from the aircraft, they failed to detonate upon impact. It was discovered that the FMU-139 fuzeing was improperly set. In the technical data a caution stated that if fuzeing times were set the same, the fuze would fail to operate. Several personnel throughout

the assembly and loading process failed to properly read the technical data for warnings or cautions. If this had been a combat situation, more aircrew would have been at risk by trying to destroy the same target.

When you perform a job, be aware of your surroundings. If you see something out of the ordinary, report it to your supervisor. Your supervisor should have the experience and knowledge to determine if something is wrong. For instance, the umbilical connectors on an AIM-9 — have you ever seen black marks on the pins? If you have, there may be something wrong with the missile or the aircraft weapons system. Notify someone! Notify your supervisor or the expeditor, because, if you don't let someone know, you could be hampering the mission. What could happen to that aircraft if the situation was overlooked? What could have happened if the aircraft was on a mission and the system short-circuited the aircraft's electrical system? Not only could you lose the aircraft, you could also lose the pilot, which is something we can't afford to lose.

Safety is your responsibility. It doesn't matter what rank you are. You need to report any unsafe acts or conditions immediately. If you see something unsafe or potentially unsafe, it's up to YOU to elevate it through your chain of command to stop the operation and get the appropriate safety personnel involved in making a final decision. Now, more than ever, SAFETY is crucial to maintaining our mission capability and protecting our most important assets — YOU. ■

Be Prepared for the U

*By Senior Master Sgt. Ronald Ross
9th Air Force Ground Safety
Shaw AFB, S.C.*

There I was, a 3-level firefighter in the USAF with only three months hands-on experience at my first base of assignment. I was assigned as lineman at a remote base housing fire station on a fire truck that had been around longer than I had. I was there with my supervisor at the two-man fire station. We had just completed the first eight hours of a 24-hour shift and things were going well. I was enjoying the beauty of a sunny spring day by preparing my evening meal on the outside grill. The smoke was rolling from the grill and the smell of a charcoal-cooked steak filled the air, and I anticipated enjoying one of my favorite barbecued delights. I had just removed my steak from the grill and began to savor its taste when, suddenly, the fire response alarm sounded. Within seconds I bunkered out and hopped up on the tailboard of the fire truck, en route to an unknown dwelling for a medical response.

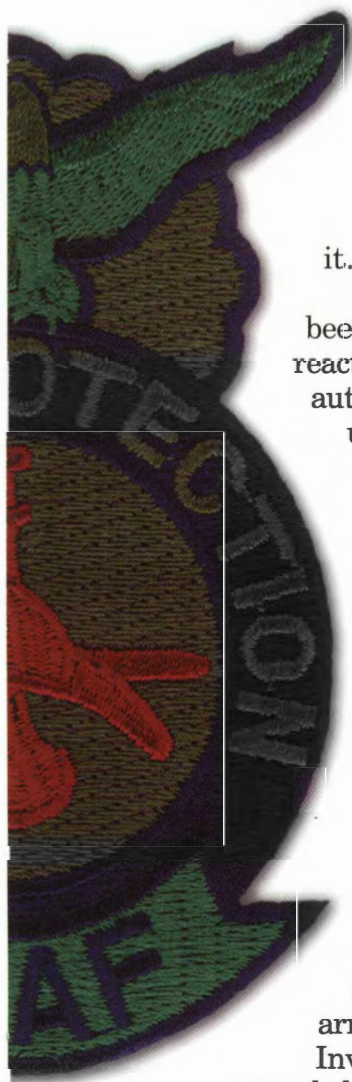
My heart was racing from the excitement as we rounded the base housing street and stopped abruptly at the second house from the end. My supervisor told me to get the first aid kit and follow closely behind him. We were met by a tearful

teenager who directed us to a small bedroom. My supervisor went in and took one quick glance down at the bed and exited, overwhelmed by memories and emotions. He had recently lost his one-year-old daughter when she ran into the street in front of their home and was struck by a passing car. The circumstances surrounding that horrible event still occupied his thoughts, leaving him helpless in this emergency. He looked at me in desperation and told me to go in there to render aid.

I entered the room and saw a lifeless infant baby boy about six months old lying on the bed. The infant's frozen frightful facial expression beckoned me with his piercing big blue eyes staring right at me. I had been trained in technical school in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid, but had never had to actually use



Unexpected Emergency



it. But now duty called.

The child appeared to have been dead for some time, but I reacted as any firefighter would. I automatically responded to the urgency of the matter, checking for vital signs and starting CPR. During the course of performing CPR some sputum came from the infant's mouth, but I continued without interruption. After what seemed like half an hour of performing CPR, the medics finally arrived on the scene and relieved me of life-saving efforts. However, it was fruitless because the infant was later found to have been dead well before our initial arrival on the scene.

Investigation after the incident revealed the teenage baby-sitter wasn't trained in CPR. Had she been adequately trained, the infant may have survived with her immediate aid. Additionally, she was not aware of the on-base emer-

gency reporting procedures and therefore called the county fire department, inadvertently causing a crucial delay in the rescue aid response. Critical life-saving moments were lost when the teenager found the infant in cardiac arrest but, in a panic, failed to alert the closest emergency service, since her call to the county fire department had to be relayed to us so we could respond.

Today, almost 18 years later, I can still remember the frozen look on that infant's face and how sick I felt after my fruitless efforts. I never did eat that steak the evening of that response, nor did I sleep one bit that night, because I knew that a life had been needlessly lost. It's truly a shame that the teenager was not better prepared for the emergency, but I thank God that I was prepared to do my job regardless of the outcome.

Protect your peace of mind as a baby-sitter and/or parent. Be aware of proper local emergency reporting procedures and be skilled in CPR. No one ever knows if or when the training will be needed, but it's better to be prepared than not. Be prepared to meet the challenge of a medical emergency. A little forethought and training can save time, and even a life. ■

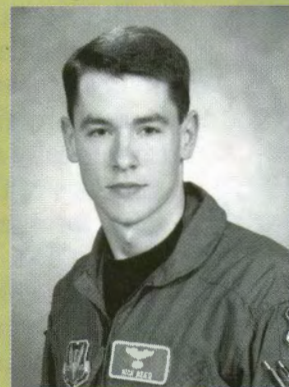
MONTHLY AWARDS

AIRCREW SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*Capt. Mark C. Anderson and 1st Lt. Nicholas J. Reed
60th Fighter Squadron
33rd Fighter Wing
Eglin AFB, Fla.*



On 2 Feb. 00, Lt. Reed and Capt. Anderson were flying as numbers one and two of a four-ship of F-15Cs while deployed to NAS Keflavik, Iceland. During the G-awareness exercise, Capt. Anderson felt and heard his airplane violently yaw and shake. He immediately backed off the G-loading and rolled out of his turn. Lt. Reed saw a huge vapor cloud engulf Capt. Anderson's airplane and called a "knock-it-off." Capt. Anderson



looked over his airplane and noted significant damage to his left wing and a fuel leak. As Lt. Reed rejoined for a damage assessment, he noticed that the left pylon and external fuel tank had departed the aircraft. The underside of the wing and flap were severely damaged, and most of the wing's leading edge was gone.

The decision that they would have to make over the next few minutes was critical because of Capt. Anderson's significant fuel leak and the life-threatening water conditions that awaited any bailout decision. The two pilots agreed to jettison the remaining wing tank, configure for a no-flap approach, and perform a controllability check en route to the airfield. Capt. Anderson determined the airplane was controllable down to 170 knots, about 15 knots faster than a normal approach for his fuel weight. Due to icy runway conditions, they decided that an approach end arrestment would greatly minimize the risk associated with the higher speed approach. Lt. Reed and Capt. Anderson demonstrated exceptional crew coordination while establishing a game plan and ensuring that the search and recovery forces had been alerted.

Capt. Anderson flew a flawless approach end cable arrestment under extremely difficult conditions. Capt. Anderson and Lt. Reed expertly used their corporate knowledge and flying skills to quickly come up with and execute a plan that prevented a loss of aircraft and life.

PILOT SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*Capt. Christopher J. Burns
99th Reconnaissance Squadron, 9th Reconnaissance Wing
Beale AFB, Calif.*



Four hours into a high altitude U-2S Kosovo intelligence gathering mission, Capt. Burns encountered fluctuating hydraulic pressure. Upon noticing the fluctuations, he immediately lowered the gear handle and observed the landing gear slowly ratchet to the down and locked position. This unusual gear movement confirmed that the hydraulic malfunction was more than an indication problem. He then extended the speed brakes and began trimming nose-up in accordance with technical procedures. He descended to 45,000 feet and attempted to lower the flaps. Unfortunately, the pressure had now dropped to zero, leaving Capt. Burns with no hydraulics. His landing configuration would remain as set: 0.5 units of nose-up trim, flaps up, speed brakes partially extended, and the gear down and locked. After reviewing his situation and possible divert options with the supervisor of flying (SOF), Capt. Burns elected to return to the deployed base from which he had launched.

Capt. Burns would have to fly the most difficult pattern (no flap) in the Air Force's most difficult aircraft to land. Because he was performing an operational sortie at high altitudes, he would be accomplishing this landing in a mobility and vision-restricting multi-layer pressure suit. The U-2 primary flight controls consist of an unassisted elevator, aileron, and rudder. The horizontal stabilizer pitch trim is actuated hydraulically. Trim control is critical as 30 pounds of force may be required to overcome each degree of stabilizer trim. Capt. Burns' trim was now stuck three units below what is normally used for landing.

Despite this, Capt. Burns' quick, smart actions prevented a bad situation from becoming worse. By expeditiously extending the landing gear, Capt. Burns ensured he would not have to rely upon emergency extension of the gear. By extending the speed brakes, he increased the drag on the aircraft, resulting in a more controllable approach and landing. With the pitch trim stuck at 0.5, he successfully used airspeed control to minimize any push or pull forces during the almost one-hour descent.

Capt. Burns flew a flawless overhead pattern to a two-mile final. No-flap emergency approach procedures for the U-2 require a very shallow approach (1.5 degrees) due to minimal aircraft drag. Charted threshold speed is only one knot above stall speed; however, each extra knot of airspeed greatly increases landing distance. At his current fuel weight, Capt. Burns had only 2,000 feet to spare with the 8,000-foot runway. Capt. Burns crossed the threshold at four feet on speed. He touched down 1,000 feet and immediately extended the emergency lift spoilers to aid in drag and to "pin" the landing. He applied the brakes judiciously and shut down the engine to further increase drag. The aircraft stopped with 2,000 feet remaining. Capt. Burns' quick, knowledgeable actions and superb stick and rudder skills safely recovered a national asset.

CREW CHIEF SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*Staff Sgt. Aaron P. Nanney and Senior Airman Christopher M. Holmes
333rd Fighter Squadron, 4th Fighter Wing
Seymour Johnson AFB, N.C.*



Sgt. Nanney was the assigned crew chief during the launch of a 333 FS F-15E Strike Eagle on a wing-sponsored incentive flight. Sgt. Nanney met the pilot and the passenger at the aircraft and assisted with strapping the passenger into the rear cockpit. Engine start progressed normally until the start of the second engine, when the Jet Fuel Starter (JFS) failed violently in a large explosion, accompanied by smoke and flames from the JFS exhaust duct.

Sgt. Nanney immediately directed the pilot to terminate the start on the #1 engine and to shut down the JFS. Sgt. Nanney rapidly and accurately assessed the situation, noting that the fire continued to burn inside the fuselage. He directed the pilot to continue to let the #2 engine run, as shutting it down would vent fuel on the ground and pose an aggravated risk of fire. He quickly prepared the nearest 150-pound Halon fire extinguisher for immediate use. Sgt. Nanney then discharged Halon into the JFS compartment and extinguished the fire. When he was completely confident that the flames were extinguished, he directed the pilot to shut down the remaining engine and egress the aircraft.

Amn. Holmes had just finished launching his aircraft from the parking spot next to Sgt. Nanney's aircraft. Hearing the JFS fail and seeing smoke, he realized the problem and potential for more serious danger. He was also aware that the aircraft had a passenger in the rear cockpit that was unfamiliar with aircraft operation and emergency actions. He ran to the aircraft to assist. While Sgt. Nanney was occupied in fighting the fire, Amn. Holmes, realizing an impending need for an emergency egress, lowered the boarding step and climbed up to the rear cockpit to assist with unstrapping the passenger from his seat. By the time the pilot had shut down the last engine, Amn. Holmes had the passenger ready for egress. He assisted both the passenger and pilot in rapidly egressing the aircraft. His calm demeanor, combined with his keen ability to perform under the most stressful situations, prevented possible injury to the passenger and pilot.

The rapid response, cool thinking under pressure, and performance beyond the call of duty by both of these young maintenance technicians averted possible injury to the pilot and passenger and prevented further damage and possible destruction of an F-15E Strike Eagle aircraft, valued at \$44 million.

FLIGHT LINE SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*Tech. Sgt. Jamie Leon
524th Fighter Squadron, 27th Fighter Wing
Cannon AFB, N.M.*



On 27 Jan. 00, Sgt. Leon, an expediter for the 524 FS, responded to an aircraft that had sparks coming out of the liquid oxygen (LOX) panel. Upon arrival, he smelled burning materials and immediately directed a crew chief to get a fire bottle and bring it around to the right side of the aircraft. Examining the LOX bottle compartment, he noticed a great deal of smoke and the vent line, which had touched a hot chaffed battery wire, glowing orange. Fearing the highly flammable liquid oxygen in its bottle may explode, he valiantly disconnected the vent line and yanked the bottle from its compartment, averting a very possible catastrophe. His quick and selfless actions potentially saved a \$24 million aircraft and the lives of those individuals in the immediate area.

GROUND SAFETY INDIVIDUAL AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Honors an individual for sustained performance or a one-time act in preventing mishaps that do not fit the criteria for other safety awards.

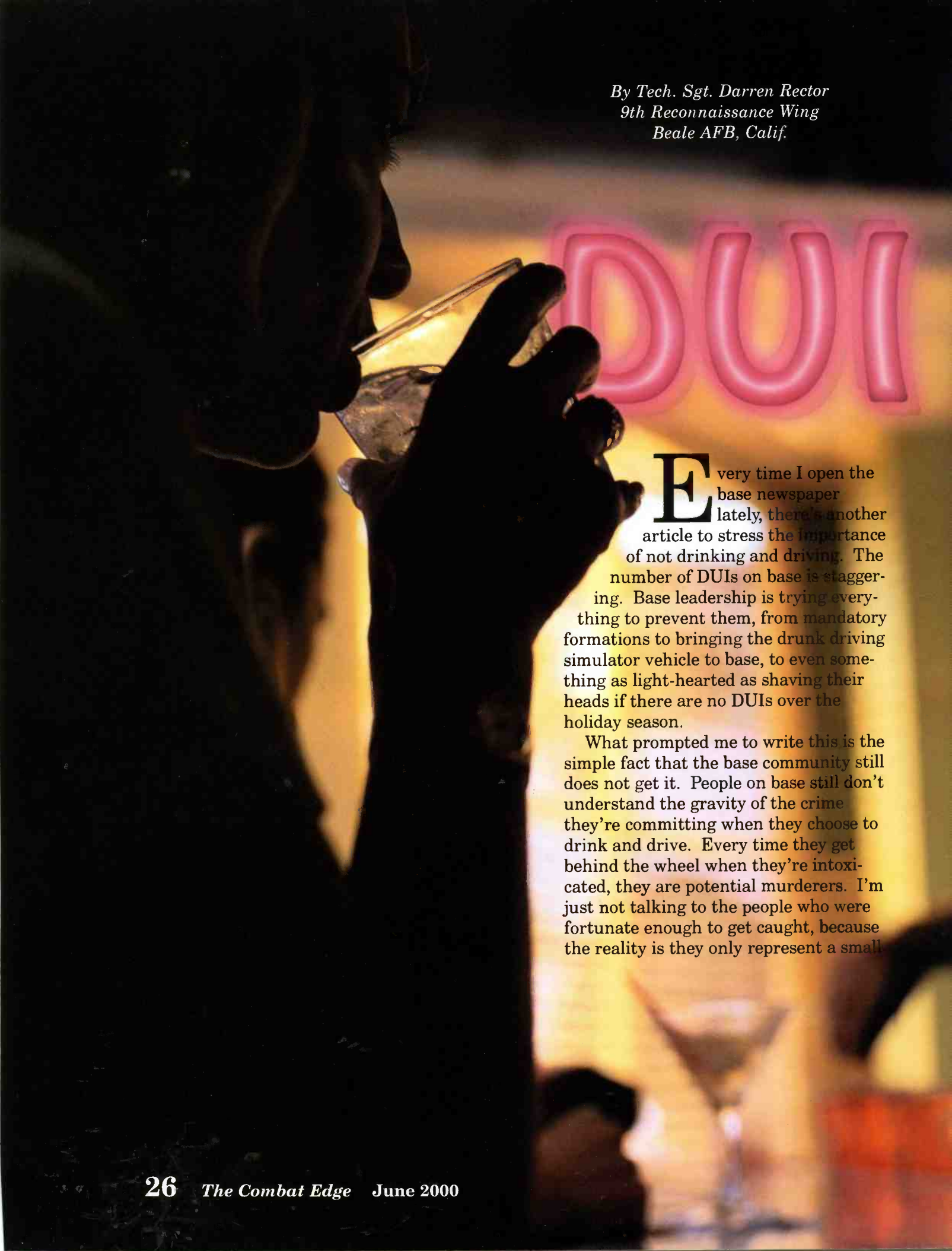
WEAPONS SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Honors individuals who make exceptional contributions to weapons safety.

UNIT SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Recognizes a unit (squadron-level and below) for sustained performance or a one-time act in preventing mishaps that do not fit the criteria for other safety awards.

*Some deserving individual or team could
have been featured here!*



*By Tech. Sgt. Darren Rector
9th Reconnaissance Wing
Beale AFB, Calif.*

Every time I open the base newspaper lately, there's another article to stress the importance of not drinking and driving. The number of DUIs on base is staggering. Base leadership is trying everything to prevent them, from mandatory formations to bringing the drunk driving simulator vehicle to base, to even something as light-hearted as shaving their heads if there are no DUIs over the holiday season.

What prompted me to write this is the simple fact that the base community still does not get it. People on base still don't understand the gravity of the crime they're committing when they choose to drink and drive. Every time they get behind the wheel when they're intoxicated, they are potential murderers. I'm just not talking to the people who were fortunate enough to get caught, because the reality is they only represent a small

percentage. There are many others that slip through the gate driving home after having a few at the club or at a friend's house, and thinking that a few miles across base couldn't hurt anyone. Then there are others who just stay off base rather than taking the chance of getting caught at the gate. These attitudes should scare each and every one of us.

Over Thanksgiving most of us gathered with family and friends to celebrate. My family got together too. We celebrated and were thankful to be together, but we also grieved a loss that most of you will hopefully never fathom — a loss that we've grieved over and over for the past 20 years. Though most of the time it feels like yesterday, it was on November 23, 1979, that my baby brother, Mark, died. He was a smart, funny and beautiful 6-year-old who didn't get a chance to live out his life because a drunk driver struck him.

We lived in a neighborhood much like base housing; the speed limit was 20 mph and there were kids playing, walking, and riding bikes everywhere, just like it is outside your window. It was the Saturday before Mother's Day — a bright, sunny afternoon. Mark was walking to the store with his older sister to get Mom a present for Mother's Day. He saw me walking home from baseball practice and ran across the street to meet me. At that same time a drunk driver rounded the corner. Her judgment was so impaired that she actually swerved into him as he moved back to the sidewalk. It didn't end there. After she hit him, she kept going, not realizing that Mark was still attached to her vehicle and that she was dragging him across the pavement, head first. Trying to get away, she accelerated and neighbors doing yard work ran along side the car screaming at her to stop because she was dragging a little boy. Finally, after nearly breaking the window, they managed to get her attention and make her stop. By this time it was too late. Imagine the horror my sister and I felt as we watched this event unfold — we were just children ourselves. Feel the heartbreak that my mother felt as she heard horrific news from the neighbors.

Imagine the visions going through her mind as she ran the few blocks to where her baby boy lay on the asphalt. Visualize the tears that flowed as she held him in her arms until the ambulance arrived.

That was the beginning of six months of heartbreak, horror and hell. Mark slipped into a coma that he never came out of. The whole family hoped, prayed, and talked to him every day, looking for a sign that he would be all right. My mother only left the hospital to shower and change her clothes. For six months she never left his side. The family tried to be strong, but even now I can't think of the pain Mark suffered, or how sad and unrecognizable his frail body was in the hospital, without being reduced to tears. His sunny blonde hair was gone; it was shaved, showing scars resembling Frankenstein's due to the brain surgery. He had a feeding tube and a tracheotomy, and I can't even describe the horrific act that it took to suction the trachea tube; he couldn't cough on his own and the congestion would have caused pneumonia. He started growing coarse, black hair all over his young body because of the medication. Every day was a constant battle to keep his muscles from atrophying and his body from pulling up in the fetal position.

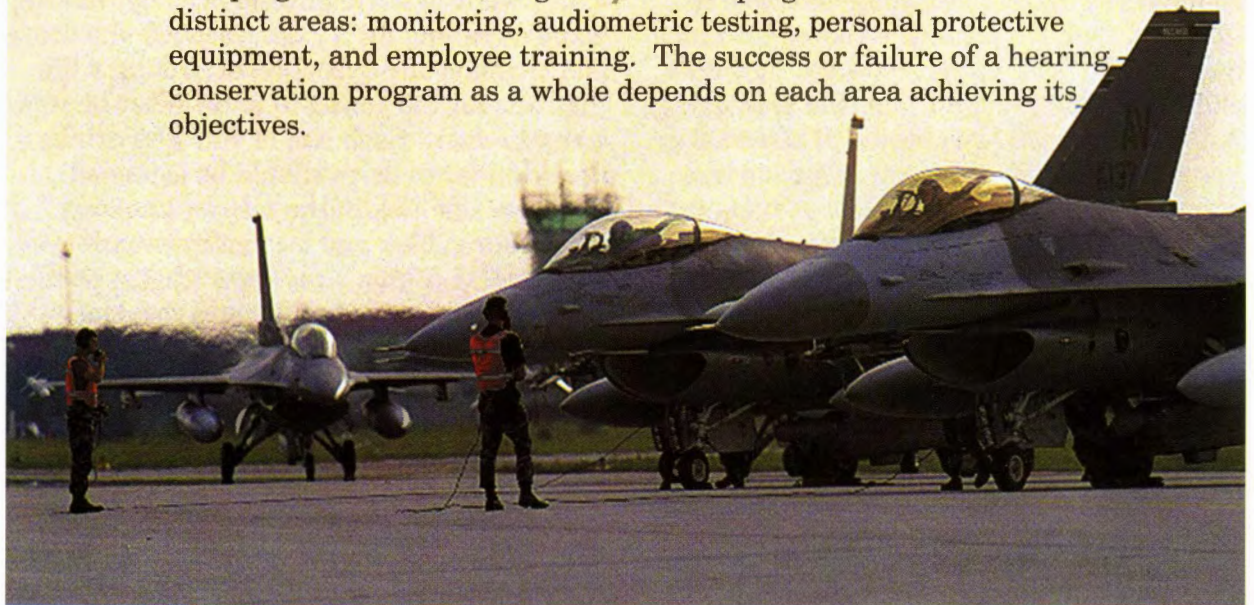
This was the reality that we were faced with day after day, because some woman sat on a barstool and had too much to drink, and didn't want to be inconvenienced by walking home or calling for a ride. Instead, she drove and changed our lives forever; taking a life that was far too young to know what he was going to miss. Each one of you who drinks then decides to drive should be ashamed. How can you look in the mirror, knowing what your selfish and lazy actions could cost someone? I couldn't care less what it could cost you; think of what it could cost the innocent people who had no part in your decision to drink and drive.

Please, before you get behind the wheel drunk, think of the loss, the tears, the heartbreak, and misery your action could cause an innocent family. Stand up and be the mature, responsible adult that everyone in your community EXPECTS and TRUSTS you to be. ■

Essentials of a Good Hearing Conservation Program

*Compiled by the 55th Aerospace Medicine Squadron
Offutt AFB, Neb.*

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) promulgated a noise standard in 1974 and published a Hearing Conservation Amendment to this standard in 1983. This amendment became effective on 7 April 1983. The OSHA standard provides worker protection against the effects of noise exposure when sound levels exceed a time-weighted level of 90 decibels over an 8-hour workday and requires the employer to implement a monitoring program if noise exceeds 85 decibels over an 8-hour workday (a 50 percent dose). AFOSH Std 48-19, Hazardous Noise Program, also requires hearing monitoring implementation at 85 decibels (dBA). If personal noise-monitoring conducted in the workplace identifies workers who are exposed to noise levels equal to or greater than the 85 dBA level, the USAF must institute an effective hearing conservation program. Good hearing conservation programs consist of four distinct areas: monitoring, audiometric testing, personal protective equipment, and employee training. The success or failure of a hearing conservation program as a whole depends on each area achieving its objectives.



Monitoring

Bio-environmental Engineering personnel must become familiar with the tasks performed in the work center through firsthand observation, interviews with shop personnel, review of previous work center data, and epidemiological summaries by Public Health. Potentially hazardous noise sources should be noted during this phase to identify the need for further evaluation. Once the need for further evaluation has been determined, noise surveys are used to quantify worker exposures. During a noise source survey, each piece of noise-producing equipment is measured for sound level to see if it exceeds the 85 dBA criteria. Where the potential to exceed the 85 dBA criteria exists, worker exposures will be evaluated by direct measurement with noise dosimeters or indirectly through noise exposure calculations.

Audiometric Testing

Audiometric testing will be conducted on all employees (without cost to the employee) who are exposed to levels that equal or exceed 85 dBA time-weighted average (TWA). An initial baseline audiogram will be obtained and subsequent annual audiograms will be compared to the baseline to ascertain if a significant threshold shift has occurred in the worker's hearing.

OSHA Amendment guidelines for testing procedures are followed.

Hearing Protection

Hearing protection will be prescribed and used to protect personnel exposed to noise levels equal to or in excess of 85 dBA until engineering controls are in place or if engineering controls are not feasible. Bio-environmental Engineering will estimate the at-the-ear noise exposure for each prescribed hearing protector to ensure the wearer's effective exposure has been reduced to below 85 dBA. Where at-the-ear noise exposures are not reduced below 85 dBA with single protection, noise attenuation for a suitable combination of earplugs and muffs will be calculated. Some employees may ask, "What is the best hearing protection for me?" It's been said the best protection is what the employee will regularly use!

Employee Training Program

Hearing loss from noise exposure nears the top of the list as the most frequent occupational hazard. DoD spends millions of dollars each year compensating noise-induced hearing loss, which is a completely preventable hazard. An educational program will be instituted for all employees whose noise exposure equal or exceed 85 dBA TWA. This program will cover specific topics outlined in OSHA documents and be repeated annually. One goal of employee education is creating awareness and appreciation that our ability to hear is precious and can never be replaced. The main purpose of hearing is to understand speech and language – to communicate. If hearing loss occurs while someone is young, it will negatively impact the quality of that person's life as the years pass.

It's also important to note that many recreational activities can cause hearing loss from excess noise. Hunting, sharp-shooting, wood-working, snowmobiles, loud music, and personal stereo systems (Walkman-type devices) can all damage hearing if not used with care.

The importance of the success in each of these four areas of the hearing conservation program cannot be overemphasized. For example, even if workers have been correctly identified for entry into the hearing conservation program, given appropriate hearing tests, and issued suitable hearing protection, the hearing conservation program may still not protect the worker. Unless the workers receive proper instruction on how to wear the hearing protection, and the workplace supervisor enforces the wear of hearing protection during tasks that involve hazardous noise levels, the hearing conservation program will ultimately fail. A coordinated team approach between Bio-environmental Engineering, Public Health, Audiology, workplace supervisors, and workers is the only way to ensure our people receive the proper preventative health care required to complete the mission. ■

"...after a lifetime in silence and darkness, that to be deaf is a greater affliction than to be blind...I have imagination, the power of association, the sense of touch, smell, and taste, and I never feel blind, but how can I replace the loss of hearing?"

-Helen Keller



Bargain-Hunters BEWARE!

*By Master Sgt. Dan Gamboa
552nd Air Control Wing Ground Safety
Tinker AFB, Okla.*

Treasure-hunting at the local flea market and rummaging through piles of boxes at garage sales can be really fun. Today, bargain hunting is popularized by TV shows highlighting valuable treasures — shows that usually portray a rare find by a little old lady who purchased a masterpiece for mere pennies. Of course finds like this really are rare, but what is common today is that “treasures” that were meant to be discarded many years ago are still being sold on today’s market. Buyer beware! Items like this can present a certain amount of risk to the consumer, i.e., worn parts, faulty wiring, poor insulation, and hazardous materials. Banned items have even made their way back into the main consumer market and are now in demand because of their scarcity.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) recently kicked off a national campaign to alert the public that many thrift stores and flea markets are selling hazardous items that were banned, recalled, or discontinued because they did not meet safety regulations.

For example, the top three products commonly found in the field that present a serious risk to a child’s health are jackets and sweatshirts with drawstrings, which pose a strangulation hazard, cribs that do not meet safety standards, and hair dryers that present the risk of possible electrocution.

On average, the CPSC recalls 250 to 300 hazardous products each year. Of these, many will find their way back into the home through second-hand stores, thrift shops and flea markets. Most consumers and store operators are un-

aware of product recalls, bans and current safety standards, and may inadvertently offer the items up for sale.

A recent study of stores nationwide, both independent and those operated by national organizations, detected the following hazardous products for sale:

Fifty-one percent of jackets and sweatshirts with drawstrings presented a strangulation hazard.

Twenty percent of retailers sell hair dryers not protected against electrocution.

Twelve percent sell baby cribs that present entrapment and strangulation risks. Narrow rails and protruding bolts are common hazards.

Ten percent sell recalled halogen torchiere lamps without wire or glass guards, presenting a severe fire hazard.

Seven percent sell recalled play yard equipment and playpens with protruding bolts, hardware, or collapsible top rails, presenting a strangulation hazard.

Four percent sell recalled car seat carriers with handles that can unexpectedly disengage, causing the seat to flip and injure infants.

One percent sell other hazardous products including banned lawn darts, recalled cedar chests (suffocation) and beanbag chairs, all of which present injury and death hazards to children.

Bargain hunting is a popular pastime. Anyone who purchases a secondhand product should check with the CPSC on their Web site www.cpsc.gov to determine if the item has been banned, recalled, or violates current safety standards.

It’s all right to keep searching for that super bargain or rare treasure piece, but stay alert to the potential hazards you could be introducing into your home! ■

BOAT SMART FROM THE START.



WEAR YOUR LIFE JACKET.