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ACCent on Safety

OPERATION SAFE HOLIDAY

What are your plans for this holiday season? Will you be traveling to visit family and friends? Are you deployed and accomplishing the mission? Regardless of where you are, I challenge you to make this holiday season the safest possible — call it OPERATION SAFE HOLIDAY with the goal of having zero mishaps. The key to achieving this goal is you!

As you prepare to travel consider the following tips:

1. Respect the weather. Practice sound risk management by looking ahead when it comes to traveling. A trip that might take you less than an hour during the summer will take longer when snow and ice are present. Plan accordingly.

2. Wear your safety belts. Make it a rule that everyone who gets in your car/truck buckles up before you drive off. We have lost several ACC Airmen in the past 12 months simply because they didn't buckle up and their Wingman didn't enforce wearing seat belts.

3. Don't drink and drive. Over the past year, five ACC warriors died because they made a decision to drive after partying. The lesson relearned over and over is this: speed, failure to wear seat belts, and alcohol use are a deadly combination. Don't let it happen to you.

4. Inspect and winterize your vehicle's safety kit. If you don't have one, build it now. At a minimum you should have a flashlight, a first-aid kit, jumper cables, and road flares. For winter weather add to it an ice scraper/brush, lock deicer, a small blanket, and a small snow shovel.

5. Always conduct a pre-trip inspection. No matter what time of the year, always check your vehicle to make sure it is just as ready as you are. In addition to checking under the hood, ensure your tires can handle the weather.

Every Airman in ACC is responsible for safety — it is a personal and a shared responsibility as a professional Wingman. Too many times we've seen celebrations during the holiday season start off with the best intentions only to end in tragedy. Be involved — be the one who breaks the chain of events leading up to a disaster. Zero mishaps during OPERATION SAFE HOLIDAY is achievable if we all make safety our *Combat Edge*.

Colonel Creid K. Johnson,
ACC Director of Safety

4 Shots of FATIGUE

by Capt Kevin Divers, and Maj Mike Stentina, Langley AFB, Va.

Capt Kevin Divers and Maj Mike Stentina

Photo Illustration by SrA Alex Sotak

Photo by A1C Justin Weaver

Let's start off with an aviator-friendly quiz. Don't worry; it's only three questions and they've all been answered.

Question 1: How many USAF pilots would pound a few beers with breakfast before a mission?

Answer: Obviously, the answer should be none. If it sounds like a dumb question, hang in there; we're making a point.

Question 2: How many USAF pilots would show up the morning of a mission feeling fatigued?

Answer: Unfortunately, this has happened to most of us at some point in our flying careers.

Question 3: What would your local flight surgeon or aerospace physiologist say is the difference between these two questions?

Answer: Absolutely nothing.

The medical community has spent years developing a modeling system that equates fatigue levels (which are very tough to quantify) with Blood Alcohol Content or BAC (which most of us understand).

The truth is that the effects of fatigue are exactly the same as the effects of alcohol. Both can cause forgetfulness, disorientation, slowed reaction time, a lack of patience, and a number of other symptoms that vary depending on the individual.

The bottom line is a drunk or fatigued pilot has no place in an Air Force aircraft. No worries; there are rules to prevent both. AFI 11-202, Volume 3 clearly covers the "bottle-to-throttle" rule concerning alcohol consumption prior to flying a mission. Break that one at your own peril -- nobody will have any sympathy for you.

The crew rest and duty day sections of AFI 11-202, Volume 3 take care of the fatigue issue, right? Wrong! While the Air Force makes pilots take 12 hours off duty with the intent of allowing for 8 hours of uninterrupted sleep, it's up to each individual pilot to get the rest he or she needs to perform at his or her best.

This is where the system has a tendency to break down. Regardless of aircraft type or crew position, all pilots have a number of common factors that add up to the same result: fatigue. All of us are human beings with lives away from the base. We have personal obligations: homes to take care of, families to support, kids to raise, etc. At work, there are other factors beyond our control: operational requirements, range times, airspace availability, manning and qualification issues, evaluations to write, etc.

Pilots do their best to balance it all and still get the sleep they need, but let's face facts. The Air Force concentrates significant effort on avoiding fatigue-related accidents off duty, but there's little emphasis on the effects of fatigue on our on-duty performance.

For example, we can all pretty much guess what a commander would say if an Airman submitted the following leave itinerary: drive 14 hours through the night to get to mom's house; hang out for 12 hours, resting whenever possible; and drive 14 hours back the next day. "Disapproved!"

Now, what would that same commander say if a pilot flew a 14-hour sortie to the AOR, went into crew rest on landing, and flew back home 12 hours later? The commander would call it operational requirements and sign the flight orders. By the time a pilot returned home from this mission, his or her equivalent BAC could be as high as 0.08 percent. That's legally drunk according to the driving laws in most states!

It's just as easy to visualize a peacetime training scenario in which a crewmember does everything "legally," but still ends up flying "drunk." Let's say there's a wingman in a squadron named "Bob." Bob is going through his two-ship Flight Lead Upgrade (FLUG) syllabus.

Physiologically, Bob's sleep requirements are average, meaning he needs 8 hours of sleep a night to avoid being fatigued. It's mid-July so sunset is at 8:40 p.m. Airspace at Bob's home station is extremely difficult to schedule, and, it just so happens, his squadron is on the early cycle with 7:00 a.m. takeoffs all week long. This is Bob's flight schedule for the week:

Monday: Red Air, 5:00 a.m. brief
Tuesday: Red Air, 5:00 a.m. brief
Wednesday: Scheduling Duty Officer
Thursday: Blue Air upgrade flight, 5:00 a.m. brief

Sunday through Tuesday, Bob gets to sleep by 10:00 p.m. (not unreasonable considering it doesn't get dark until 9:00 p.m.). He wakes up at 4:00 a.m. so he can be in the squadron 15 minutes before his brief. Up to this point, Bob is getting 6 hours of sleep a night, which is 2 hours off his average.

Photo by Mr. Jason Minto

Wednesday night throws his averages off even more. He stays up until 11:00 p.m. practicing his FLUG brief. Bob then gets up at 3:00 a.m. on Thursday morning so he can finish up his lineup card and put his boards up before his brief. Bob knows he'll only get 4 hours of sleep, but it's an upgrade ride, and he wants to be prepared.

During the week, Bob left the squadron building on time every day, meaning he never broke the 12-hour rule. He used his own "uninterrupted" time to work on his briefings so he was "technically legal" according to AFI guidance. The question is: Was Bob fulfilling the "spirit and intent" of the AFI?

Physiologically, what did Bob do to himself? His self-induced, day-to-day fatigue and accrued sleep deficit gave him a BAC equivalent of between 0.10 to 0.12 percent as seen in the figures below:

Monday	0.05 percent
Tuesday	0.05 - 0.085 percent
Wednesday	0.05 - 0.085 percent
Thursday	0.10 - 0.12 percent

By the time Thursday rolls around and Bob stands up to brief his FLUG ride, his fatigue level is the same as being legally drunk in every state.

Granted, the previous example is a bit compressed and designed to prove a point; however, the scheduling scenario used is fairly common. The bottom line is: fatigue is a factor. Today's operations tempo, as well as the demands of our expeditionary force, is not going to change that fact anytime in the near future.

Air Force flying units face a number of realities (e.g., manning, qualifications, airspace availability, etc.) that disrupt mission schedules and work to prevent pilots from establishing and maintaining a consistent circadian rhythm. Nonetheless, as Air Force operators, we still have to get the mission done. Since we can't eliminate the inherent hazards, we have to mitigate them to the best of our ability through active Operational Risk Management (ORM) practices.

The first thing we have to do is overcome some common myths and cultural stigmas attached to fatigue:

1) Airmen cannot "power through" fatigue and still maintain an adequate margin of safety. Using substances like caffeine, nicotine, or sugar to boost energy is only a Band-Aid fix that further complicates the problem.

2) Sleep cannot be "banked" to be spent at a more convenient or later date. "Sleeping in" to catch-up or stock-up has an adverse physiological affect that only causes greater fatigue levels in the future.

3) Sleep is a physiological need -- it is not a sign of failure or weakness to admit you are tired.

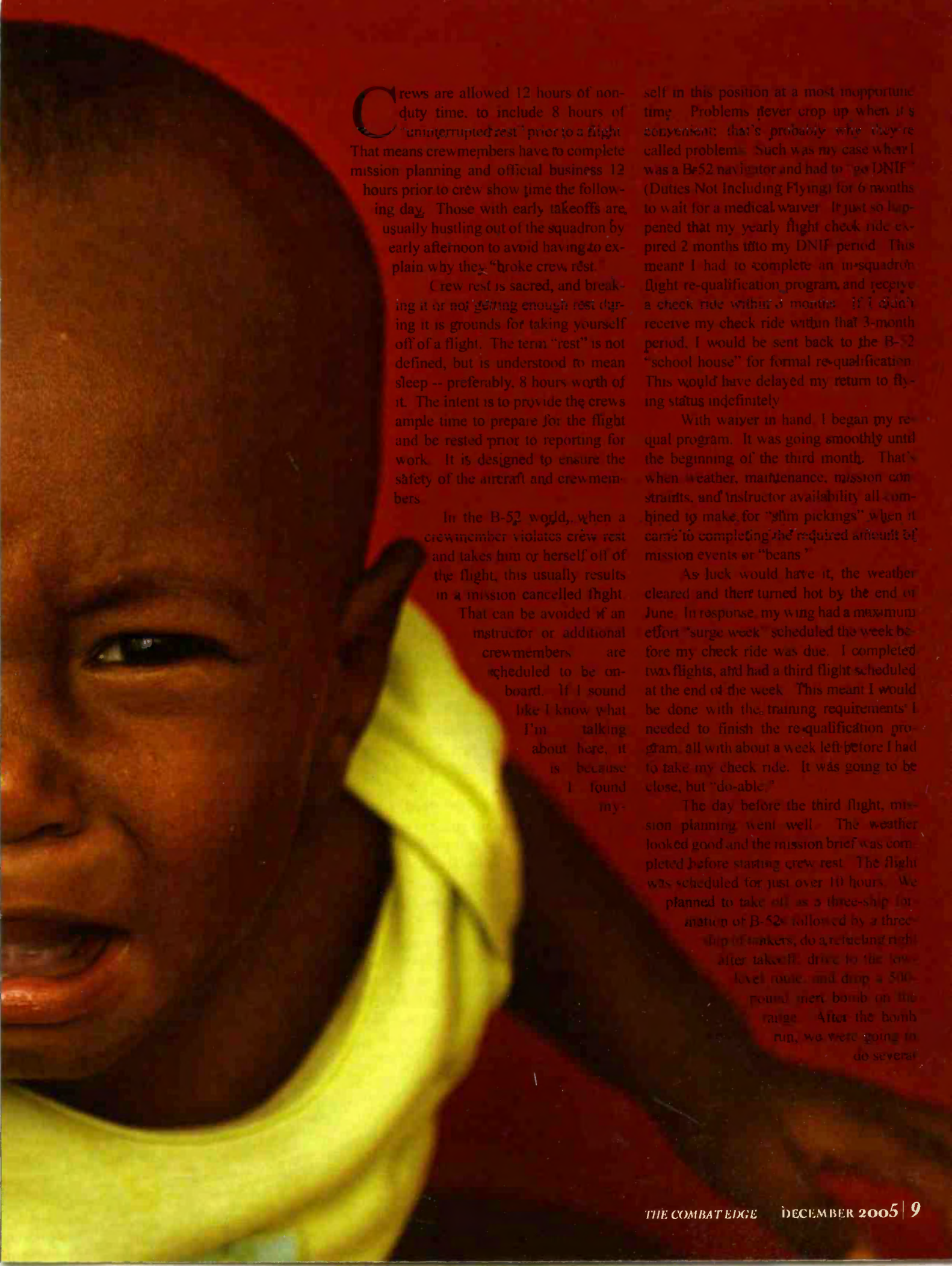
The critical judgment of when to call "knock-it-off" typically falls to the individual(s) in the cockpit. It is a difficult call to make — no doubt about it. How tired is too tired? There isn't a hard and fast rule. If there is any doubt, raise the issue with a supervisor. Once the chain of command is aware, they can incorporate any concerns into the ORM process. The physiological and medical experts have designed a modeling tool to help commanders make good ORM decisions. It provides courses of action to take once an individual is identified as being fatigued. Default on the side of safety. If safety of flight is involved, you owe it to your crew, wingmen, and commanders to make the "knock-it-off" call and try it again tomorrow.

Photo by A1C Austin Knox

Crew REST

by Anonymous

Photo by SSgt Stacy Pearsall



Crews are allowed 12 hours of non-duty time, to include 8 hours of "uninterrupted rest" prior to a flight. That means crewmembers have to complete mission planning and official business 12 hours prior to crew show time the following day. Those with early takeoffs are usually hustling out of the squadron by early afternoon to avoid having to explain why they "broke crew rest."

Crew rest is sacred, and breaking it or not getting enough rest during it is grounds for taking yourself off of a flight. The term "rest" is not defined, but is understood to mean sleep -- preferably, 8 hours worth of it. The intent is to provide the crews ample time to prepare for the flight and be rested prior to reporting for work. It is designed to ensure the safety of the aircraft and crewmembers.

In the B-52 world, when a crewmember violates crew rest and takes him or herself off of the flight, this usually results in a mission cancelled flight. That can be avoided if an instructor or additional crewmembers are scheduled to be on-board. If I sound like I know what I'm talking about here, it is because I found myself in this position at a most inopportune time. Problems never crop up when it's convenient; that's probably why they're called problems. Such was my case when I was a B-52 navigator and had to "go DNIF" (Duties Not Including Flying) for 6 months to wait for a medical waiver. It just so happened that my yearly flight check ride expired 2 months into my DNIF period. This meant I had to complete an in-squadron flight re-qualification program and receive a check ride within 3 months. If I didn't receive my check ride within that 3-month period, I would be sent back to the B-52 "school house" for formal re-qualification. This would have delayed my return to flying status indefinitely.

With waiver in hand, I began my re-qual program. It was going smoothly until the beginning of the third month. That's when weather, maintenance, mission constraints, and instructor availability all combined to make for "slim pickings" when it came to completing the required amount of mission events or "beans."

As luck would have it, the weather cleared and then turned hot by the end of June. In response, my wing had a maximum effort "surge week" scheduled the week before my check ride was due. I completed two flights, and had a third flight scheduled at the end of the week. This meant I would be done with the training requirements I needed to finish the re-qualification program, all with about a week left before I had to take my check ride. It was going to be close, but "do-able."

The day before the third flight, mission planning went well. The weather looked good and the mission brief was completed before starting crew rest. The flight was scheduled for just over 10 hours. We planned to take off as a three-ship formation of B-52s followed by a three-ship of tankers, do a refueling right after takeoff, drive to the low-level route, and drop a 500-pound inert bomb on the range. After the bomb run, we were going to do several

Photo by TSgt Janice Cannon

high-level bomb runs and then drive back to base for an hour of touch-and-go landings.

In preparation, I went home, had dinner, relaxed around the house, and then went to bed early to make sure I got a good night's sleep before the flight. Just as my wife and I were turning in for the night, our 1-year-old woke up screaming and crying with a fever of 103 degrees. That's when my plan for a good night's sleep began to unravel.

It was hot and we didn't have air conditioning in our base house, so that made our son even more miserable. We gave him something for his fever, turned on a fan, and, after he quieted down, we put him back into his crib. The medicine helped lower the fever, but he still slept fitfully.

He woke up crying several more times over the next 2 to 3 hours. My wife attended to him because I had to fly in the morning; but, as any parent knows, you never really sleep when your children are sick. At about 1:00 a.m., the medicine had worn off and his fever spiked to almost 104 degrees. Now he was screaming, pulling at his ears, and rolling around his crib.

My wife and I guessed that it was probably an ear infection and knew we needed to get his temperature down quickly. Most parents know that means filling the tub with cool water. Because he was so distraught, I ended up going into the tub with him, which was the only thing more chilling than his screams. We gave him some more medicine and realized there was little more we could do until we could get him to the doctor in the morning. If I was sleeping lightly before, I was wide awake after the bath, and my ordeal was just beginning.

After putting our son in the crib, he was still fussy so my wife brought him to sleep with us. He quieted down a bit lying next to mommy, but kept crying and reaching for daddy. I finally acquiesced and laid him face down on top of my stomach. He squirmed, pulled at his ears, whimpered for a few minutes, and then fell asleep.

My wife tried to move him off my stomach so that I could get some sleep, but he resisted her every attempt. We gave up, and I tried to get back to sleep. I soon discovered though that I had difficulty falling asleep on my back. Couple that with a feverish baby sleeping fitfully on my stomach, trying to will myself to sleep (which is impossible), and a house temperature of 80 degrees (even with the fan on) and the sleep probability factor dipped below 10 percent.

I may have taken a few micro-naps, but I heard the downstairs clock strike every hour and half hour until the alarm went off. I shut off the alarm and successfully transferred my son to the bed without waking him, then headed off to the shower. Simply put: I was exhausted.

As I readied for the flight, I began to realize I wasn't going to make it through the 16-hour day (including 10 hours of flying) that lay ahead of me. I decided that the best and safest choice was to show at the squadron and take myself off of the flight.

I met my crew at the squadron prior to the mission brief and explained my sleepless night on the way to the briefing room. My aircraft commander agreed with my assessment. It probably helped that there would be little mission impact as my instructor would fly in my absence, maintaining crew integrity.

I made it through the mass mission brief without completely falling asleep due to a large cup of strong coffee and a radar navigator who kept poking me in the ribs. After the brief, as I was turning over my mission materials to my instructor, I was told that the Squadron Operations Officer (also known as the Sq DO) wanted to talk to me in his office.

I was met by the Sq DO and his deputy in the hallway, and we went into his office and sat down. The Sq DO wanted me to explain why I didn't want to fly, why I hadn't gotten the required crew rest, and what had happened the night prior that kept me from getting enough sleep. I explained that I was following squadron policy, which always stressed the importance, for safety reasons, of taking ourselves off of a flight if we came down sick the morning of the flight or if we didn't get the proper amount of crew rest. The Sq DO then asked if I had been "out drinking late and was hung over?"

I replied, "No, Sir. I'm not hung over, and I haven't been drinking. My 1-year-old came down with a fever last night. My wife and I were up nearly the whole night trying to get his fever down." I then proceeded to explain the details. His first response was "Why weren't you able to get some sleep? Can't your wife handle your kids?" His next comment went something like, "I had fevers over 105 degrees a lot of times when I was a kid, and it was never a big deal."

I explained to him that it's pretty hard to get any sleep when a baby wakes up screaming in the middle of the night and won't stay quiet or sleep unless he's held or attended to. I told him that this had been a worst case scenario event. I also defended my wife's child handling abilities and reiterated the fact that, for whatever reason, I was the only one who was able to comfort my son.

To reassure the Sq DO that the flight was not going to be cancelled because of my actions, I reminded him that my instructor would be taking my place. He replied, "I'm not worried about losing this flight. It's the fact that if you don't get this flight, you won't get another chance to complete the training events and get a check ride completed before the 3-month deadline expires. You need to get this flight. If you don't fly, I don't know if we can extend your re-qualification period or when you'll be back on status. You might also lose your flight

pay if you don't get this done in time! Are you sure there isn't any way you can fly today?"

I have no idea how long we talked or how long it took for me to make a decision; it was all a blur then, and -- 13 years later -- it still is. What I do know is that I finally agreed to fly, but I don't know why. It could have been that I didn't want to be seen as a "whiner." It could have been just to get out of the Sq DO's office. It could have been to keep from busting the 3-month re-qualification timeline or losing my flight pay. I might have agreed to fly in order to stay off of the leadership's "radar scope" because the Air Force was about to conduct a Reduction In Force (RIF). It could have been because I was flying with an instructor who would surely keep me from endangering the aircraft and crew. I honestly don't remember why I agreed to fly that day. What I do know is that it wasn't because I was adequately rested or safe to fly, and I was wrong to do it!

I drove to Flight Support, picked up my helmet, and met my crew at Base Ops in time for the weather brief. I grabbed another cup of coffee while there and drank it on the way to the flight line. I finished my own thermos of coffee before refueling and began to take donations, but the caffeine was only going to take me so far.

We completed the refueling rendezvous, and I leaned forward, at a 45-degree angle in my parachute harness, locked the inertial reel, and slept until refueling was over. Off the tanker, I ran all of the applicable checklists and then slept until low level. After the bomb run, we climbed out of route, and I slept until the high bomb runs. Then I slept, hanging from my parachute harness, until the initial approach and touch-and-go. The radar navigator then proceeded to monitor the pilot's touch-and-go landings as I slept in my harness, only waking up momentarily when the gear touched down each time.

By the time we were in the chocks and shutting down engines, I had made up part of my sleep deficit (from exhausted to tired) and was feeling pretty normal. We did a quick maintenance and crew debrief. Then I headed home for some much needed rest. My wife had taken our son to the hospital while I was gone and they were both sleeping by the time I got home. She woke up long enough to ask, "So you went ahead and flew?"

"Yeah, I did," was all I could think of.

"Well, that was pretty stupid. …"

"Yep, it was …" was all I remember saying before falling asleep.

The next day my flight commander heard about what had happened and wanted to talk to me. After recounting the conversation with the Sq DO, my flight commander said, "He doesn't have children, so he might not understand what it's like to raise kids nor appreciate how a sick child can impact everyone in the house. As for having several 105 degree temperatures as a kid, that might very well explain everything else." He chuckled and added, "But seriously, it's a judgment call. Don't ever let anyone talk you into doing something like that again. We could have worked something out to get you another flight or worked an extension to the 3-month re-qual period. Granted, you had an instructor watching over you, but he can't watch everything you do and that isn't his job in the first place." He reiterated that what was done was done, but I shouldn't have "given in" and made the decision to fly that day. More importantly, he felt that I should never have been put in that position to begin with.

That was way back when. Fast forward to today where our mishap reduction focus is on the "Wingman Concept." While we place a lot of attention on applying the program to off-duty time, it's important to remember that it extends to on-duty scenarios as well. My incident is a good example of one of these.

I identified the fact that I was not adequately rested for the flight; however, there were several people at the lowest levels of supervision (i.e., my aircraft commander and crew), at the mid-level of supervision (i.e., training flight/schedulers), and, finally, at the upper level of supervision (i.e., the Sq DO and his deputy) who all had opportunities to act as my Wingman and call a "knock-it-off." Wingmen are the critical link to breaking the mishap chain of events when coworkers, like myself, don't stick to our guns and do the right thing.

If you feel like you've been backed into a corner, call a "knock-it-off." Waivers and extensions exist to help us make it through the problem periods. Know your limits and don't push the envelope. Watch out for others and be a Wingman to them.

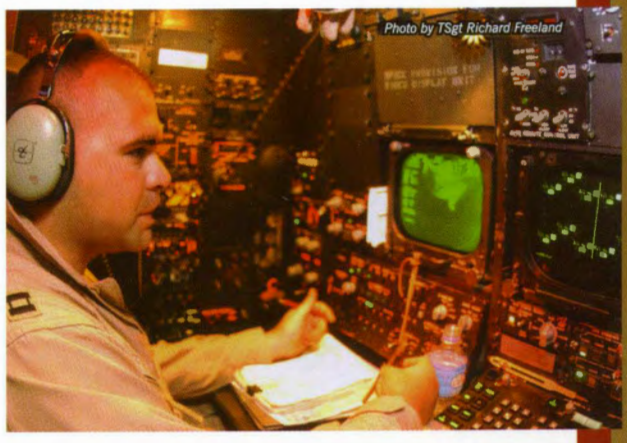


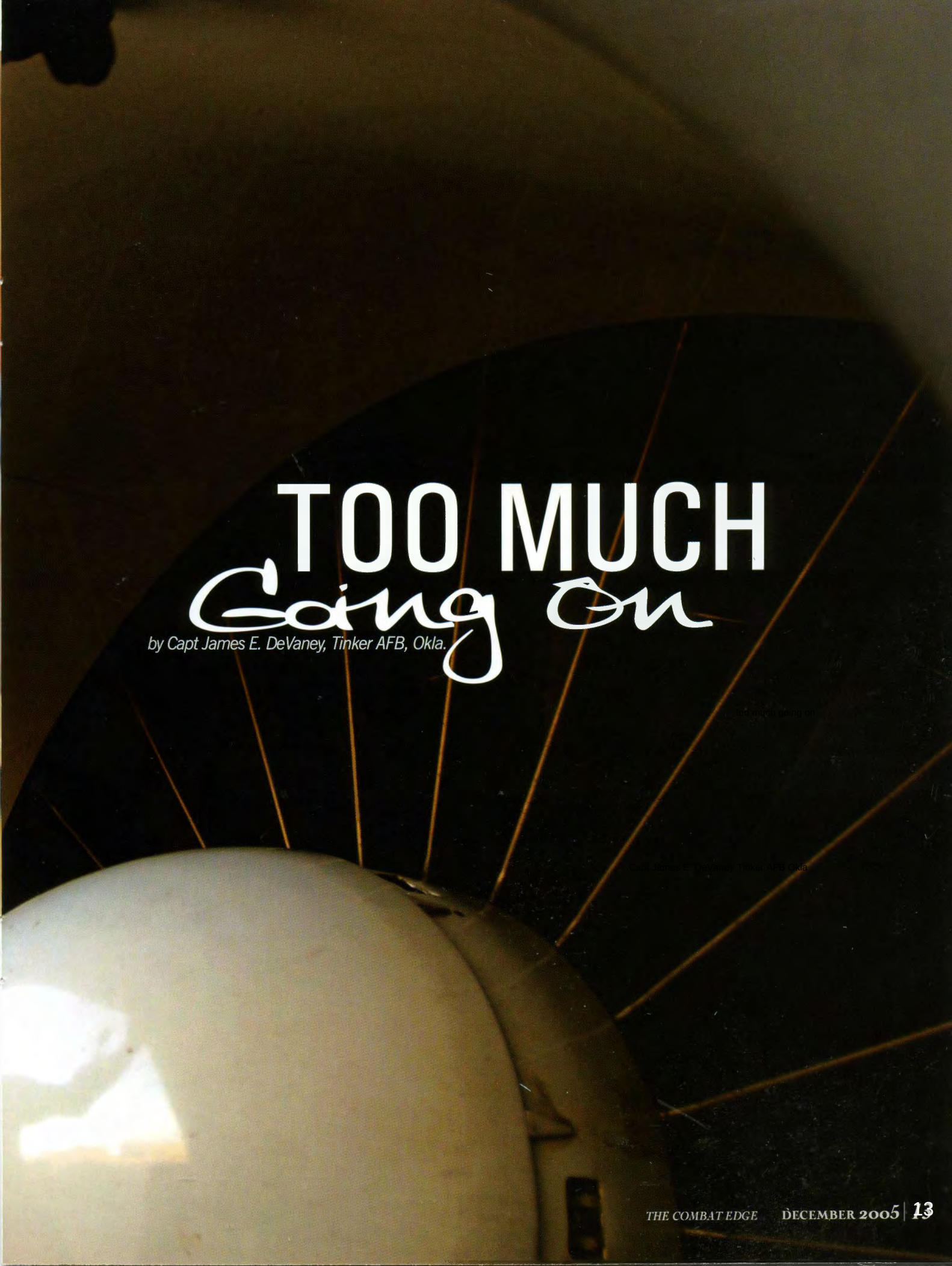
Photo by TSgt Richard Freeland


Photo by TSgt Richard Freeland

Photo by SSgt Matthew Hannon

TOO MUCH Going On

by Capt James E. DeVaney, Tinker AFB, Okla.



Too much going on

Capt James E. DeVaney, Tinker AFB, Okla.

Photo by MSgt Chadwich J. Eiring

Editor's Note: While the following account was not written by any of the participants, the event depicted actually occurred.

It was my usual day at the office as an AWACS maintainer. I've been working this job for a few years and am pretty comfortable with what I do. I know the rules and procedures on how to do things right, and make sure the "newbies" know what they are doing. I am an important player in the daily grind because I am experienced and can provide the leadership to the young troops working the line.

Photo by SrA Angel Rivera

As in the rest of the Air Force, OPS TEMPO and end-strength requirements often have a negative impact on our day-to-day manning, and many times there are really not enough of us to go around. We have a sufficient number of bodies working the line in maintenance, but not enough experience to really spend the time grooming and mentoring the new guys to help them not only advance but grow into leaders. Often, all we have time to do is instruct, and providing quality instruction in the time allowed is often compromised by the need to do the mission. That is what I came up against that fateful day.

My training item for the morning was demonstrating an engine run while the aircraft was in the chocks. I was moving to another section, and I really needed to get some other folks trained and proficient in the task at hand before departing for my next job. I knew I couldn't support both my old section and my new job at the same time, especially on this one single qualification item. So out to the ramp I went to spread the wealth of my knowledge and train some other folks.

Shortly after arriving at the aircraft, all the required safety pre-brief, and checklist items were accomplished and all the right people were in position to accomplish the training. Everything was proceeding as planned, so what could have possibly gone wrong enough to warrant this article?

The problem was that there were too many cooks in the kitchen, as we were not the only people who wanted to do work on the jet that day. Other maintenance personnel had items they needed to accomplish to meet mission requirements and it was only a matter of time before we began "stepping on one another." One group of folks needed to check out the Auxiliary Power Unit (APU), while another group's task was to remove a power unit. All of this interfered with my training agenda, but I allowed the additional work to take place simultaneously because we're all required to support the mission. In true Monday morning quarterbacking style, I wish we had paced ourselves a little better.

As my team and the other two maintenance teams went about trying to do our individual jobs, we lost sight of what the other teams were doing, and somewhere amid all the taskings we ran up the engines with the ground cart still plugged in. This, in general, is not a good thing, but it was made worse by the fact that the aircraft jumped the chocks and began to roll forward. I have been doing this job for years, but a debate began between the teams over whether or not the brakes were actually set. I know what the important steps are during an engine run. "Brakes set" is just something you don't miss, but we did jump the chocks.

In retrospect, there are two possibilities to explain what happened. First, the brake handle was binding and could have gotten stuck in the up position, making it appear that the brakes were set when they actually were not. Second, I was so distracted by all the other people and events taking place that the brakes were never properly set to begin with.

As soon as we started rolling forward -- which I instantly knew should not be happening -- we activated the auxiliary brake system and cut the throttles. It was the only way to stop the forward movement. It was the right thing to do considering the circumstances. No matter what caused my airplane to start moving, I did not need to complicate the situation further by having it stopped by another aircraft in our crowded ramp area. From that point on, we worked to figure out what else had been damaged in an attempt to make sure everything from this point on was being done safely.

Fortunately, the only other problem was the damage done to the ground cart, which had been attached during the whole ordeal. The end result was a slightly shaken maintenance crew, a damaged outlet jack for the ground cart, and my de-certification for a period of time. My post-game lesson is that when too much is going on, take a step back, slow down the pace, and take a safety look at everything that is happening. Take control of the situation, and make sure nothing bad develops. We have to balance training and our real-world mission. We can't maintain one without the other, but we can hinder both when we don't consider the safety risks involved in our taskings.

Photo by TSgt Danny C. Bolbecker

In Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol," Ebenezer Scrooge is characterized as a neurotic, selfish, greedy workaholic with nothing but disdain for the poor that he employed. What many don't know is that while writing the piece, Dickens had fallen off a wobbly stool trying to hang a sprig of mistletoe over his door step in a vain attempt to steal a kiss from the seventh member of the "Eight Maids a Milking" carolers (maids one through six were too old, and maid number eight needed a shave). In his haste to delay the mistletoe hanging until after maid number six had passed and before maid number eight arrived, Charles tumbled to the floor. Upon regaining consciousness, he found he had the ability to see the future and began to edit his work to incorporate some of his new found knowledge. He submitted the new version to his editor, who threw the large manuscript at Charles, hitting him in the head. Subsequently, Dickens lost the ability to see the future and published his initial draft; the futuristic version being lost to the ages until being discovered recently at a local thrift shop.

After an in-depth study and analysis of the manuscript, I would like to set the record straight. In the unpublished version, Ebenezer Scrooge was a "humbug" during the holidays because of the death of his partner and friend, Jacob Marley, who was killed in an unfortunate holiday decorating accident. Jacob and Ebenezer wanted to win the London holiday decorating contest. Their plan was to put lights and garland around the windows, a plastic Santa and reindeer on the roof, as well as animated carolers singing to a large inflatable snowman near the front door — all plugged into one un-grounded electrical outlet located near a large puddle of water. Jacob's ladder was standing in the puddle of water, as he hung the last of the chasing lights, when Ebenezer inadvertently plugged the whole mess into the outlet, causing the light string to short out as it came in contact with the metal ladder. The shock knocked Jacob off of the ladder and he fell to the ground in a tangled heap of lights, garland, and a half-inflated snowman as the carolers sang on. It is for this reason, that when Jacob Marley visits Scrooge, he is clad not in chains, but a twisted mass of holiday lights that only stay on when Marley flaps his arms like a bird trying to take off. …

Without continuing the Dickens theme too much further, the lesson learned is to not be a "Scrooge" around the holidays because you acted like Jacob Marley and hurt yourself trying to out-do the neighbors with too many decorations plugged into too few outlets. Some folks have an unnatural want and desire to decorate their homes, while others would rather have their teeth drilled and decorate begrudgingly. Your attitude toward decorating can spell the difference between success, and a trip to the emergency room, because you're more apt to reach too far, take unnecessary chances and improvise (using a bucket instead of a step stool or ladder) ways to cut corners just to get the job done. Additionally, many decorate and then try to figure out where the decorations or lights will get plugged in after they're done, often resulting in multiple decorations being plugged into a single outlet or running extension cords all over the lawn, both of which create numerous hazards. When decorating inside and outside your home this holiday season, remember to have a plan, use the right tools for the job, and know when to say when.

An analytical mindset focused on safety first, and aesthetics second is the best tool for the job when it comes to decorating. Think your ideas through, and have an idea of how you want to decorate your home before you start purchasing decorations and putting them in place. Answer questions such as: how many electrical outlets are available, where are they located, are they Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) outlets, and if they can safely take the electrical load (miniature lights draw very little electricity, however, animated or inflatable ornaments, or a large number of miniature lights plugged together can put a large load on a circuit), you plan to place on it. If you overload the circuit, you will cause the circuit breaker to trip at best, and a fire at worst. If you are using extension cords, ensure that they, as well as all ornaments, are rated for outdoor use. Don't place plug connections near gutter downspouts or in low areas where water collects; this will keep them from shorting out and run extension cords along building foundations or fences. It keeps them from becoming a tripping hazard. Avoid using wire ties or staple guns to secure light strings; the wire can short circuit the light string, and staples can pierce the plastic casing of the light strings or extension cords, exposing the wire and creating a short circuit situation. Read the package instructions, especially on the newer "end-to-end" light sets, as most manufacturers limit the number of light sets that can be plugged in series to three to avoid overloads. When stringing lights, never place the light string or fingers in your mouth, wash your hands thoroughly after handling them and before eating as the plastic insulation on some light sets contain small amounts of lead, also check packages for warning labels and don't allow children to handle the light sets.

When decorating, use the right tools for the job. A 5 gallon bucket, lawn furniture, or a pickup truck bed, although quick and readily at hand, are not substitutes for a sturdy ladder, or step stool. Use lights and extension cords rated for outdoor use, and don't "pig-tail" the cords (plugging several

cords into a single source), and route them away from walkways and steps. While you are decorating, use a little common sense and a lot of Personal Risk Management (PRM) principles. Visualize the task before starting, recognize the hazards (like placing a ladder under a power line, or uneven ground), and take the measures necessary to minimize the risk. If you decorate before the snow falls, keep in mind that you might have to take down the decorations when there is snow and ice present. One example was hiding excess extension cord length in a rain gutter, only to have to chip it out after the snow had melted and re-frozen in the gutter. The end result was one cut finger, one cut extension cord, and one gutter with a hole in it, none of which are very favorable.

Finally, know when to say when. Too many decorations not only put a strain on your budget, back, and electrical system, but will make a large dent in your electrical bill. Aesthetics of too many decorations on or around a home aside, they also create a safety hazard when it comes to walking through the yard and when clearing snow if cords are placed across walkways or porches. Have a plan before you start, remember less is more, and have a safe and happy decorating season from all of us at **THE COMBAT EDGE!**

This report summarizes the results of that analysis, which indicated that, during 2000-2003, an estimated 17,465 persons were treated in U.S. hospital emergency departments (EDs) for holiday-decorating--related falls. Approximately 62% of those injured were aged 20-49 years; approximately 43% of injuries were caused by falls from ladders; and males were 40% more likely than females to be injured.

Males sustained more injuries than females (58% versus 42%, respectively), although the rates for males and females did not differ significantly. The majority of falls were from ladders (e.g., while hanging holiday lights), followed by roofs (e.g., while mounting an artificial Christmas tree on the roof), furniture (e.g., while standing on a table decorating a Christmas tree, standing on a chair hanging holiday decorations, or standing on a step stool when hanging a tree topper), stairs, and porches. Other falls were caused by tripping over or slipping on holiday-related objects (e.g., tree skirts or ornaments). Among 46% of injured persons, injuries occurred to the extremities (i.e., arm/hand and leg/foot); most persons (88%) examined in EDs were treated and released, and 12% were hospitalized. Fractures were the most commonly reported injury (34%); approximately half (51%) of the fractures were caused by falls from ladders. Of those who fell from ladders, nearly half (47%) were hospitalized.

Circumstances and outcomes differed by sex. Males were significantly more likely than females to sustain injuries falling from ladders or from ladders and roofs combined. For both males and females, rates for types of injuries were highest for fractures. Although decorating-related injuries represent less than 1% of the 1.9 million injuries from falls that occur each holiday season, most of these injuries are preventable. Approximately half the injuries (56%) were caused by falls from considerable heights (e.g., ladders and roofs), and an additional 11% were caused by falls from moderate heights (e.g., tables, chairs, beds, and step stools). Using ladders was a common risk factor for fall injuries. A recent telephone survey indicated that ladders are used by persons in 60% of households nationwide (7). The findings in this report indicated that falls from ladders accounted for nearly half of all fractures treated. Males were twice as likely as females to be injured by falls from ladders, possibly because men used ladders more frequently. The study did not include persons who were treated in physician offices or other outpatient settings or persons who did not receive medical attention.

Finally, although the majority of patients were treated and released, NEISS-AIP does not include information about long-term outcomes such as mobility limitation, functional impairment, need for outpatient surgery, or rehabilitation.

Holiday Safety

by Lt Col Anton G. Komatz, Langley AFB, Va.
Illustration by SrA Alexander Sotak

Photo by TSgt Bob Sommer

Dropped BDU-50

by TSgt Joseph K. Haddox, Minot AFB, N.D.

Photo by TSgt Scott Stewart

Most people are reminded of safety during Wing Safety Days or right after someone gets injured or damages a piece of equipment. That happens because human nature is what it is and people have a lot of things going on in their lives (i.e., deployments, family issues, money problems, in a hurry to get the job done, complacency, etc.). But we really need to find a way to ingrain safety into our everyday thinking so that it becomes our second nature in all we do. It would save us much heartache, pain and millions of dollars every year.

Ingrained safety thinking would have helped a load crew one rainy night. They were loading Bomb Dummy Unit-50s (BDU-50s) on an open ramp when they dropped one of them on the ground. Even though they did not use a tie-down strap, they did not violate any technical data or safety requirements because they were loading in the same spot as the trailer. However, if the person in charge of the operation had practiced some Operational Risk Management (ORM), the outcome of that evening would have been different.

Let's go over the order of events. The load crew was dispatched to the aircraft to load the BDU-50s. When they arrived at the aircraft, it started to rain very hard. After preparing the aircraft, the jammer driver got the steel rollers out of the box and put them on the jammer. The driver knew that it's not necessary to use a tie-down strap so he did not place it on the lift table. After loading several bombs without incident, the individual in charge and the jammer driver were bringing in another bomb when the driver turned the corner and clipped the team chief in the heel. When the driver saw the team chief jump, he took his foot off the gas petal. On a jammer, this is the same thing as putting on the brakes and without a tie-down strap, the rollers turned the wet BDU-50 into a very short-range missile (approximately 3 feet). After getting the bomb back on the jammer, the Munitions Storage Area was called out to inspect the scratched BDU-50. Only then did the crew sit back to look at how bad it could have been.

If the bomb had been real, at least three people could have been killed, several others could have been injured, one aircraft could have been destroyed, and many thousands of dollars in damage could have been done to the surrounding aircraft. Even though the book did not require a tie-down strap for this task, a proper assessment of the situation by a person whose thinking was ingrained with safety would have resulted in the use of the strap anyway because of the rain. All of us who were there are grateful that this error in judgment did not have catastrophic consequences, but the next crew might not be so lucky. Know what the technical data says about a task and then practice ORM to eliminate any hazards that are unique to your specific set of circumstances. Having a safety mindset in everyday operations will make this process seem like second nature.

Breaking the law does not often require an invitation for formal attire, but Airmen at Eglin charged with driving under the influence can expect just that. When charged with a DUI, Airmen here are requested to show up in their service dress uniform at the office of Col Edmond Keith, 96th Air Base Wing commander.

"I have them put on that uniform because it's the uniform I would have to put on when I explain to their parents why they no longer exist after wrapping themselves around a telephone pole, or explaining to parents why one of my Airmen killed their child," Col Keith said.

Last year, the Alcohol and Drug Awareness Prevention and Treatment program here reported 46 active-duty DUIs. As of August, 34 DUIs have been reported this year. Florida statute defines DUI as a person driving or in actual physical control of a vehicle who is under the influence of alcohol or other controlled substances with a blood-alcohol level of 0.08 or higher. This number determines whether an individual is legally drunk or intoxicated.

Though the trend for Eglin had been a steady increase in the number of DUIs since 2003, Capt Mitzi Mitchell said the base has begun to see a decrease in DUI numbers compared with the first quarter of 2005. "The trend has already been decreasing. Earlier in the year, the numbers were really high. Now they've already gone down this first quarter," said Capt Mitchell, the ADAPT program manager here.

Numbers for Eglin may be taking a downward turn, but DUIs still remain a national problem. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, about 1.5 million drivers in 2002 were arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics, putting the DUI arrest rate at one for every 130 licensed drivers in the nation.

Legal repercussions stemming from a DUI vary according to location and circumstances, but one thing is certain — the penalties, be they monetary or otherwise, come at high costs. "The financial costs are great and are often a lot more than people recognize," Capt Mitchell said. Costs and penalties associated with DUI in Florida vary by county, but the price tag of a first-time DUI ranges from $4,000 to more than $25,000. In Okaloosa County, this figure can include $250 to $1,000 in DUI fines, $372 to $1,425 in court fees, $1,500 to $5,000 in attorney's fees, and a variety of other fees depending upon blood alcohol level.

Legal officials said servicemembers with DUI offenses can be taken to court-martial and charged under Article 111 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. If a DUI results in personal injury, an Airman can expect a maximum punishment including a dishonorable discharge, confinement for 18 months, and forfeiture of all pay and allowances. Without personal injury, the maximum punishment is a bad conduct discharge, 6 months confinement, and forfeiture of all pay and allowances. DUIs can also be handled through Article 15 action, with punishments varying depending on case circumstances and a commander's decision.

Photo by TSgt Ben Bloker

Photo by SrA Mike Meares

Civilian Below the Zone

by Ms. Monica D. Morales, Eglin AFB, Fla.

Suspension of a driver's license for 1 year, personal injury lawsuits, vehicular manslaughter, and prison sentences can also accompany DUI charges. Col Keith said the military is the most respected institution in the United States, thus holding Airmen to a higher standard. "Irresponsible drinking is one of the easiest ways to become a civilian below the zone," he said.

Bird Flu

Photos by SrA Alexander Sotak

by Dr. Mike Montopoli, Department of Energy

The questions and answers in this Advisory were adapted from information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Department of State. Travelers can minimize the health risks associated with the Bird Flu by avoiding exposure to the virus, obtaining prompt medical care if flu symptoms develop, and accessing current information on the Bird Flu.

What is the avian influenza A (H5N1) virus?

Influenza A (H5N1) virus – also called "H5N1 virus" – is an influenza A virus subtype that occurs mainly in birds. Like all bird flu viruses, H5N1 virus circulates among birds worldwide, is very contagious among birds, and can be deadly.

Avian influenza or "Bird Flu" occurs naturally in wild and domesticated birds. The H5N1 strain is a particularly deadly form of the virus. It has been isolated from birds in Asia and other parts of the world. A small number of humans also have been infected, mostly by exposure to infected birds.

Because humans lack immunity to Bird Flu, approximately 50 percent of the affected persons have died. Scientists predict that an influenza pandemic (i.e., a global disease outbreak) with avian influenza will result in millions of deaths worldwide.

Do bird flu viruses infect humans?

Not usually, but cases of human infection with bird flu viruses have occurred since 1997. So far, spread of H5N1 virus from person to person has been rare and spread has not continued beyond one person. Because all influenza viruses have the ability to change, scientists are concerned that the H5N1 virus could one day be able to infect humans and spread easily from one person to another. Because these viruses do not commonly infect humans, there is little or no immune protection against them in the human population.

If the H5N1 virus were able to infect people and spread easily from person to person, an "influenza pandemic" could begin. No one can predict when or where a pandemic might occur. However, experts from around the world are watching the H5N1 situation very closely and are preparing for the possibility that the virus may begin to spread more easily and widely from person to person.

How does Bird Flu Spread?

Infected birds shed flu virus in their saliva, nasal secretions, and feces. Susceptible birds become infected when they have contact with contaminated excretions or surfaces that are contaminated with excretions. It is believed that most cases of bird flu infection in humans have resulted from contact with infected poultry or contaminated surfaces.

Where has the H5N1 virus been found?

Beginning in late 2003, outbreaks of Bird Flu have been reported in Southeast Asia (Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, South Korea, Thailand, and Vietnam). In recent months, H5N1 was isolated from birds in Russia. The virus can be spread from country to country through international poultry trade or normal migration of birds.

What is the risk to humans from Bird Flu?

The risk from Bird Flu is generally low to most people because the viruses occur mainly among birds and do not usually infect humans. During an outbreak of Bird Flu among poultry (e.g., domesticated chicken, ducks, turkeys), there is a possible risk to people who have contact with infected birds or surfaces that have been contaminated with excretions from infected birds. While only about 100 humans have been infected, the death rate for these reported cases has been 50 percent.

Travelers should avoid contact with infected birds or contaminated surfaces, and should be careful when handling and cooking poultry. For more information about avian influenza and food safety issues, visit the World Health Organization website at **http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ avian_influenza/en**.

Flu symptoms include:

- Cough
- Sore throat
- Fever
- Muscle aches
- Eye infections
- Pneumonia
- Difficulty breathing

How is infection with H5N1 virus in humans treated?

Two antiviral medications, oseltamivir and Zanamavir, would probably work to treat flu caused by the H5N1 virus, though studies still need to be done to prove that they would be effective. Flu viruses can become resistant to these drugs, so these medications may not always work.

[NOTE: Oseltamivir is manufactured by Hoffman-LaRoche, Inc. (Tamiflu® – tablet). Zanamavir is manufactured by Glaxo Smithkline (Relenza® – inhaled powder). Information based on data published by the US Food and Drug Administration at **www.fda.gov**.

Is there a vaccine to protect humans from H5N1 virus?

No. Vaccine development efforts are underway. Research studies to test a vaccine to protect humans against H5N1 virus began in April 2005. The "normal" flu vaccine available each year will not protect you from infection with the H5N1 virus. Consult your health care provider for vaccination recommendations. For more information about the H5N1 vaccine development process, visit the National Institutes of Health (NIH) website at **http://www3.niaid.nih.gov/news/newsreleases/2005/H5N1QandA.htm**.

How can I avoid exposure to the H5N1 virus?

There have been no human cases of H5N1 flu in the United States. Travelers returning from affected countries in Asia or elsewhere could be infected. The CDC currently advises that travelers to countries with known outbreaks of influenza A (H5N1) avoid poultry farms, contact with animals in live food markets, and any surfaces that appear to be contaminated with feces from poultry or other animals.

How can I get medical care while traveling overseas?

Before going overseas, travelers are advised to consult their health insurance providers to determine insurance coverage for health care services obtained outside the United States. Be sure to carry a sufficient supply of prescription medications, a copy of your prescriptions, and a description of your health status written in the language of the countries you will visit.

For assistance with regional health information or arranging emergency medical evacuation and repatriation, you may contact the American Citizen Services representative at the nearest US embassy or consulate. Some embassies and other missions operate medical clinics. Contact information is available at **http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/embassies/embassies_1214.html**.

In the event of a serious public health crisis, such as an outbreak of avian influenza, the Department of State (DOS) is responsible for providing health services to federal government employees on official government travel in foreign countries.

What should I do if I develop flu symptoms after returning from overseas?

As with any illness, you should promptly seek appropriate medical care. Tell your health care provider when and where you have traveled. Mention any disease outbreaks in the countries you visited. If your provider suspects that you have the flu or any other infectious disease, contact your unit prior to returning to work. By following these procedures, you will help minimize the risk of disease transmission in a military facility.

Photo by SSgt Jason W. Gamble

SHAKE in

by TSgt Anthony W. Wilson, Nellis AFB, Nev.

Photo by MSgt Dave Nolan

Photo by SrA D. Myles Cullen

Late on a Friday night after weeks and weeks of loading test munitions, the most experienced weapons load crew (after all they won six "Weapons Load Crew of the Quarter" competitions in a row) was dispatched for a last minute change to reconfigure eight F-16 aircraft with four each GBU-12s on Triple Ejector Racks (TERs) instead of the usual parent mount MAU-12. The loading went flawlessly; the crew chief guided the munitions into the rack effortlessly thanks to a near perfect jammer driver. The number two person ran the lanyards, swayed the munitions, and installed impulse carts in all the loaded stations. After loading each aircraft, the crew chief and the number three person installed the Computer Control Group, the lanyard, and the wings. With the checklist complete, all tools and equipment accounted for and secured, the load crew headed inside for a much needed and long overdue break.

As they proceeded to the break area, they reported that all aircraft were properly configured and loaded to the weapons night shift expediter. Being an above average expediter, he decided to go out and post-load all the aircraft himself as well. With checklist in hand, he headed out of the office. Walking from aircraft to aircraft inspecting all the munitions, everything looked exactly as it should. Perfect loading once again from his most experienced crew, or so he thought.

They turned all tools and equipment back into support, called it a night, and headed for home. On the long drive home, the expediter kept thinking about how his load crew performed throughout the night, volunteering to stay late to reconfigure all eight aircraft and load all the bombs. All of a sudden a light bulb turned on in his head, and he remembered that for the past few weeks all the munitions had been configured for parent mount on the MAU-12. Now something just didn't seem quite right. Did the load crew wire the bombs for

the FRAG

parent mount release, or did they wire them correctly for TERs release? The thought of all the munitions being incorrectly wired haunted him as he drove toward his home. Finally, he decided to turn around and double check the wiring.

Before heading out to the aircraft, he reached for the trusty ole 33-1-2, the loading bible. Flipping through it, he realized that indeed there was a mistake. He called the load crew back into work immediately. They all arrived well after midnight, and of course, they were disgruntled. After the expediter reviewed the 33-1-2 with the load crew, everyone recognized the wiring mistakes and returned to the flight line to rewire all 32 bombs. A couple hours later, they had all the bombs rewired and ready to go for the early Monday morning missions. Tired and upset with themselves for making a long night even longer, the load crew and expediter headed for home once again. This time they were confident that all aircraft were properly configured and loaded.

The point of this story is no matter how experienced your load crews are, how many competitions they have won, or how many bombs they have loaded, it's easy to become complacent. Daily, or any time the frag or schedule changes, load crews should not only review their checklist, but also review the 33-1-2 to refresh their memory on the munitions they are loading or are about to load. Luckily for this unit and this load crew, an expediter had a funny feeling that something wasn't quite right and corrected the mistake. If no one had caught the mistake, the bombs would have come off the rail but may have damaged the aircraft, not functioned properly, or may not have hit their intended targets. Reviewing technical data and procedures before, during, and after a task can and will save lives, manhours, aircraft, and you and me from making a damaging mistake.

Monthly Award Winners

Aircrew Safety
Award of Distinction

On the morning of August 18, 2005, Maj Neaderhiser and A1C Sutton were operating an MQ-1 Predator in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. While prosecuting a target, Maj Neaderhiser and A1C Sutton experienced a return link failure. The crew executed the Lost KU-Band Command/Return Link emergency checklist, and, within a few minutes, the aircraft regained link, but had been descending to its lost link altitude. While Maj Neaderhiser executed a climb back to the operational altitude, A1C Sutton noticed numerous engine temperatures climbing outside of operational limits. Maj Neaderhiser turned the aircraft away from the target area, turned off the altitude hold, set max range airspeed, and reduced the throttle setting in an attempt to lower engine temperatures. At the same time, A1C Sutton turned the sensor ball towards the aft of the plane, where the crew noticed a considerable amount of venting fluid. As the engine temperatures continued to climb, Maj Neaderhiser declared an emergency with their controlling agency and pointed the aircraft towards the primary divert base. After completing the engine overheat checklist, the crew, along with their mission commander, began to coordinate with the Launch and Recovery Element (LRE) in order to extend the operational hours at the divert airfield. In the process of coordinating with the LRE, the crew realized that the LRE did not possess a copy of the emergency aircraft's current software. While the crew tried to determine software compatibility, Maj Neaderhiser utilized a mid-range power setting with minimal throttle movements and initiated a max-range descent. Once the aircraft was within glide back range, Maj Neaderhiser established an orbit at the end of the runway. With the engine temperature continuing to rise, the decision was made to proceed with the handover, in spite of the untested software. After gaining control of the aircraft, the LRE was able to successfully recover the aircraft with no additional problems. Maj Neaderhiser and A1C Sutton's flawless airmanship, quick decision making, and superb judgment saved a high value Air Force asset.

Maj Neal L. Neaderhiser, A1C Steven A. Sutton
17th Reconnaissance Squadron, 57th Wing
Nellis AFB, Nev.

Flight Line Safety
Award of Distinction

SSgt Fox was performing an operational landing gear check on an RQ-4A aircraft when he noticed the right-hand nose landing gear door push-pull rod was disconnected. SSgt Fox checked the jacking procedures for disconnecting/reconnecting of the door push-pull rod and identified that the current aircraft jacking procedures only account for the disconnecting of the push-pull rod with no reference for follow-on maintenance of the rod. Next, he checked the technical data on landing gear retraction and extension. There were no references made to the nose landing gear push-pull rod being disconnected for aircraft jacking. Upon realizing the deficiency, SSgt Fox initiated an AFTO Form 22 to have the nose landing gear push-pull rod reconnected prior to operating the landing gear. If this potentially dangerous condition had not been found, it would have caused extensive damage to the nose landing gear actuator valued at $3,600 and the follow-up door valued at $8,200. SSgt Fox's actions and proactive efforts prevented the needless damage of a critical airframe component.

SSgt Brian M. Fox
9th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
9th Reconnaissance Wing
Beale AFB, Calif.

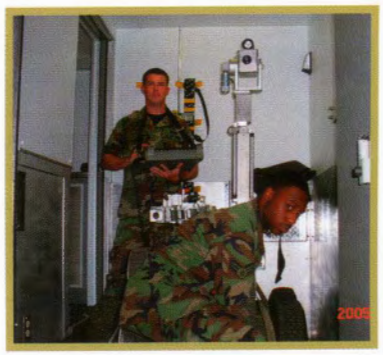
Crew Chief Safety
Award of Distinction

On August 30, 2005, at about 4:00 a.m., SSgt Yazza and two assistants were accomplishing a routine power-on check of navigation lights on a B-52H aircraft. The three maintainers noticed the aft navigation lights were non-operational and began to troubleshoot the lighting system. The first step in the operation was to cycle the circuit breakers. Once complete, SSgt Yazza walked to the back of the aircraft to see if the lights were working and immediately noticed smoke pouring from vents in the rear of the fuselage. Realizing the aircraft was filled with thousands of gallons of volatile jet fuel, SSgt Yazza snapped into action and directed his assistants to abandon the aircraft. Once he was sure they were safely out of the jet, he calmly assessed the situation and quickly concluded the smoke had to be the result of an electrical malfunction. He removed the external electrical power cord from the aircraft, eliminating the source of the ignition. SSgt Yazza flagged down the closest vehicle and directed them to notify the Maintenance Operations Control Center of the situation. This initiated a chain of events that led to a declaration of a ground emergency. The fire department responded quickly to the scene, isolated the cause of the smoke to a failed transformer, and determined the aircraft to be safe. SSgt Yazza's expert analysis and decisive actions under intense pressure minimized damage to a $74 million asset, ensured the safety of his two assistants, and truly represents the essence of being a good Wingman.

SSgt Justin Yazza
2nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, 2nd Bomb Wing
Barksdale AFB, La.

Weapons Safety
Award of Distinction

On August 13, 2005, SSgt Futrell and SrA Strom were serving on standby duty for the 2nd Bomb Wing Explosive Ordnance Disposal Flight when an emergency request for assistance came in from the local police department in Tool, Texas. An Alcohol, Tobacco, and Fire Arms raid of a drug lab there had yielded one AT-4 Anti-Tank rocket. Tool, Texas, is located approximately 3 hours driving distance from Barksdale AFB, La. Demonstrating exceptional resourcefulness and quick thinking, the team implemented a new and novel idea to minimize the chance of wasting scarce tax payer dollars or damaging vital equipment by deploying unnecessarily. By carefully scrutinizing real-time photos taken by the responding officers, the team was able to determine that the rocket was not 100 percent safe for the local authorities to handle. SSgt Futrell and SrA Strom directed the local officials to stay clear of the area, checked their equipment, loaded their response vehicles, and completed a thorough Operational Risk Management (ORM) assessment to ensure they were fully prepared to deploy, perform their duties, and return safely. The team was acutely aware that many illicit drug labs raided previously had been booby-trapped to discourage intervention. They also realized that the individuals responsible for assembling this particular lab had demonstrated at least some familiarity with military ordnance. After driving to the scene, the team cautiously entered the site using integrated combat tactics. While completing their initial reconnaissance, the team encountered no other weapons other than the AT-4 launcher. After securing the immediate area, they ensured the 2,000 square-foot house and adjoining 3-acre lot were safe and turned over the crime scene to local law enforcement officers for investigation. Upon closer inspection, the AT-4 launcher was found to be empty, something which could not be determined from the photographs reviewed back at the base. This team demonstrated exceptional ORM techniques, professionalism, selfless courage in a potentially hostile environment, and an unrivalled commitment to safety, underscoring Barksdale's strong safety partnership with the surrounding civilian communities.



SSgt Jay Futrell, SrA Martin Strom
2nd Civil Engineer Squadron
2nd Bomb Wing
Barksdale AFB, La.

Monthly Award Winners

Pilot Safety
Award of Distinction

On September 4, 2005, Maj Berge was giving a T-38 check ride to a re-qual pilot at Whiteman AFB, Mo. As they were accomplishing the initial no flap touch and go, the examinee landed and pushed up the power for the touch and go. When the throttles moved up to military power, the pilots heard a loud bang. Maj Berge immediately called for an abort during this critical phase of flight. After the command to abort, the examinee pulled the throttles back to idle. Because it was a no-flap landing, the jet was faster than normal. Maj Berge, therefore, instinctively called for the examinee to put the flaps down to cut down on landing distance. He then checked that the flaps were rolled to full down and coached the other pilot on not getting airborne while the flaps were rolling. Maj Berge expertly called out airspeeds and runway remaining, so the other pilot could effectively apply abort procedures that would not blow a tire or cause them to skid on the runway. The aircraft reached the end of the runway at a reasonable speed, and the aircrew cleared at the end of the runway. Upon further investigation, maintenance discovered that the loud bang was caused by ingesting a bird in the right engine. Had the aircrew continued, a possible catastrophic engine failure might have ensued. The actions performed by Maj Berge prevented further damage to the aircraft and possible loss of life. His quick thinking and decisive actions are to be commended.

Maj Todd Berge
509th Operations Group, 509th Bomb Wing
Whiteman AFB, Mo.

Ground Safety
Award of Distinction

SSgt McDonald has spearheaded the Commander's Safety program for the past 3 years. During that time, he has elevated the program to its highest standards ever, maintaining "zero" lost work days from mishaps. The 67th Information Operations Wing inspectors said the program was "excellent," "superb," and in the best shape ever seen following a recent ground safety inspection. SSgt McDonald initiated an improved innovative database to track all safety training events, including all AF Form 55 items. The database provides a snapshot of when items were last completed and when they are required to be re-accomplished, saving valuable time in determining individual training requirements. Additionally, he made the database available to all personnel in the unit so they can view their training requirements. In early spring, SSgt McDonald briefed the squadron on proper boat, beach, and other summertime safety activities. As a result, the unit experienced zero recreational mishaps during the 101 Critical Days of Summer in 2005, despite their location near one of the country's most popular summertime beach destinations. Prior to hurricane season, SSgt McDonald ensured personnel were properly briefed on correct evacuation routes and that all personnel had proper supplies to support themselves upon return to their homes. SSgt McDonald's tireless efforts are directly responsible for the unit's safety record ... no major mishaps on his watch!

SSgt Keith M. McDonald
25th Information Operations Squadron
Hurlburt Field, Fla.

Unit Safety

Award of Distinction

The 5th Maintenance Group takes the Foreign Object Damage (FOD) issue seriously and it shows. With the 5th Bomb Wing Commander's declaration of FOD Week (August 8th to 12th), the group was off and running. To begin the week, the group held FOD briefings and ensured every Airman in the wing had an opportunity to attend. These briefings consisted of viewing the 2004 FOD video, featuring Maj Gen Harrell, followed by a detailed FOD prevention presentation. The presentation included flight line responsibilities, tool accountability, FOD checking procedures, FOD control and Minot AFB specifics. During the same week, Quality Assurance along with maintenance leaders visited shops and spot inspected work areas for proper tool accountability and FOD control. All maintenance squadrons conducted focused efforts to clean their shops and flight line vehicles and analyze FOD management programs. In the middle of the week, the group expertly organized an all-base participation FOD walk of the entire Minot ramp, taxiway, and runway area. Before the walk, they placed "Golden Bolts" in various locations as an added incentive for troops. Also, prior to the start of Minot's Northern Neighbors Day Air Show, the Maintenance Group again executed a thorough FOD walk of the parking apron. This was in preparation for the arrival of approximately 30 aircraft, including: F-16, B-1, F-15, RC-135, E-3, EA-6, T-38, T-37, and T-6 type aircraft as well as one jet car. Maintainers again accomplished sweeps prior to each aircraft's departure and a final end-of-the-show FOD walk! The end result: ZERO FOD incidents for the entire 5-day period of visiting aircraft. The 5th Maintenance Group's actions and accomplishments reflect great credit upon the 5th Bomb Wing and serve as an example for the rest of the Air Force to follow.

5th Maintenance Group, 5th Bomb Wing
Minot AFB, N.D.

ACC Safety Salutes Superior Performance

Capt Benjamin J. Schill
F-16CJ Pilot
522nd Fighter Squadron
27th Fighter Wing
Cannon AFB, N.M.

Maj Patrick Guinee
F-16 Instructor Pilot
134th Fighter Squadron
158th Fighter Wing
Burlington IAP, Vt.

Capt Lonzo E. Wallace, AC
Flt Lt Daniel J. O'Donnell, RAAF Pilot
Capt Camden J. Buell, CP
1Lt Ryan M. Story, NAV
MSgt Patrick A. Riley, FE
Maj Brian W. Fitzgerald, MCC
Capt Canyon D. Knop, SD

Capt Leslie C. Hall, AWO
1Lt Michael S. Carrizales, AWO
1Lt Jeffrey A. McKiernan, AWO
1Lt Ricardo O. Lara, AWO
1Lt Justin M. Tarlton, AWO
1Lt Richard S. Barber, AWO
1Lt Brian P. Samson, AWO
MSgt Gayle W. Black, WD
Capt James M. Harmon, ECO
Capt Eugene E. Shiflett, ASO
SSgt Vincent R. Wittig, SST
TSgt John N. Stanton, SST
SrA Kristin E. Lenhart, AST
SrA Katherine L. Pennington, AST
TSgt Nicole M. Young, AST
SrA Cody P. Morris, CDMT
A1C Nicholas J. Page, CDMT
SSgt Matthew R. Lawrence, ART
SrA Rebecca L. Kurth, ART

TSgt Rebecca M. Scott, CSO
A1C Matthew R. Huch, CSO
SSgt Gabriel R. Bonnett, CT
A1C Joann S. Tubbs, CT
960th Airborne Air Control Squadron
552nd Air Control Wing
Tinker AFB, Okla.

Propulsion Flight
388th Component Maintenance Squadron
388th Fighter Wing
Hill AFB, Utah

FY06 Aircraft

As of October 31, 2005

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

FY06 Ground

As of October 31, 2005

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

FY06 Weapons

As of October 31, 2005

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

Aircraft Notes

Foreign Object Damage (FOD) has become the HOT topic and for good reason; it is almost always preventable! The problem crosses all lines -- contractors, maintainers, and aircrew. We have had everything from gear pins to aircraft forms go through engines, and it's not cheap. FOD is attention to detail! Everyone needs to take the extra moment to check the intake, secure your flashlight, forms, and make the radio call to ground, "you have FOD at ... Alpha." For all of us flyers it goes back to, "Forms, Pubs, Loose Items Stowed" before engine start and before we open the canopy.

Ground Notes

FY06 started off poorly for ACC. On 15 Oct, the command experienced a double fatality in a motorcycle mishap. This mishap is still under investigation. As past history has shown us, we must continue to advise our personnel to use personal risk management techniques in everything they do and to always watch out for their Wingman.

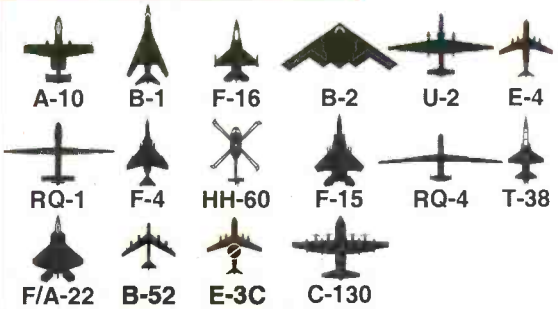
Weapons Notes

Weapons safety has had a bad beginning to FY06. During the month of Oct, we had three Class C mishaps. ACC experienced only three Class C mishaps in all of FY05. All mishaps, so far this year, were caused by personnel error. We must stop this trend! Please ensure your personnel are following tech data, procedures, and paying attention to details. Thanks for all you do for the weapons community and weapons safety every day!

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




Fleagle
I JUS' LOVE THIS TIME OF YEAR.
I GOT ME ENUFF LIGHTS THIS YEAR TO REALLY MAKE A STATEMENT.
NEW LIGHTS
MORE LIGHTS
©STAN HARRISON 2005
DECK THEM HALLS
AIN'T SHE A BEAUTY? NO TELLIN' HOW MANY LIGHTS I USED.
I DON'T KNOW 'BOUT THIS...?
WHAT TH' HECK.
HARRISON
PLOOF!
I COULD LEARN TO HATE THIS TIME OF YEAR...