The Combat EDGE

May 2004

101 Critical Days of Summer

General Hal M. Hornburg, Commander

Colonel Creid K. Johnson, Director of Safety

The Combat Edge

Photo by TSgt Ben Bloker

Photo by SSgt Nathaniel G. Bevier

Photo by SSgt Sam Bendet

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Departments

MAJ ANTON KOMATZ
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

MAJ WENDY HAMILTON
EDITOR

MS. BARBARA TAYLOR
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

SSGT CARRIE ATWOOD
PUBLICATIONS DESIGNER

TSGT BEN BLOKER
ASSOCIATE PHOTO EDITOR
1ST COMMUNICATIONS SQUADRON

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CONTRIBUTIONS: Please send articles with name, rank, DSN phone number, e-mail and complete mailing address and comments to:

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

Telephone: (757) 764-8868
DSN 574-8868
FAX: (757) 764-8975
e-mail: anton.komatz@langley.af.mil

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Front Cover: *TSgt Ben Bloker*

ACCent on Safety

101 CRITICAL DAYS OF SUMMER

The 101 Critical Days of Summer campaign began in the early 80's when fatal mishap numbers were growing for both on- and off-duty activities. Initially the fatal mishap numbers were reduced from a high of 46 to a low of 15 fatalities; however, the fatal mishap numbers have begun to rise again. In FY02, ACC lost eight Airmen during that timeframe, and last year that number increased to 12. So far this year ACC has experienced 11 fatalities — we're on a pace to set records, the kind we don't want. Although the 101 critical days comprise just over a quarter of the year, historically, ACC experiences almost 40 percent of the yearly fatalities during this time period.

The causes seem obvious — more mishaps due to an increase in leisure time activities. ACC Airmen spend more time on the road traveling, recreating with their family and friends, and taking well deserved vacations. We must impress upon all of our personnel to use the principles of good Operational Risk Management and Personal Risk Management. Take the time to assess the hazard(s), consider the options, and then take action (ACT process). Proper risk management planning will allow us all to keep ourselves, our loved ones, and our friends out of harm's way.

When traveling and recreating, don't forget the proper use and wear of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) — it is one of the greatest lifesaving actions we can take. That means wearing seat belt and shoulder harnesses properly, and ensuring our children are safely seated in child seats that are installed correctly in any vehicle. Proper PPE for motorcycle enthusiasts includes an approved helmet, impact resistant goggles or full face-shield, long-sleeved shirt, full length pants, sturdy footwear and gloves and a brightly colored or contrasting reflective vest or jacket. While boating, each person in the boat must have a flotation device available to them, preferably one being worn at all times while on the water.

Lastly, don't drink and drive. We simply can't afford the cost in human suffering and mission impact. Enjoy the upcoming summer and be careful in your endeavors — your nation and your Air Force need you to be duty ready at all times. Help make safety proactive — make it your Combat Edge.

Colonel Creid K. Johnson,
ACC Director of Safety

Photo by TSgt Ben Bloker

what was I thin

Story by SMSgt Rodney Robinson, Langley AFB, Va.
Photos by TSgt Ben Bloker, Langley AFB, Va.

king?

Well, my story ends with me missing 2 days of work because I was unable to walk. My clothes were stuck to my body and felt like sandpaper each time I moved. If you read on, you will see how poor planning on my part and my failure to take other more experienced people's advice led me to my predicament.

I remember when I received my orders for Hawaii. I thought, "This is going to be a great assignment!"

Since I'm an avid sportsman, what more could I want? I now could play softball, golf, and other outdoor sports year-round. I arrived in May and quickly got involved in the sports scene, but as summer came to a close, so did many of the sports activities I was involved in. Since I like to stay active, I was looking for something to do, when out of the blue I heard two chiefs in my office talking about the upcoming Honolulu Marathon. Since I'm not a runner, I should have just kept my head in my books, kept my mouth shut, and pressed on, but that wouldn't be me. No, I eagerly joined in the conversation and commented that anyone should be able to run a few miles. Boy was that a huge mistake!

My counterparts in the office were going to walk the marathon, but there was no way I was going to walk; in fact, I had bigger plans. I found another coworker just as crazy as me that would be willing to run the marathon as my partner. Although we were not out of shape, we were certainly not in shape to run a marathon — 26.2 miles.

Well, since the marathon was in December, we had 5 whole months to prepare. You would think I would have started running a little to get ready, but I made no such preparation. The two chiefs in the office invited me several times to train with them, but since they were "just walking," I felt that it would be a waste of my time. So, I kept on training the way I had been by playing intramural flag football and racquetball at lunch.

The chiefs kept asking me and my coworker what we were doing to prepare, and we would reply, "Don't worry about us." My wife was even on me to prepare for this event, but I didn't let that influence me either.

The marathon was now only a day away, and I was ready, or so I thought. My coworker was TDY and was due in later that evening. We would have to get up around 3 a.m. so we could get a good parking spot by Hooters and walk to the starting line. Yeah, that's right. We parked the car by Hooters because we thought after the race we would meet for wings and a drink. After we parked the car, we walked to the starting line a few miles away. I guess I should have figured something was wrong when one of the racers at the starting line approached me and asked if I was running in my T-shirt. I didn't think anything about it and just shrugged him off.

I must admit I felt a little out of place. Most runners were stretching, running in place, and putting Vaseline on their bodies — for what? I was just standing near the front of the starting area ready for the big event to begin.

Finally the fireworks were in the sky, and off we went. The race was packed with thousands of runners. The first 10 miles took what seemed to be days, although I did manage to pass a few of the walkers. At the 10-mile point, my coworker started having foot problems and had to stop. I pressed on, even though I already was questioning myself on what I was trying to accomplish. By this time, I was covered in sweat, and my T-shirt was rubbing on parts of my body that it shouldn't be. The shorts I was wearing also were not designed for running and were causing me substantial problems in key areas, if you get my drift. My shoes, although they were running shoes, were not as comfortable as I remembered. During the race, I did

After several hours, and many rest breaks later, I was close to completing the marathon

see numerous runners going by tables along the course and putting their hands in something. I later found out this was Vaseline, which could have solved many of my problems.

After 13 miles I could run no more; so I began to walk. Shortly after I stopped running, the two chiefs from my office caught up to me. They were very encouraging and wanted me to walk with them. However, by this time my entire body was in pain. My shirt and shorts were sticking to all major parts of my body, my feet were sore, and my hands were swelling. The two chiefs ended up walking ahead, and I struggled to keep going. After several hours, and many rest breaks later, I was close to completing the marathon.

As I neared the finish line, I remember one of the medical folks asking me if I was okay. Although I told him I was "good to go," my body was telling me something entirely different. Well, I finally crossed the finish line some 7 hours, 32 minutes, and 37 seconds after I started. My body was totally exhausted. If you remember how I began this story, I was supposed to go to Hooters for wings, but, as you can imagine, that never occurred.

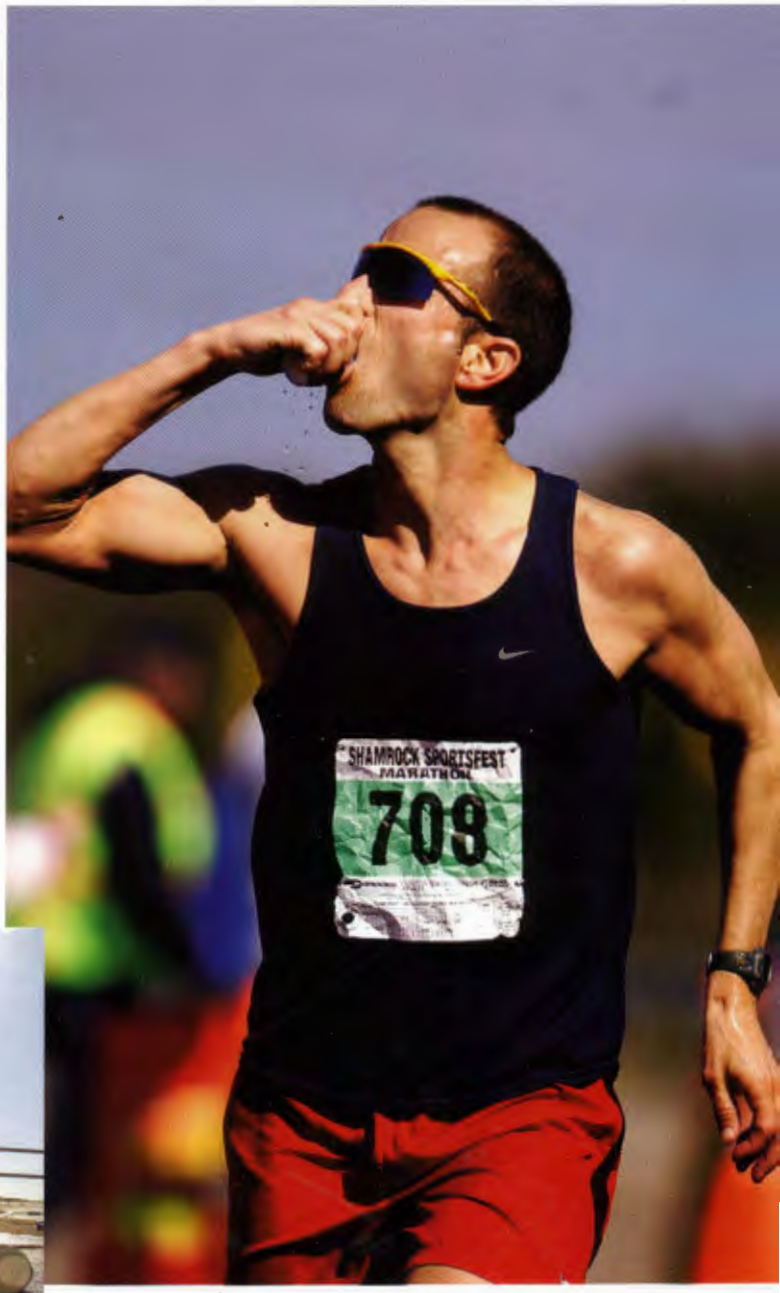
My dilemma now was getting home, and since I was separated from my running partner, that was not going to be an easy task. I did have some money in the bottom of my shoe — $13.00, but the taxi driver wanted more than I had just to take me back to the car. I ended up calling my wife from the Honolulu Zoo. However, due to the runners and traffic issues downtown, she would not be able to make it into the city for about an hour.

Since I failed to plan, I had no other choice but to wait for her to pick me up. I was now in serious pain and unable to walk another step. I ended up lying down in the grass in front of the zoo and sleeping. When my wife arrived, I hobbled over to the car and got in. By this time, my body had started to stiffen, my clothes were sticking to very sensitive areas, my feet were sore, my toe nails were black and blue, and my hands were still swollen — not a very pretty picture.

The next day was Monday, but I was in no shape to go to work; so I called in and asked for the day off. I actually ended up taking Tuesday off also. Well guess who answered the phone? You guessed it — one of the chiefs who walked the marathon. We all can joke about the experience now, but at the time it was not funny.

What was I thinking when I didn't prepare? Folks were reaching out to me, attempting to give me sound advice, but I just didn't pay them any mind. Since I'm not a runner and have little, if any experience in this area, I should have listened. I know I should have done things differently, but my stubbornness got in the way of me making the right decisions, and I failed to properly assess the situation and take the appropriate actions that would have made the marathon a better (less painful) experience.

Throughout life we certainly encounter many situations where people offer help and advice. I sure hope the next time I take the advice of folks more experienced than me. ▶



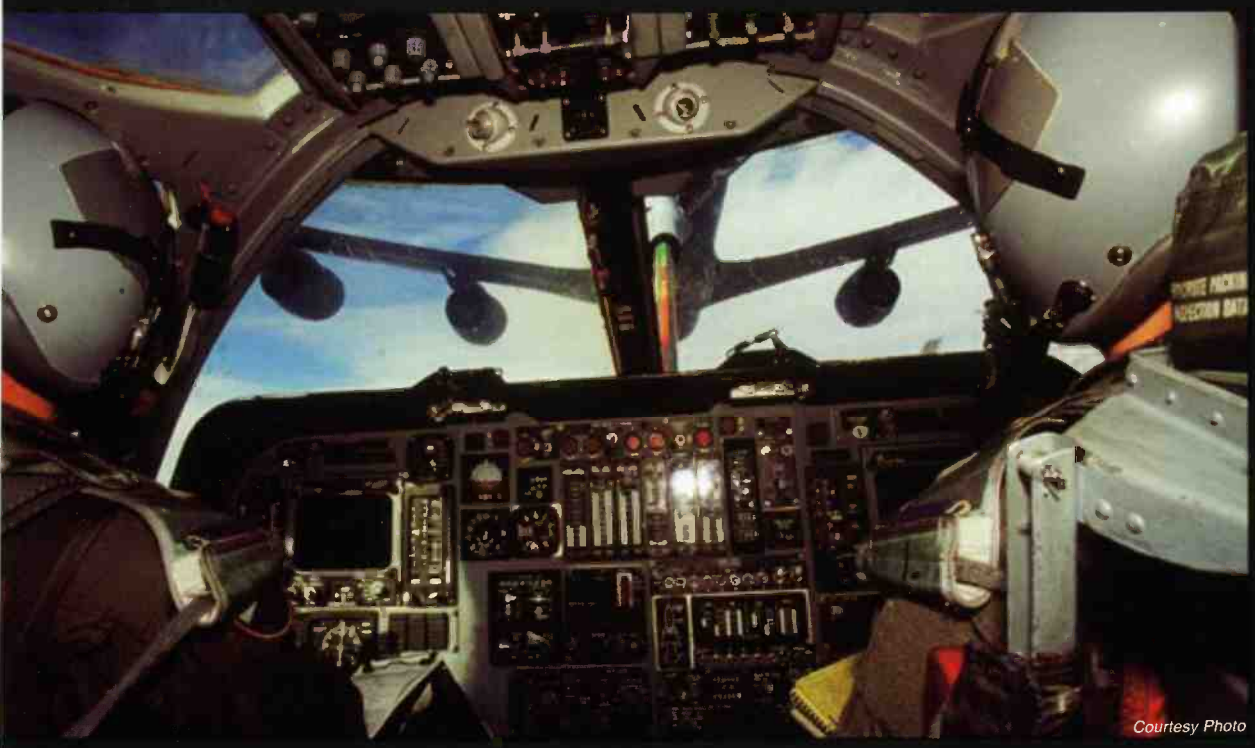
Expect the UNEXPE

By Maj Mark Bennett, Dyess AFB, Texas

Photo by SrA Nathaniel G. Bever

B-1 enters fog bank in the flare


CTED
unexpected
115



Courtesy Photo

We've all heard of Murphy's Law. I'm not sure of the exact definition, but I think it goes something like this "if it can happen, it will," and one balmy October morning in Texas the unexpected did happen to me.

It was a sortie like almost any other. We were scheduled as the first two-ship formation in a 3-day, 120-sortie surge for the 7th Bomb Wing at Dyess AFB, Texas. Every aspect of the mission was covered in detail the day prior in the mass brief. It was a routine sortie: takeoff, proceed direct to the range, perform a Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) weapons release on a multiple target set, exit the range, and return to base. We didn't want to spend any extra time on the range performing additional training. We decided we would get the jets back to base as quickly as possible to let maintenance have them for as much time as possible during the surge.

Scheduled takeoff was 0500, pushing our "show time" at the squadron into the early morning hours, yet late enough to allow for every bit of extra sleep. I determined that a 2-hour show prior to takeoff would be enough time to check over the final details of the sortie. The eight crew members showed on time, but it was obvious that each of us had just rolled out of bed and was still shaking off the sleep from the night before. It was time to wake up: *Weather, Activate flight plan, NOTAMS, TOLD, Self,* we covered every detail of the *WANTS* check completely, and we stepped to the jets. Nothing at the step desk gave us any indication that the sortie would be anything less than an as planned, "black line" sortie.

And for almost the entire sortie it was black line. Our formation took off on time, proceeded to the range, executed a successful weapons release, and proceeded back to base with the wings swept cruising along at .95 mach. With the meat of the mission behind us, the last thing to do was put the jets on the ground, giving them back to maintenance so they could begin prepping them for their next sorties. Since it was early in the morning, the sun hadn't risen, and we would be performing a night landing. "Great, I wasn't expecting to update that bean," I thought to myself as we sped home.

Eighty miles out I directed my wingman to proceed with the standard radio drill, one spin on Air Terminal Information Station (ATIS) then back to squadron common frequency. ATIS reported the weather as few clouds at 5,000 feet, visibility greater than seven, winds variable at three knots, altimeter 30.02, temperature 54. That's all the information we needed. It would be a vanilla approach to end a vanilla sortie. What could go wrong?

With the descent check complete and the runway in sight 30 miles out, I directed "Two" to take spacing while being vectored to the Instrument Landing System (ILS) approach. The vectors lined us up with the runway on a 12-mile final approach. I configured the jet, and tower called out, "Dark 11, check gear down, you're cleared to land." Everything appeared to be routine. At the final approach fix my copilot stated, "Handle down, three green, slats extended, flaps full, safety check complete."

The next thing I heard was a request from tower, "Dark 11 say conditions on final."

"What, are you new?" I thought to myself, "It's clear and a million. Set down the coffee and look outside!" I responded with "standby" and continued the approach. My cross-check confirmed both visually and with the instruments that we were on course and glidepath, everything looked normal.

the next look outside was totally unexpected ... visibility was almost zero

At 500 feet the copilot said, "Runway in sight, but it looks a little hazy." I concurred, but from the look of it, the haze was very thin and wouldn't be a factor. I could still see the approach lights, Visual Approach Slope Indicator lights, and all the runway edge lights. No problem, besides ATIS was calling the visibility 7 miles.

At the decision height of 200 feet, the conditions hadn't changed. With the exception of a little more haze, the landing environment was still clearly discernable, so I continued the approach. At 100 feet, I started picking up the normal visual cues to begin my round out, but it was dark and the haze was getting thicker. I thought to myself, "better cross-check the ILS just to make sure."

The indications showed on course and glidepath. That was a good feeling. The next look outside was totally unexpected and almost unbelievable, visibility was almost zero with the runway lights a complete blur. All the normal landing cues had disappeared. This is where temporal distortion set in, and what happened in less than a second seemed to last minutes. It felt like I had the time to cross-check my course, glideslope, airspeed, and descent rate.

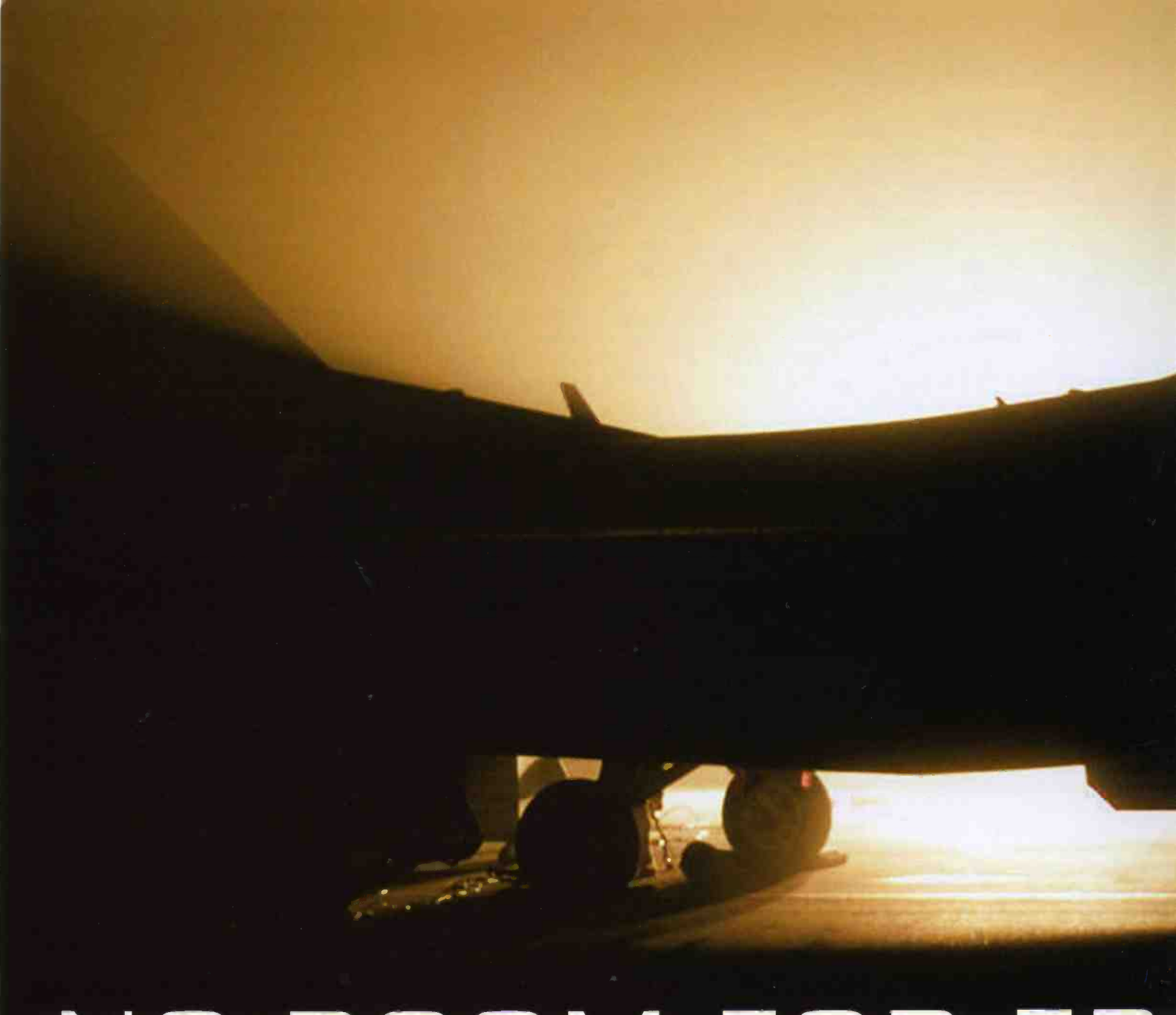
Just as "Go" started out of the copilot's mouth commanding a go around, the main gear touched down. At that point, I realized that if I executed a go around, we would be accelerating through the same conditions. I decided to keep the jet on the ground because I could still see the runway edge lights and was able to maintain runway centerline. Half way down the runway, just abeam the tower, we popped out of the fog bank into conditions that were "clear and a million."

I immediately radioed tower to inform Dark 12 of the impending conditions he was about to encounter. As I turned off the runway, I saw my wingman's landing light disappear into the fog at about 50 feet above the runway threshold. It reappeared almost immediately as they executed a go around. Now what? As flight lead I hadn't discussed a divert option in detail because I felt the chances were remote based on the weather forecast. Hopefully, they had talked about it in their individual crew brief. Fortunately, tower had more on the ball, and they offered an opposite direction landing since that end of the runway was clear with light and variable winds. Tower changed the landing runway and my wingman landed uneventfully.

Photo by SrA Christina M. Rumsey

It was unbelievable! I remembered talking about a low-level fog bank during weather class in Undergraduate Pilot Training during our annual instrument refresher course, but I considered it a one-in-a-million phenomenon and never expected it in the dry plains of Texas. Unfortunately, I overlooked the warning signs. Even though fog was not in the forecast, the temperature-dew point spread for our time of arrival was conducive to fog formation. It's not uncommon for a fog bank to form over a nearby body of water, and if the winds are just right, it can move over the airfield. That's exactly what happened on this October morning. Half of the field was "zero-zero," and the other half was "clear and a million."

The lessons I learned are old ones but need repeating. Use all the information you have available. Look closely at the weather forecast, even when it looks routine, as you may find a hidden piece of information that will give you a craniums up on what you may encounter down the road. Also, don't be quick to disregard inputs from outside agencies, they may hold important information to clue you in on possible hazards. If I had taken the time to ask the tower controller what he saw, he could have informed me of the fog bank forming over the approach end of the runway. Lastly, there are a number of factors that can cause you to divert, and it's not always weather. Always plan a thorough divert option and brief it between the crew and those in the formation. There are too many unknown factors in flying to pass up information that is available to you, so have a plan and expect the unexpected, because "Murphy" can strike even when you think you've covered all the particulars.



NO ROOM FOR ER

By Capt Mike Matesick, Hill AFB, Utah

No room for error

Throughout my flying career I've been pretty fortunate when it comes to In-Flight Emergencies (IFEs). I managed to make it through pilot training and two operational assignments in the Hog with no major issues. In fact, I seldom worried about emergencies because Hog drivers know the jet is built with redundant systems, and best of all, two engines. If one gives you a problem, just push up the power on the other and go home. All that changed when I started flying the F-16 in 2000. One learns to have more respect for section 3 of the Dash-1 when there is only one engine. I spent 3 years making crude comments about Viper drivers flying Operation NORTHERN WATCH (ONW) and Operation SOUTHERN WATCH (OSW) missions and losing an engine over Iraqi territory. It seems God has a sense of humor because I became the guy that lost an engine over Baghdad.

I was flying Operation IRAQI FREEDOM sorties from Al Udeid

Photo by SSgt Tiffany Page

AOR F-16 glides into Baghdad

AB, Qatar, and had logged several night missions in the AOR before my eventful evening. My wingman and I had just come off the tanker and called on station in our assigned Close Air Support (CAS) orbit. After 20 minutes of looking for something to do, we set up for some simulated attacks at 24,000 feet MSL when my engine dumped. I heard a loud "bang" that blew my feet off the rudder pedals and I noticed a bright flash of light in my Night Vision Goggles (NVGs). Immediately, the jet began to shake to the point I could not read the HUD, so I snapped the throttle to idle. I told #2 I had a problem and he responded he could see sparks coming from the exhaust nozzle. I pointed the nose east toward Baghdad and established a glide at 250 KIAS.

A glance at my engine instruments revealed the engine to be operating within normal limits except for the vibration, which decreased somewhat at idle. I

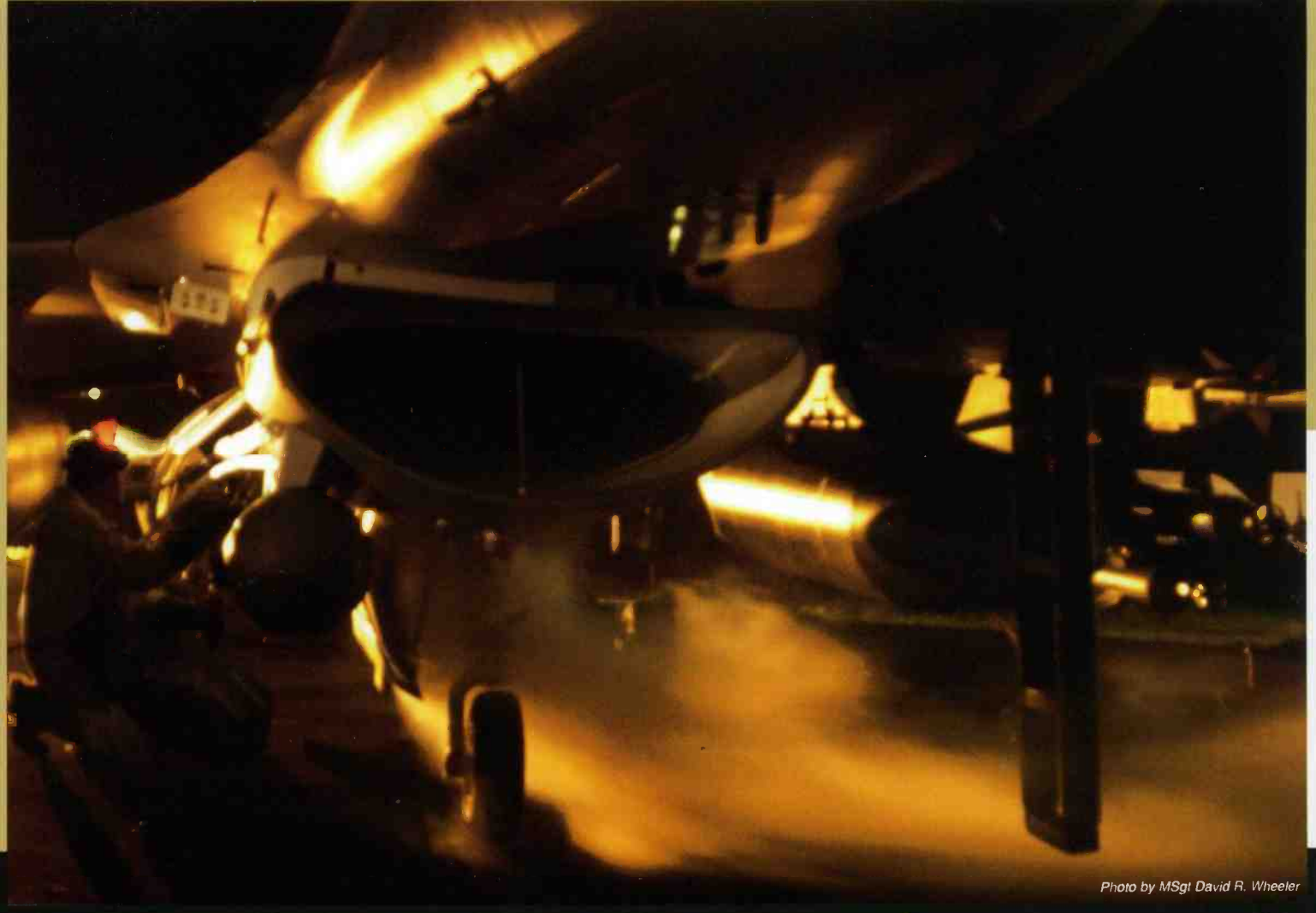


Photo by MSgt David R. Wheeler

I got out my Dash-1 checklist and began to search ...

did a belly check to determine if I was over a populated area before I jettisoned my bombs and wing tanks. I informed the command and control center of my problem, double checked my initial vector with them, and pushed the flight to Baghdad approach. After rechecking the engine instruments, I tried to push the throttle up to obtain something more than idle thrust; the vibrations became severe again, so I returned the throttle to idle.

At this point we were approximately 25-30 nm from Baghdad. Holding 250 KIAS would not allow me to establish a 1:1 glide ratio necessary to fly a flame-out (FO) approach, so I reduced the dive angle to establish 230 KIAS. I got out my Dash-1 checklist and began to search for the appropriate page but soon realized there was nothing relating to "engine vibrations," so I settled on "abnormal engine response." I declared an emergency with Baghdad approach and inquired about the field status, winds, etc. as I set up for an FO to Runway 33. At approximately 12-15 nm from the field I established a 1:1 glide ratio and dropped the nose to capture my computed FO airspeed (confirmed by #2 earlier) while checking 30 degrees south to put myself on a base position.

soon realized there was nothing relating to "engine vibrations,"

About this time, approach informed me the main runway was closed because the lights weren't operational, and the only landing surface with lights was Taxiway Mike. I still had my NVGs on but was unable to find the runway (which was 6,000' feet east of Taxiway Mike) without any lights. My night seemed to be getting more interesting by the minute. I asked about the length of Taxiway Mike and since that was the only landing surface I could see, I decided that the taxiway would work just fine. I queried

approach to make sure the taxiway was clear and confirmed the absence of arresting cables. Now on final, I lowered the gear and tried one last time to push the power up in case I needed to go around. The vibrations were considerably worse than before; I would only get one chance to put the jet on the ground.

On final, inside a half mile, I raised my NVGs and dropped the nose, aiming short of Taxiway Mike to bleed off excess energy gained during the approach. I touched down 200-500 feet from the approach end and maintained a 2-point attitude while applying the brakes. The nose smoothly fell to the ground and the jet stopped easily with 1,000-2,000 feet remaining. The engine vibrations were becoming unbearable, so I shut down on the taxiway and told #2 to go home. Fire department and transient alert trucks soon arrived to tow the jet off the active taxiway and ended my excitement for the evening. The engine was removed and sent to depot where an inspection revealed that the #4 bearing had failed.

My biggest lesson learned was that things happen quickly at night over hostile territory. I didn't have time to stop and think about the basics of flying a jet with no useable thrust, I had to rely on training and experience. Had it not been for the training flying simulated FO approaches at home and for the valuable experience gained from instructors in the simulator, the night would have concluded differently. Mutual support is important for success during IFEs; just a few comments from my wingman confirming airspeeds and the airfield location were key in building my situational awareness. Finally, God does have a sense of humor; without the 30 knot tailwind on the way to Baghdad that night, I would have been walking to the airfield.

Photo by SSgt Bennie J. Davis III

eye on Safety

Desert Spi

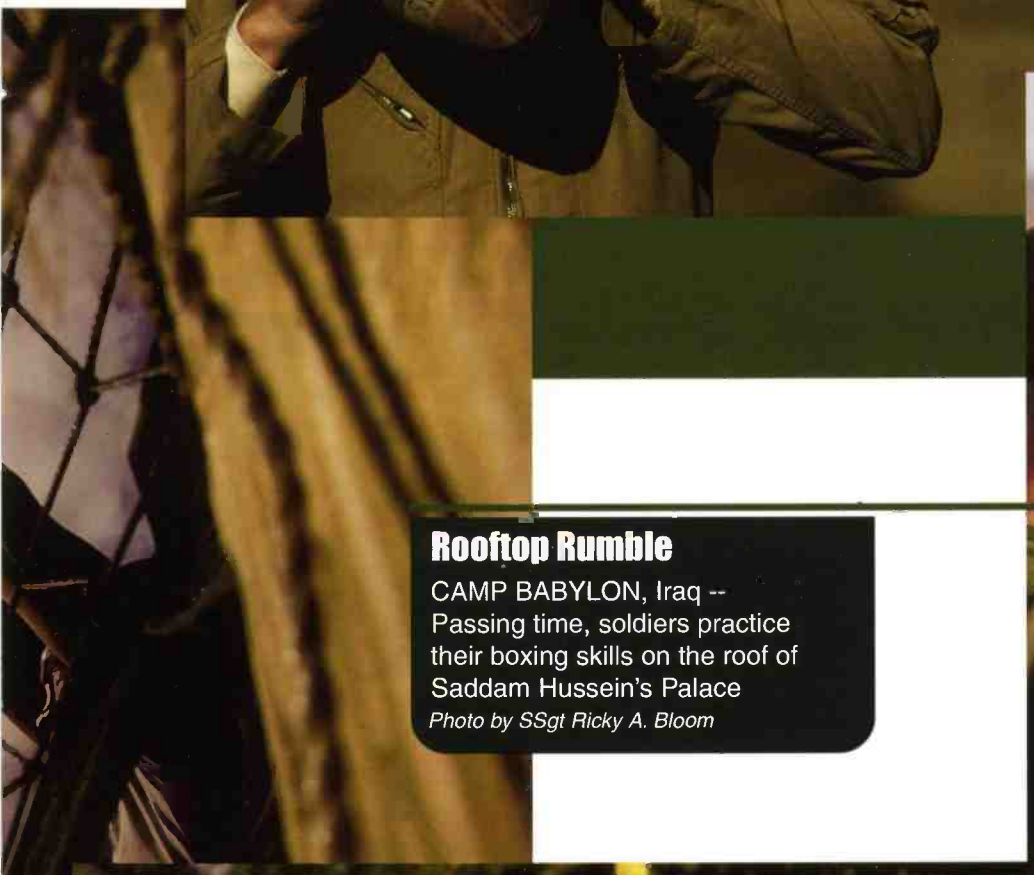
OPERATION IRAQI FREEDO
Deployed troops come together f
group sports day at Bagh
International Air

Photo by TSgt Robert J. Horstm

Baghdad Bowl

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM-- Airmen from the 447th AEG come together for an Air Force vs. Army game at Baghdad International Airport

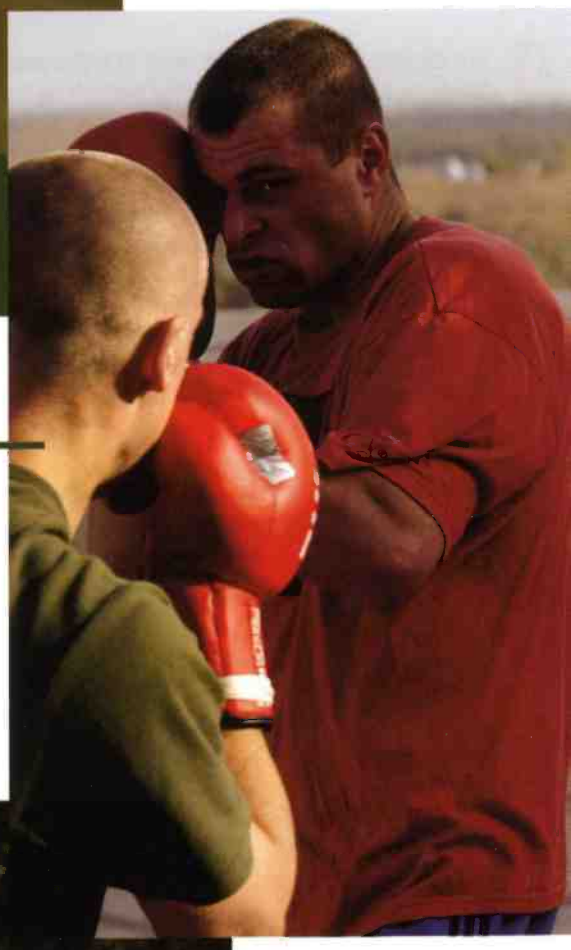
Photo by SSgt Stacy Pearsall

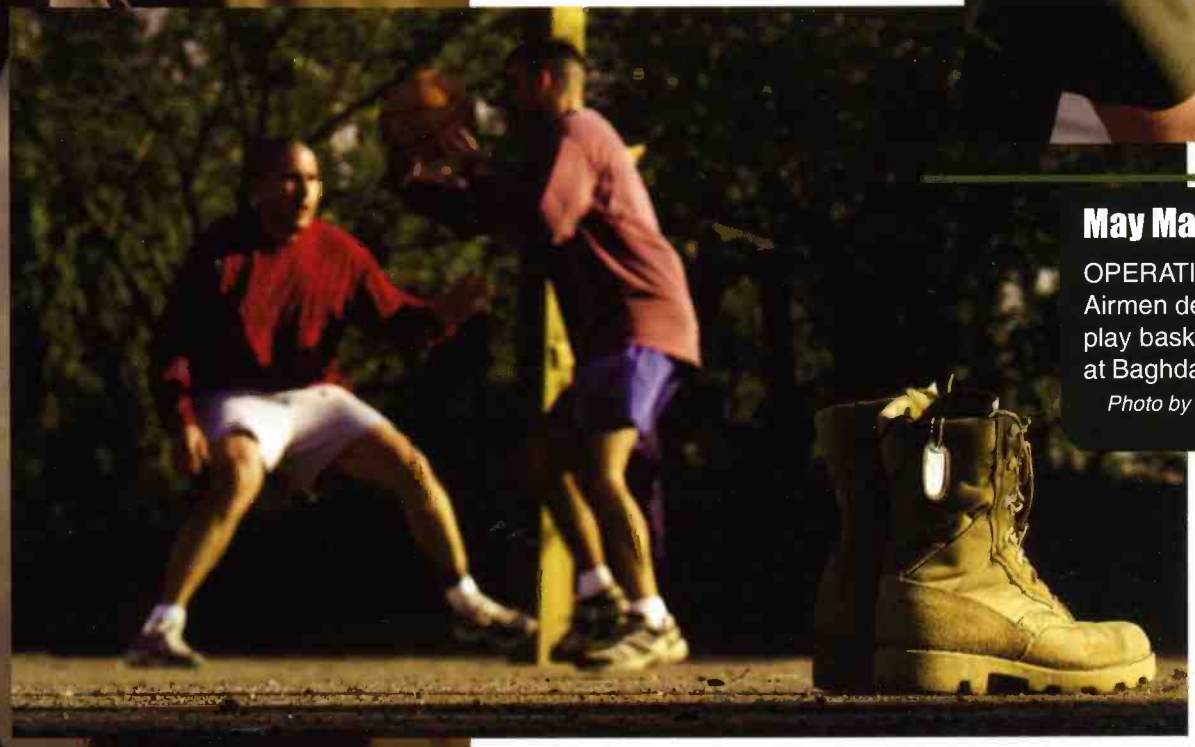


Rooftop Rumble

CAMP BABYLON, Iraq -- Passing time, soldiers practice their boxing skills on the roof of Saddam Hussein's Palace

Photo by SSgt Ricky A. Bloom





May Madness!

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM- Airmen deployed with the 447th AEG play basketball with deployed soldiers at Baghdad International Airport

Photo by SSgt Stacy Pearsall

MONTHLY AWARD WINNERS

Aircrew Safety
Award of Distinction

Capt Dickens, student pilot, and 1Lt Conrad, student Weapon Systems Officer, were on initial takeoff as number two of a two ship F-15E formal training syllabus sortie, when the landing gear would not retract. The crew also noted a Utility Hydraulic Circuit A caution light at the same time. The crew turned towards the fuel dump area, coordinated a rejoin with the lead aircraft, and began to run the four different checklists required to safely recover the aircraft. Since the aircraft was configured with external wing tanks, the crew was also required to run the Emergency Fuel Transfer/ Dump checklist in order to reduce to a gross weight compatible with the BAK 12 arresting gear. After completing all required emergency actions, the crew set up for a visual straight-in and approach end arrestment. Capt Dickens flew a flawless approach and landing, successfully engaging the approach end BAK-12 at 142 KCAS. After coming to a stop, the aircraft began to roll back, which Capt Dickens countered with a small power increase. As the aircraft rolled back, it began a violent, uncommanded swing to the right. After turning nearly 135 degrees to the right, the aircraft then began to roll back towards the left edge of the runway. Quickly realizing that the aircraft might depart the runway, Capt Dickens pulled the Emergency Brake/Steer handle and applied wheel brakes in time to stop the impending departure. Emergency response personnel were then able to safely approach the aircraft to assist the crew in a safe shutdown and cable extraction. The superior knowledge, excellent crew coordination, and expeditious, correct actions of Capt Dickens and 1Lt Conrad led to the safe recovery of a valuable combat asset and ensured the safety of the aircrew and ground personnel.

Capt Richard R. Dickens, 1Lt Christopher E. Conrad, 333rd Fighter Sqdn., 4th Fighter Wing, Seymour Johnson AFB, North Carolina

Flight Line Safety
Award of Distinction

As part of his duties as flight line expediter, SSgt Double dispatched several personnel to act as wing and tail walkers for a tow team operation. He then repositioned his vehicle to watch the team push an A-10A into the phase hangar. The fact that this hangar had recently been converted into an A-10A phase dock, coupled with the congestion created by a wide variety of support equipment in the hangar, made this operation stand out to SSgt Double as one with a greater than normal potential for a mishap. As he watched from his vehicle, Sgt Double assessed that the newly trained tow vehicle operator could benefit from some additional assistance and training to safely push the aircraft back into the hangar. He signaled the tow team supervisor to stop the operation and then got in the cab of the tow vehicle with the driver and talked him through this complicated task. Sgt Double's quick action that utilized and promoted the Operational Risk Management process may have prevented a costly aircraft mishap. More importantly, his action as a supervisor provided valuable training to one of the Group's inexperienced flight line personnel and served as an example for the other maintainers that witnessed his actions. SSgt Double's leadership and initiative will have lasting effects for the 23rd Fighter Group.

SSgt John R. Double, 23rd Aircraft Maint. Sqdn., 23rd Fighter Group, Pope AFB, North Carolina

Ground Safety

Award of Distinction

A-10 aircraft number 78-0688 ground aborted for inoperable anti-skid. SSgt Okerlund, SrA Drocea, and A1C Bynum were dispatched and trouble shot the system to a popped landing gear circuit breaker. Their knowledge of Kapton arcing danger prompted them to immediately begin troubleshooting to find the root cause of the problem and not settle for simply resetting the circuit breaker. When their shift ended, they briefed the situation and their troubleshooting progress to their swing shift counterparts. SSgt Cline and SrA Evans took over the search for the exact cause and narrowed the problem down further to a section of wire between the landing gear control valve and the landing gear relay box. After a full shift of troubleshooting, the swing-shifters gave a turnover to SSgt Okerlund, SrA Drocea, and A1C Bynum once again. Continued troubleshooting led SSgt Okerlund and his crew to trace wires from panel W-2 up to the landing gear relay box in panel F-40. While tracing wires in panel F-40, they discovered burnt wires behind the cabin air duct next to the left system hydraulic reservoir. The damaged wires proved to be the culprit and the team removed and replaced the bad section of wire to correct the original problem and return the aircraft to service. They then notified their supervisors and the QA office to get the word out to the rest of the A-10 community via a cross tell message from ACC/DRA10 that there is a flaw in the routing of this particular wire bundle. The wires were routed too close to a heat source and a one-time inspection was issued throughout the fleet. The superb team work, dedication and strict adherence to technical data of all involved, heightened the awareness of a potential fleet-wide chaffing problem, saved this war fighting asset and possibly, even more valuable, a life.

SSgt Denes P. Okerlund, SrA Thomas G. Drocea, SSgt Jamie J. Cline, A1C Daniel A. Bynum, SrA Jarrett M. Evans, 23rd Aircraft Maint. Sqdn., 23rd Fighter Group, Pope AFB, North Carolina

Pilot Safety

Award of Distinction

Lt Howland, an F-15C wingman with less than 100 hours in the aircraft, launched out as number four on a radar trail departure for a Mission Qualification Training sortie, with weather just above his minimums. Following an afterburner takeoff, Lt Howland noticed his landing gear would not retract. He immediately reduced power to continue a safe climb while keeping airspeed below maximum gear limits, simultaneously proceeding with remaining checklist procedures. After confirming the gear would not raise, he reported the situation to his instructor pilot and leveled off in clear airspace, allowing the IP to effect a rejoin and look over the aircraft. Once the IP determined all three gear were down, the two-ship flew to a holding fix and initiated emergency fuel dumping with the gear down. Lt Howland then noticed all fuel in his three external tanks was trapped, failing to transfer because of a landing gear circuit breaker that would not reset. The flight declared an emergency, ran the appropriate checklists for the fuel problem, and contacted the SOF. With 12,000 pounds of trapped fuel, the SOF calculated that Lt Howland's aircraft was too heavy to take an approach end cable, due to higher-than-normal approach speed, and also too heavy to stop on the wet runway for the same reason. The IP subsequently noticed an abnormal gear door configuration while Lt Howland reported the illumination of an anti-skid braking caution light, compounding his problem and further reducing his options. Additionally, jettisoning external tanks with gear stuck down is discouraged by the Dash-1 due to the possibility of aircraft damage. While the SOF consulted multiple experts, Lt Howland completed the checklist items for the anti-skid braking caution light, and carefully adjusted the internal fuel to the lowest practical level for existing conditions. The SOF then advised the aircraft to take the approach end cable. Heavy weight and in poor weather, Lt Howland executed a perfect landing. He engaged the approach end cable precisely at the BAK-12 barrier's maximum airspeed limit for a heavyweight Eagle, bringing the aircraft to a full stop with no damage. Lt Howland, along with his IP and SOF, expertly handled multiple EPs in challenging weather conditions, ensuring the safe recovery of a multi-million dollar combat asset.

Lt Ryan A. Howland, 58th Fighter Sqdn., 33rd Fighter Wing, Eglin AFB, Florida

Weapons Safety
Award of Distinction

Mr. Dennis Foster sustained superior performance as a Combat Arms Instructor by contributing to an outstanding safety record in an inherently dangerous environment. While conducting a weapons inspection, Mr. Foster identified four weapons as extremely unsafe and unserviceable. He quickly repaired almost invisible damage and precluded the likelihood of serious injury or death. In addition, he ensured these weapons were serviceable for a short-notice deployment tasked for SWA. Mr. Fosters' keen sense of awareness also prevented a possible life-threatening situation by removing faulty ammunition from a shooter during a weapons training class. He later identified several munitions racks that became rusted during Hurricane Isabel and were rendered unsafe for use. The racks would have caused thousands of pounds of explosives to topple over. Mr. Foster did not hesitate to relocate the munitions and construct a much safer storage unit that allowed personnel to use a dolly to transfer ammo and eliminate the need to lift heavy containers. Mr. Foster continually provides a safe training environment for 1st Fighter Wing personnel; over 2,800 individuals attended weapons training during the fourth quarter without a single weapons mishap or personal injury.

Mr. Dennis E. Foster, 1st Security Forces Sqdn., 1st Fighter Wing, Langley AFB, Virginia

Unit Safety
Award of Distinction

When it comes to safety, the 388 CMS takes the lead in enforcing the Air Force Mishap Prevention Program with the most aggressive program at Hill Air Force Base. We take our job very serious and continue to be the benchmark with our various safety and anti-DUI programs. Taking the lead is no easy task, but the rewards are astounding because of our level of prevention. To start, we have launched a safety campaign zeroing in on home and on-the-job safety. Safety monitors in each section briefed an interactive multimedia presentation used to demonstrate and encourage common safety practices. This campaign reaped huge benefits and resulted in the lowest mishap rate in history for the month. Both on-duty and off-duty mishaps went down by a whopping 40 percent from a year ago. Putting "Safety First" also resulted in the lowest mishap winter season in unit history. To ensure everyone is practicing personal risk management, morning roll call notes from the commander contain fresh safety tips and current snippets of Air Force-wide safety cross tells. Safety briefings are now intertwined into the weekly safety campaign to help members transition into the weekend with safety on the brain. As if that wasn't enough, the unit DUI Prevention Program kicked into high gear. Being the only program of its kind on Hill Air Force Base, team members, consisting of the DUI target age group of 19-24 year-olds, helped curb our DUIs to zero for the past 5 months. The team launched and implemented a monthly DUI Prevention Poster Contest now open to the entire base. They also partnered with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to promote the national "You Drink, You Drive, You Lose" campaign. Unit members selflessly volunteered numerous off-duty hours as dispatchers and designated drivers for the base Airmen Against Drinking and Driving program. This dedication accounted for countless "life saves." Other programs include a Contract for Life that the commander signs with each individual newcomer. This contract outlines commander's policy and position on drinking and driving and stresses importance of having a plan before the first drink. It's better to arrive alive than not at all! A high-risk extreme sports process sheet was incorporated into the mentorship program to ensure members are properly trained before taking on an extreme sport for the first time. This leanforward approach resulted in a 30 percent drop in winter sports-related injuries and mishaps from a year ago. With all these safety programs, it's no wonder the 388 CMS is truly the best. This defines our motto, "Upward and Onward."

388th Component Maint. Sqdn., 388th Fighter Wing, Hill AFB, Utah

FY03 Annual Awards

Air Force Annual Awards

Koren Kolligian, Jr., Trophy
Capt Mike L. Matesick
421st Fighter Squadron
Hill AFB, Utah

Colombian Trophy
27th Fighter Wing
Cannon AFB, N.M.

Air Force Explosive Surety Outstanding Achievement Award
MSgt Sean E. Carter
9th Air Force
Shaw AFB, S.C.

Air Force Explosive Safety Outstanding Achievement Award
Capt Thomas B. Vance, Jr.
9th Air Force
Shaw AFB, S.C.

Flight Safety Plaque
2nd Bomb Wing
Barksdale AFB, La.
552nd Air Control Wing
Tinker AFB, Okla.

Missile Safety Plaque
4th Fighter Wing
Seymour Johnson AFB, N.C.
83rd Fighter Weapons Squadron
Tyndall AFB, Fla.

Explosives Safety Plaque
23rd Fighter Group
Pope AFB, N.C.
1st Fighter Wing
Langley AFB, Va.
7th Bomb Wing
Dyess AFB, Texas
9th Munitions Squadron
Beale AFB, Calif.
4th Fighter Wing
Seymour Johnson AFB, N.C.
2nd Bomb Wing
Barksdale AFB, La.

Nuclear Surety Plaque
5th Mission Support Squadron
Minot AFB, N.D.

Aero Club Safety Certificate
Offutt AFB, Neb.
Langley AFB, Va.
Barksdale AFB, La.

National Safety Council Awards

Award of Honor
1st Fighter Wing
Langley AFB, Va.
5th Bomb Wing
Minot AFB, N.D.
9th Reconnaissance Wing
Beale AFB, Calif.
20th Fighter Wing
Shaw AFB, S.C.
23rd Fighter Group
Pope AFB, N.C.
49th Fighter Wing
Holloman AFB, N.M.
55th Wing
Offutt AFB, Neb.
552nd Air Control Wing
Tinker AFB, Okla.
Headquarters Air Combat Command
Langley AFB, Va.
67th Intelligence Operations Wing
Lackland AFB, Texas
Headquarters, Air Warfare Center
Nellis AFB, Nev.

Award of Merit
53rd Wing
Eglin AFB, Fla.

Award of Commendation
Headquarters, Eighth Air Force
Barksdale AFB, La.
3rd Combat Communications Group
Tinker AFB, Okla.

President's Award Letter
819th Red Horse Squadron
Malmstrom AFB, Mont.
823rd Red Horse Squadron
Hurlburt Field, Fla.

Harmful Water Bottle

By TSgt Carl Norman, Wright Patterson AFB, Ohio

When working in hot or stuffy climates, a time-tested method of having an ample supply of water is "to take it with you." While water bottles are useful in hot, arid climates or on flight lines and in the field, they can cause problems for those working in areas where painting, sanding, metal grinding, and mixing chemicals and pesticides occur. This hazard also applies to areas where particles or vapors can be ingested. Since many water bottles have a rubber-end mouthpiece that has to be chewed or bit open, there is a significant chance for transferring chemicals to the mouth. Additionally, dusts can collect on the wet mouthpiece and chemical vapors can absorb into the rubber. You don't want to swallow these materials because they'll make you sick — either now or over time.

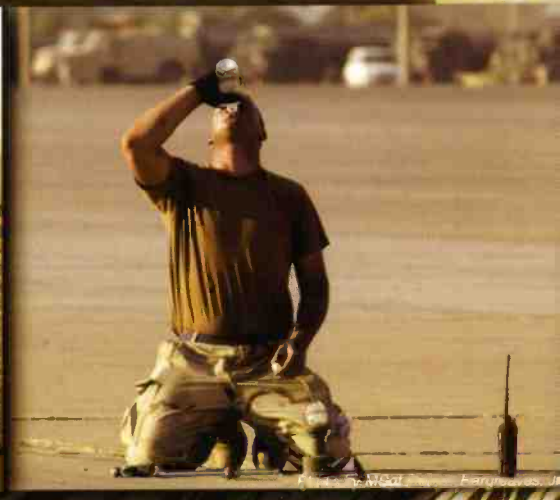
How Can I Stay Safe?

It's simple. Keep water bottles and camel packs out of these environments. Current Occupational Safety and Health Administration and Air Force regulations (OSHA CFR 1910 expanded standards and AFOSH STD 91-501) prohibit food and drink in areas where potential ingestion hazards exist, and they discuss educating people on these ingestion hazards. So, take your breaks and drink water in a hazard-free environment. You also should wash your hands before eating, drinking, or smoking after working in an area with ingestion hazards. If you aren't sure if the area where you work is considered hazardous, then talk to your shop supervisor, base Safety, or Bioenvironmental Engineering Office to determine your shop's status. Besides the ingestion hazard, water bottles and any other portable devices have loose straps or ties which could get caught in equipment or on obstructions. While there have been few reports of injuries resulting from loose clothing or personal equipment, the potential for injury still exists.

The bottom line is to keep water bottles out of industrial areas and contact your base Safety or Bioenvironmental Engineering Office if you need more information.

Photo by SSgt Stacy Pearsall

Photo by MSgt Keith Reed



Courtesy Photo

By Bob van Elsberg, Fort Rucker ALa

...cky to be alive

By Bob Van Elsberg, Fort Rucker, Ala.

THE DANGERS OF "HIGHWAY HYPNOSIS"

I had just gotten back to Seattle from a 70-day patrol in Alaska, and everyone was given 4 days off. Five if you could pay someone to stand your duty on the fifth day. I was anxious to see my girlfriend, who lived in San Diego, Calif. I whipped out my road map, and using the tried and true "string measuring system," figured it would be a 1,250-mile drive. I calculated that I could make it in 24 hours. No big deal. I'd stood 24-hour duty before, so driving a car should be a snap.

I hit the road at 1 minute past midnight. To my credit, I covered about 900 miles before my energy level dropped through the floorboards. I pulled over for a brief rest and then drove the remaining 350 miles.

As you can imagine, having driven so far I wanted to cram as much as I could into those 3 days, so I cut corners on my sleep schedule. But hey, I was young and bullet-proof. I could handle it.

Finally, I had to head back. I pulled out from my parents' house at "zero-dark-early," glad that I would at least miss the Los Angeles morning rush hour traffic. Except for gas, I didn't stop until I hit the northern California town of Dunsmuir, where I stopped for a bowl of chili. I figured that would keep me going for awhile longer.

It was nightfall, and I was now well into Oregon. As I looked ahead, I thought I saw people walking across the freeway. I slammed onto the brakes and slowed to a crawl. But when I rubbed my eyes and looked around, nobody was there. "Wow," I thought, "was that what is called 'highway hypnosis'?"

I poured myself a cup of coffee from the thermos, determined not to fall prey to another illusion. An hour or so later I saw what I thought were the taillights of a tractor-trailer stopped

I tried slapping my face and punching my leg figuring the pain would keep me awake

in front of me. I hit the brakes and swerved into the left lane, but there was no tractor-trailer. The "taillights" were just some stars low on the horizon.

This was getting serious, so I took the next exit and pulled off the road to get some sleep. I figured I could get in an hour-long nap and still make morning formation. I wasn't asleep for long before a policeman shone his flashlight through the window and asked me what I was doing.

Once more I headed north on the highway. I rolled down the window, hoping the cold air would keep me awake. When that didn't work, I tried slapping my face and punching my right leg, figuring the pain would keep me awake. It wasn't pretty, but at least my eyes were staying open.

The sun had been up for an hour or so when I passed the Seattle city limit sign. I breathed a sigh of relief. I'd made it, or so I thought. But I was wrong. Without any warning, I fell asleep going 55 mph on the freeway. Suddenly, I awoke to a blaring horn. I'd drifted to the right and was about to sideswipe a Corvette.

I swerved to the left, scared stiff at what had just happened. I realized I was no longer in control of myself. Fatigue had taken over. I could fall asleep again at any moment, and I was only minutes away from my unit.

I was lucky! I made it back all right and shaved and dressed for formation. My E-6 took one look at me and ordered me to bed. He later told me I could have been brought up on charges for being unfit for duty. I realized later that he cared enough to stop me from doing something stupid like this again. (Yes, NCOs, you CAN make a difference in your Airmen's off-duty safety.)

I was lucky three times on that trip, which was more luck than I deserved. I let being young and "bulletproof" almost make me dead.

Some hard-learned tips to get you through the long haul:

- Get 7 to 8 hours of sleep before you leave. Long-distance driving is hard work. Also, don't begin your trip late in the day.

- Plan to drive with a friend. A passenger can help you with the driving, and conversation can increase alertness.

- Avoid long drives at night. The glare of lights, both from your dash and outside your vehicle, increases the danger of highway hypnosis.

- Don't use cruise control. Keep your body involved with driving.

- Stop for a rest break every 100 miles or 2 hours. Get out and walk around, or even jog or do some calisthenics. Exercise fights fatigue.

- Avoid alcohol and over-the-counter or prescribed medications that cause drowsiness.

- Caffeine can provide short-term alertness, but be aware it takes about a half hour for caffeine to take effect.

If you can't stay awake, stop and get some sleep. Find a safe, guarded rest area, truck stop, or service station. Even a short nap, 15 to 45 minutes, can help energize you enough to get to a hotel or motel. ▶

Editor's Note: *The author describes how suddenly sleep can overcome the most vigilant driver. While caffeine and other stimulants are effective up to a point, eventually the sleep debt must be paid. Drivers must ensure they plan for and satisfy the body's requirement for sleep. Sleep is a creditor that will not be put off indefinitely. Story courtesy of COUNTERMEASURES MAGAZINE.*

highway TERRORISM

By TSgt Darren Veneman, Osan AB, ROK

highway terrorism by TSgt Darren Veneman, Osan AB ROK

In an era of international terrorism, we are now aware of new threats to our lives, our communities, and our way of life. But in thinking about foreign terrorists, we sometimes fail to see the people here at home who threaten our lives everyday on the roads. Drinking and driving is a subject that our society has become increasingly numb to. We are constantly reminded of the dangers of drinking and driving, but the messages of supervisors' briefings and roadside signs seem to go unnoticed. Drunk drivers are social terrorists who take innocent lives. Are we going to remain numb to these individuals and let them terrorize us on our roads?

Webster's Dictionary defines terrorism as the systematic use of terror and fear, especially as a means of coercion. While drinking and driving is not a form of direct coercion, the threat posed by drunk drivers has caused people to alter their lifestyles. For instance, many people now avoid driving after midnight when the bars close and "the drunks are out on the roads." Drunk driving is systematic in that the drunk driver typically does so repeatedly, and that threat often makes the rest of the population fearful.

Making a comparison between a drunk driver and a terrorist may seem somewhat of a stretch, but when you look at the statistics of drinking and driving you must agree that this form of terrorism is real, and it's something that touches thousands of families each year. In 2001, according to data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 17,448 people were killed in crashes involving alcohol. During the nine major holidays of 2001 alone, there were 3,153 total alcohol-related vehicle deaths. In 2002, there were 17,419 deaths due to drunk drivers.

drunk drivers are social terrorists who take innocent lives

Many say the decision to drive drunk is made when an individual is in a drunken state and incapable of making a rational decision. I dispute that logic and contest that the decision to act responsibly or irresponsibly is not made at the consumption of the last drink of an evening, but rather at the first drink of the evening. Individuals who choose to drink have the opportunity to make a well thought out plan to act responsibly. By taking the time to arrange designated drivers, taking a taxi, or taking the keys of friends who have had too much to drink, we are all making a choice to fight the social terrorist, the drunk driver.

We have increased our awareness of the threat posed to us and our loved ones by terrorists, but as a nation, we also need to address the threat posed by people who drink and drive. We must continue to eliminate the threat to the innocent people of our own community. Who knows, without action, you or someone you love, could be a victim of this form of social terrorism. Simply put, don't drink and drive.

Editor's note: *The author's opinions and comparisons in this article are not intended to downplay the importance or the impact of the 9-11-01 terrorist attacks. The message is that while we have taken a zero-tolerance stance towards the threat of terrorism, a threat based on people choosing to drink and drive continues to take lives on a regular basis. This article and accompanying photo carry a message that many may find shocking or uncomfortable — think about it!*

Photo by A1C Franklin J. Perkins

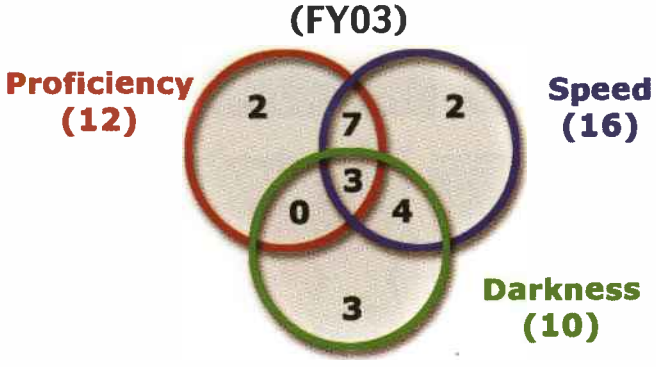

Fleagle
WHAT IN SAM'S HILL IS THAT?
TRAINING FOR THE MARATHON TOMORROW. YA' BETTER GET WITH IT, FLEAGLE.
OH YEAH. I FORGOT.
BUT WHEN YOU'RE IN SHAPE, LITTLE TRAINING IS NEEDED.
TH' MARATHON
©STAN HARRISON 2004
13
10
BANG!
HARRISON
GOOD LUCK. SUCKERS.
HOW...HOW LONG IS THIS THING??
TH' BOY SHOULD HAVE PREPARED HIMSELF.
13

The ACC Lost Squadron

Injuries to Date **260**

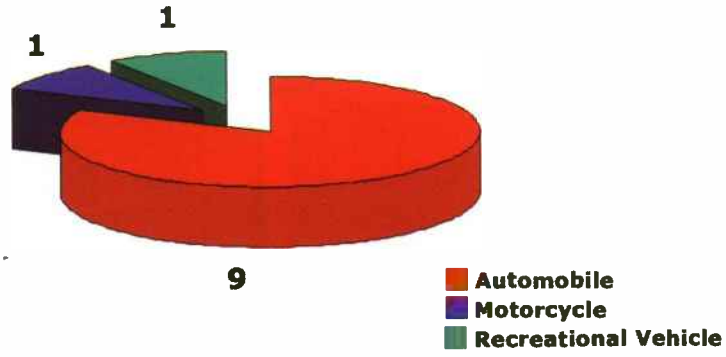
Deaths to Date **11**

Fatal PMV 2 Wheel Mishap Factors



Lack of Proficiency, Speed, and Darkness
Total Fatalities Reviewed=23

ACC Deaths as of March 31, 2004



A Few of the Mishaps

Dec 1, 2003: A 22-year-old SrA failed to stop at a red light at an intersection, crossed 5 lanes of traffic and was struck on the passenger side by another vehicle. Seat belt was worn and airbags deployed. She died at the scene.

Feb 6, 2004: A 20-year-old A1C was operating a borrowed Yamaha snowmobile during a group outing with his duty section. The snowmobile struck a snow bank/ditch head-on. He was thrown forward causing the exposed portion of his neck to impact the front windshield and handlebars of the snowmobile. Full-face helmet with clear visor and prescription eye glasses were worn. The operator initially appeared to have recovered from the impact and immediately complained to his supervisor of chest pains and breathing problems. Member was air-lifted to the hospital, but was declared deceased upon arrival.

Feb 21, 2004: A 20-year-old AIC lost control of his vehicle when it skidded, struck a curb, and departed the roadway. Driver was ejected before vehicle came to rest. Victim was discovered by passing county deputy and was pronounced dead on arrival at a nearby trauma center. Local law enforcement determined the speed was in excess of 84 mph as the vehicle entered a 160-degree left hand curve. Victim over steered causing the vehicle to slide sideways and roll multiple times. Seat belt was not worn.

Feb 28, 2004: A 23-year-old SrA was walking at night on an unlit two-lane asphalt road with the flow of traffic and was struck from behind by a vehicle. Member's clothing consisted of jeans and a blue/green shirt (non-reflective).

Don't become a member of the "Lost Squadron"

FY04 Aircraft

As of March 31, 2004

	Fatal	Aircraft Destroyed	Aircraft Damaged
8 AF			
9 AF			
12 AF			
AWFC			
ANG (ACC-gained)			
AFRC (ACC-gained)			

FY04 Ground

As of March 31, 2004

	Fatal	Class A	Class B
8 AF		2	0
9 AF		2	1
12 AF		6	0
DRU's		1	0

FY04 Weapons

As of March 31, 2004

	Class A	Class B
8 AF	0	0
9 AF	0	0
12 AF	0	0
AWFC	0	2

Aircraft Notes

Another E-4 engine and an F-15 landing mishap nearly gave ACC two Class As in March, but they were both downgraded to Class Bs. Recently, I saw a picture of a Beach Baron that survived a midair collision with a Cessna 180. Trust me ... it's not good. Let's take this opportunity to focus on keeping the windscreen in your VMC cross-check. Remember, to effectively clear, you must first look outside. Next, focus on something far away like a cloud or the terrain and then search a section of the windscreen for a small speck. If you don't find one, get back on altitude and search another section of windscreen. When you find a speck that is not moving on the windscreen, either change your bank angle by a few degrees or move a few inches left and right in your seat. If the speck stays in the same exact spot on the windscreen it's probably a bug you've already hit. If the speck is not already attached to the windscreen and it gets bigger without any relative movement across the windscreen, you're on a collision course. Check yourself before you wreck yourself. Fly Safe!

Ground Notes

There were no Class A mishaps in the month of March. In FY04 we had 11 fatalities, 9 PMV4, 1PMV2, 1 S&R. Last year during this same timeframe we lost 13 members. Although this statistic reflects a slight improvement, we must maintain a full court press in our mishap prevention efforts. We had one Class B in FY04 and last year we had a total of two Class Bs in FY03. Note: we had 233 Class C mishaps through Feb 04.

Weapons Notes

It looks like another banner quarter for weapons safety. We only experienced one Class B in the FOT&E arena this quarter, so stay focused. The Secretary of Defense's goal is to reduce mishaps by 50 percent. We should always look for new and innovative ways to keep safety a force multiplier. Keep up the good work!

Legend

Class A - 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 $20,000 and $200,000
* Non-rate Producing

Symbols for Mishap Aircraft

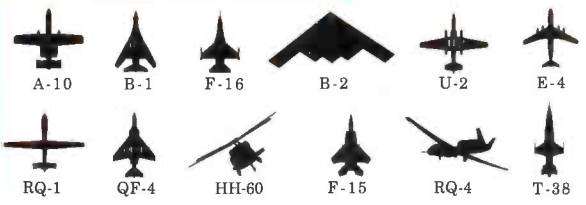


Photo by TSgt Ben Bloker

Photo by SSgt Robert Zoellner

Photo by TSgt Ben Bloker

The Combat Edge

Fit to Fight

As we transition to the new Air Force fitness standards, do it right, do it safe, be ready!

My belief is that we are a much different Air Force today. We deploy to all regions of the world, living in tent cities and working on flight lines in extremes of temperatures ... The amount of energy we devote to our fitness programs is not consistent with the growing demands of our warrior culture. It's time to change that.

~ Gen John P. Jumper, USAF Chief of Staff