

# Combat Edge

November 2006

Combat Edge November 2006

*Air Combat Command's Safety Magazine*



**Major Overcomes Adversity to Fly Again**

**10 COMMANDMENTS  
OF GUN SAFETY**

Major Overcomes Adversity to fly again 10 commandments of gun safety

# Combat Edge

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15



17



22



11

GENERAL RONALD E. KEYS, COMMANDER  
COLONEL BILLY J. GILSTRAP, DIRECTOR OF SAFETY

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## 4 NO SUCH THING AS AN UNLOADED GUN

by SSgt Warren R. McCrary, Holloman AFB, N.M.

## 8 TO FLY AGAIN

by Capt Michael G. Johnson, 386th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

## 14 GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS

by Mr. Conway Cotten, Holloman AFB, N.M.

## 16 LINE OF FIRE

by Mr. Ken Testorff, Naval Safety Center

## 18 STREET RACING

by MSgt Gerardo Delagarza, Langley AFB, Va.

## 22 IN AN INSTANT

by Mr. Larry Stulz, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio

## 24 ATTENTION TO DETAIL

by TSgt Deryk Johnston, Nellis AFB, Nev.

### DEPARTMENTS

26 MONTHLY AWARDS

30 STATS

31 FLEAGLE



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# ACCent

## ON SAFETY

### *Banner Year for Safety*

Wow! A record setting year for safety in ACC, a "Job Well Done." We ended FY06 as the safest year ever in ACC. Flight mishaps finished the year with a rate of 1.20, a 67 percent reduction over last year, we finished our fifth straight year with no weapon mishaps, and our ground mishaps were down 30 percent. We made significant improvements over previous years, and we all should be proud of those accomplishments.

The challenges for all of us -- look at ourselves, our organizations, and our coworkers and analyze what we all did to help in the safety arena. Each of us made contributions that helped foster a positive safety climate. They may have been minor things, like taking the time to put on eye and hearing protection; not making a risky pass just to gain one position in line; pushing the weather to complete a training sortie, or being the positive influence that stopped the famous "here hold my beer," from becoming another tragic accident. Each one of us makes decisions and provides an example to others many times a day; this has a dramatic effect on our lives and the lives of others.

While we had a very successful FY06, we still lost some of our fellow Airmen to avoidable and tragic mishaps and needlessly injured others. As we move forward into FY07, let's build on our success and strive to reach our goal of ZERO mishaps. To help us reach that goal ACC has three focus areas for FY07: safety takes proactive involvement from all levels of leadership, as Airmen we must be accountable for our actions, and developing a safety ethos, the culture that instills individual ownership of the safety process.



**Colonel Kelly E. Fletcher,  
Deputy Director of Safety**

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COVER PHOTO BY SRA JASON P. ROBERTSON

**M** OR **M** = MANIPULATED IMAGE



# No Such Thing as an Unloaded Gun

by SSgt Warren R. McCrary, Holloman AFB, N.M.

**I**t was a great day for shooting. My friend and I had spent the afternoon at the County Municipal Gun Range. I dropped him off at his girlfriend's house downtown and I headed back to base. When I got home I did what any gun owner does after a day of plinking and target practice — I cleaned my weapons. After I had prepared my workbench in the garage and was about to start wiping down my Old Russian bolt action rifle, my cell phone rang. It was my shooting partner. He calmly asked me if I had cleaned my guns yet. I said I was just about to start. He calmly told me to be extra careful when I cleaned my pistol, and I could hear the strain in his voice start to crack. He held back a mixture of emotion, disappointment, and fear as he told me his story. When he got home, he too decided to clean his semiautomatic pistol. His particular model requires him to load a magazine clip ... an unloaded one ... prior to disassembling the weapon. He loaded an "empty" clip as he had done dozens of times before, operated the slide, released the hammer, and was surprised by the deafening roar of a .40 caliber Smith and Wesson round being discharged. The experience of an accidental discharge is enough to make any gun enthusiast feel sick to their stomach. Coupled with the fact that he was cleaning this "unloaded" gun in his girlfriend's living room, and there were guests in the house makes for a pretty frightening scenario. The bullet traveled through one wall and stopped in

an exterior wall of the house. Luckily no one was injured in the house or surrounding neighborhood. Of course, no one who deals with guns for sporting, pleasure, or as part of their profession ever wishes to rely on luck when it comes to gun safety.

My friend, a fellow crew chief who had been my troop in the past, was a trusted shooting enthusiast, and he respected the Ten Commandments of Firearm Safety as I did. He too was raised to believe that every gun is to be treated as if it were loaded; you never pointed a weapon at anything you did not intend to shoot; you did not shoot anything you did not intend on killing. That is not a misprint. My father and grandfather both emphasized to me the most cardinal rule of gun safety: treat every gun as if it is loaded. The gun you just emptied at a target: *is loaded*. The bolt action rifle that you just took a shot at a trophy deer with: *is loaded*. The pistol you are about to disassemble and clean: *is loaded*. No person has ever been accidentally killed by an unloaded gun; only guns they assumed were unloaded. We always assume that it is the novice or new shooter that makes basic mistakes in gun safety, but we learn as with all aspects of safety on and off duty: the Grim Reaper will always capitalize on the complacency of experienced individuals.

So what can we do to protect ourselves and others when handling firearms? We can follow the Ten Commandments of Firearm Safety.

No such thing as an unloaded gun

**First, treat every firearm with the respect due a loaded gun.** This rule is the most important to me because when people assume that a gun is unloaded they start throwing out other commandments. If we follow this first commandment, the other commandments will follow.

**Second, always be aware of and properly aim the muzzle or barrel of your firearm in a safe direction.** Luckily my shooting partner followed commandments one and two. He was responsible for an unintended discharge, but treating the gun as loaded and aiming the barrel low and away from people helped negate a more serious accident.

**Third, be sure of your target and what is in front of and behind it.** This is crucial when shooting many of the popular high-powered rounds from handguns and rifles, but remember that even the venerable yet small .22 Long Rifle round can reach over a mile!

**Fourth, keep your finger off the trigger until you are absolutely prepared to fire.** A slip or fall can cause an accidental discharge.

**Fifth, ensure your barrel, action, and ammunition are serviceable and clear.** A fouled action or poorly manufactured round can lead to a trip to the emergency room.

**Sixth, unload your firearms when not in use and when they are being stored.** This is a no brainer; guns are at their safest when unloaded.

**Seventh, only point a firearm at something you intend to shoot.** By that you should equate "shoot" with kill or maim.

**Eighth, do not run, jump, or climb with a loaded firearm.** This seems obvious, but sometimes when



Photo by SSgt Suzanne M. Day

the adrenaline is pumping we start seeing ourselves as Rambo. You are not Rambo. He is a fictional action character in Hollywood; those are blanks he is firing.

**The Ninth commandment is to store firearms and ammunition separately and in a safe place.** This is just

another fail-safe to prevent firearm accidents. This is especially effective if you have small children in the house. My children are too young to enjoy firearms, but they are mischievous and love to explore. At this point they don't even know where my gun safe is and that let's me sleep that much more peacefully at night.

**Tenth, avoid alcoholic beverages before or during shooting.** You wouldn't try to solve a Rubik's Cube after a few adult beverages, would you? Then why would you literally take your life into your own hands and shoot, disassemble, or clean a weapon when you may be intoxicated. Drinks are great for relaxing but even the smallest amount affects a person's judgment. Poor judgment is simply not a luxury when it comes to firearm safety.

The Ten Commandments of Firearm Safety are a solid foundation that covers the spectrum of shooting situations — from pleasure shooting to professional applications. Any person who handles firearms, from plinkers to match shooters, varmint hunters to big game hunters, Law Enforcement to Special Forces can benefit from these common sense rules.



Photo by MSgt John DeGroot

*"... but we learn as with all aspects of safety on and off duty: the Grim Reaper will always capitalize on the complacency of experienced individuals."*



Another thing to keep in mind is the use of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) when at the range or hunting. It is not always practical or necessary to use PPE when using firearms, but having a few items on hand can be convenient or downright save your life; you must use common sense and determine what your situation requires. For instance, you may not need to wear that blaze orange vest and hat to the gun range; you can if you want, but you might receive a few wayward glances. However, when hunting, these clothing items are indispensable. You definitely want to wear hearing protection when at the range from your firearm repeatedly discharging and others as well. Muffled hearing may put you at a disadvantage while stalking in the woods; not only might you miss your prey, but you may not be fully aware of the changing situation

around you. You could miss the sound of vehicles motoring into your line of fire or the sound of hikers in the distant woods. If you are in a hunting situation, the possible aural damage of that one shot is negated by knowing that you are taking a safe shot. Eye protection is equally important. With today's ammunition technology and high manufacturing tolerances, the chance that a round will improperly discharge or explode is remote. However, the chance is always there. Is your eyesight really worth the small inconvenience of having to don eye protection? For me, the answer is no. PPE can also come in other forms such as shooting gloves,

sleeves, jackets, etc. If it can make you and the others around you enjoy your firearm in a safer manner, put it on!

I can still remember that day my friend accidentally discharged his firearm at his girlfriend's house. Like I said he is a trusted gun enthusiast. I won't hunt or go plinking with a person unless I trust them as much as I trust myself with firearms. But accidents happen, that is why they are called accidents. It can happen to the best of us and usually does when we start focusing on how good we are and not on the basics, like the Ten Commandments of Firearm Safety. What I remember most of that phone call was the sound of my friend's voice. It was that gut wrenching mixture of a person who realizes they have made a grievous error and is a little frightened, a little unsettled, and a little disappointed with himself. What he did do was the right thing. He treated the gun as being loaded, and the accidental discharge landed harmlessly in a wall and not a person. Another thing he did right was to immediately call me, own up to his mistake, and remind me of the caution one must exercise when handling firearms. I have three small children in my house. The knowledge of being responsible for their and my safety when handling my firearms is why I check that action, or that clip, or that safety, a second and third time, even when I just unloaded the gun. Like my father and his father before him always told me, "There is no such thing as an unloaded gun." 





To

# FLY



Again

by Capt Michael G. Johnson, 386th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs



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Major Alan Brown grew up the way many boys in the West grow up, with hard work and a love for the outdoors. In 1994, he became a C-130 Hercules pilot with the Wyoming Air National Guard and was living the dream of many, flying whenever he could and spending the rest of his time hunting, fishing, and helping out on his father's farm.

But that dream came to a screeching halt one cold night in southern Wyoming: Jan. 21, 1999. Earlier that day, Major Brown had flown a training mission with the 153rd Airlift Wing where he was an aircraft commander. He brought his good friend and flying partner, Steve Friedman, home for dinner and then the two set out to hunt coyotes just across the border in northern Colorado.

They were driving along a desolate road when they spotted a coyote. Brown reached for his gun as Mr. Friedman pulled the pickup over to the side of the road. "When I went to pull it out, I was focusing on the coyote. I can't remember how it got off safety; I think I was acting very quickly to get it off safety and get the shot," the Major said.

As he was pulling the gun from its case, it hung up. Maintaining focus on the coyote, he jiggled the gun to shake it loose, and that's when it fired. "It shot right through the lower femur above the knee and we found out later that much of my femur was gone," he said. The accident occurred "in the middle of nowhere." If it hadn't been for Mr. Friedman's quick and decisive actions, the Major might not be here today.

"Make no mistake, the only reason I'm here is because of Steve. We go way back; he's just an exceptional guy," the Major said. Before either knew how serious the injury was, Mr. Friedman was in the truck and heading for Greeley, Colorado, the nearest town with a hospital. "He gave me a piece of cloth. I don't know where he got it, but I put it above the wound on my leg and cranked it down," he said.

Mr. Friedman's cell phone didn't work in the remote area. As he drove as fast as he could toward Greeley, he spotted several buses at an intersection. "(Steve) pulled in front of the buses and



stopped to ask for help. One of the guys happened to be an EMT, which was nice,” Major Brown said. Snow had started falling hard enough to prevent a rescue helicopter from flying. The EMT had a working cell phone and made arrangements with an ambulance to meet the men halfway.

“We met the ambulance and they transferred me and then took me to the hospital. With only a few exceptions, that’s about all I remember until 5 weeks later when I woke up in the hospital,” he said. Major Brown was placed in a drug-induced coma, and the first 3 weeks following the accident were dedicated to saving his leg. Following numerous vein grafts, surgeries, and a transfer to Denver to see one of the best trauma surgeons in the country, a decision had to be made. The Major was going downhill fast. He was on a ventilator and a dialysis machine. The decision was made to remove the leg. “They told my parents

and girlfriend at the time, Gina -- she’s my wife now -- ‘We have to remove the leg or he’s going to die.’”

After the surgery there was an immediate turnaround in the Major’s condition. In just a short time he was dis-

*“We have to remove  
the leg or he’s  
going to die.”*

charged from the intensive care unit to a rehabilitation floor. He was in the hospital for 2 months. He spent 5 weeks of that time in a coma. When he regained consciousness, his leg was gone.

“People ask if I was freaked out [when I woke up]. No, I knew I was in the hospital. I knew I had an accident, so when I woke up and saw my leg wasn’t there, it made sense to me,”

he said. As he regained consciousness and awareness, he asked his mom, dad, and best friend two questions. “I asked, ‘Is Phinney around?’ -- Phinney is my wife’s nickname -- and they said, ‘Yes she’ll be here in about 20 minutes.’ I was relieved and thought OK, that’s great. The second thing I asked was, ‘Can I fly again?’ All of them said yes.”

While Major Brown was in a coma, his family, friends, and squadron co-workers laid the groundwork for the Major to fly again. They had a list of names of pilots who were flying with an above-the-knee prosthesis. About 3 weeks after his release from the hospital, the Major received his first prosthesis from a man in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and he taught himself to walk again and began going to the gym. “For the next several months I was just trying to get back, trying to get my strength back more or less, and just resuming everything that I could.”



him and asked why he couldn't fly. "And the General looked at him and said, 'Let's talk about this after the briefing.'" The General met with Major Brown's friend and the wing commander to discuss the Major's situation.

"He told my wing commander he wants me to resubmit my package to fly again and that he wanted to be kept posted the entire time about what's going on." "That was in November of last year. I found out at the beginning of October 2005 that they were going to give me

a waiver to fly again." Major Brown is scheduled to attend pilot re-qualification training at Little Rock AFB, Arkansas, in August -- 7 years and 5 months after he lost his leg.

"We accomplished more in that half hour of (General Handy) being at our unit than I had been able to the whole time before. I can look at you and tell you if you found yourself in the situa-

tion that I did, I just think it's natural for people to get back and do what they were doing and that's all. I wasn't trying to be inspirational, and I wasn't trying to be spectacular. All I was trying to do is resume my life the way I had it," the Major said.

The Major knows he's lucky and is grateful to his wife, family, friends, and co-workers. He knows he

couldn't have done it without all the constant support. "I've never considered myself lucky to be an amputee," Major Brown said. "But we're lucky to be amputees when there's so much technology to make our lives good, make our lives more normal. I've had backing at my unit. Our wing commander has never done anything but offer support and that's been awesome."

Throughout his rehabilitation, he focused on regaining his life and getting it back to normal. Gradually, one sit-up at a time, he began regaining his strength and life began falling into place. About 6 months after the accident, the Major was introduced to Raymond Francis, a prosthetics expert from Ohio, with a soft spot in his heart for military people. "He's just been excellent for getting myself and many other military guys back on their feet, literally, and many of them back to doing what they were doing," he said. "I got hooked up with him and this higher-tech, more high-activity leg, and then shortly after that I made two trips to the (flight) simulator."

He was still trying to walk well at the time, but was eager to see if he could fly again. "I had to work at it, but I never crashed," he said about first flight in the simulator. A civilian pilot he met taught Major Brown techniques which he practiced over and over. In June 2000, about 15 months after the accident, the FAA gave him a check ride and reinstated his medical clearance. One week later he received an interview with a civilian airline company.

"That was totally coincidental. I had my application in with them for a couple years. They had no idea I had even lost my leg. I ended up getting a job with them." He flew with the airline for 3 1/2 years before being furloughed in March 2003. Afterward, he spent more time trying to regain his flying status with the Guard. In November 2004, Gen John Handy, then commander of Air Mobility Command, visited the

***"I found out at the beginning of October 2005 that they were going to give me a waiver to fly again."***

Major's wing, but Major Brown wasn't there that day. During his visit he talked about all the great things the Air Force was accomplishing, including allowing the first above-the-knee amputee to fly again at Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland.

When the General opened the floor to questions, one of Major Brown's friends told the General about

The Major hopes people can learn from his accident. "If people can learn something from it, it's first of all, your life is not over. Second, as far as the accident goes, just count to three before you act. There's nothing that important that you have to act hastily and have an accident like this. I would feel really bad if I had a friend who did a stupid thing like me and didn't learn from my mistakes."

## Editor's Note

What follows is not a personal commentary on Major Brown, but rather a discussion of how his decisions and actions contributed to the mishap. It is also a good example of how everyone can use risk management techniques to minimize risk in our everyday actions, prevent mishaps, and more importantly, learn from the mistakes of others. With this mishap in particular, consider the lessons to be learned from a safety standpoint; undertake the indelicate task of finding the root cause of the mishap or incident by asking "why it occurred," and what we as Airmen can take away in order to prevent future accidents.

It may sound harsh; however, Major Brown's decisions and actions di-

rectly contributed to this mishap. From a risk management standpoint, the following decisions and actions led to the mishap:

- The decision to transport a loaded weapon (pistol or rifle) in a vehicle (check with local authorities as many states do not allow loaded weapons, cased or not in a vehicle at any time). Although the weapon was on safe, and in a case, had it not been loaded, this mishap would not have occurred.

- It was dark, he was in a hurry, his focus was on the target and not the actions he was performing (which were done by feel and from memory).

- In the "thrill of the hunt," Major Brown doesn't know how the weapon came off of safe (or if it was in a safe position to begin with), and after the weapon hung up in the case, he "jiggled" it to free it, while maintaining his focus on the coyote.

- It is unknown whether or not, in the process of trying to free the weapon from the case, if he inadvertently knocked the safety off and pulled the trigger. One of the hunting safety rules is to *never place your finger near the trigger of a loaded or unloaded weapon unless you plan on firing the weapon.*

From a risk management standpoint, the following things were done correctly:

- Major Brown did have a cell phone with him (despite a lack of cell phone coverage).

- Major Brown did not hunt alone; had he been alone, the outcome would most likely have been different.

- Quick thinking and decisive action on the part of his friend kept the situation from spinning out of control.

- Although not mentioned by name, Self-Aid and Buddy Care training no doubt came into play as Major Brown and Mr. Friedman tended to his wounds and kept him alive as they sought out medical assistance.

- Intangibles such as a positive mental attitude and a strong will to live were as much responsible for his survival as the medical attention he received.

This article is a testament to the human spirit and a person's ability to cope and conquer extreme challenges, and we at **The Combat Edge** applaud Major Brown's progress and ability to overcome his mishap, his recovery, and his desire to return to flying status. 🦋



# Business

by Mr. Conway Cotten, Holloman AFB, N.M.

*“ORM  
is the real key  
to success in  
behavioral  
mishap  
prevention.”*

Identifying and addressing hazards or hazardous conditions is smart business and pays obvious dividends. It takes time and effort, but helps all concerned maintain high program awareness and maximum involvement. However, it is only part – and a relatively small part – of the mishap puzzle. It is generally known and accepted that 85 to 90 percent of mishap causes are behavioral.

I maintain a log of Class C mishaps at my base. When I read the narratives, I always ask myself, “Could this individual have made a different decision to change the outcome or did the actions/decisions of this person cause the problem?” I have found that in over 90 percent of the cases, the root causes were behavioral based.

Here is a list of behavioral characteristics that contribute to our mishap statistics:

- Taking chances (gambling)
- Exceeding skill levels
- Conducting activities without adequate training or preparation
- Losing control of faculties
- Acting without considering possible consequences

Identifying the behavioral aspects is the easy part. How can we, as professionals, change the outcomes or significantly change the behavior of individuals? This is the hard part. A good place to start with all of these behaviors is emphasizing the possible consequences such as pain (including bandaging problems, casts, hospital food, etc.), family impact, unit impact, and negative career impact. But let’s look at each behavioral contribution separately.

How do we convince our coworkers and subordinates that taking chances is not worth the risk? We can reiterate how dangerous the numbers



Photo by Kenneth Brown



Photo by A1C SrA Christina Ponte



Photo by A1C Ronald Moore



Photo by A1C C. McCreedy

game is that they are playing. Ask them how many casino millionaires have they met? Chances are none because the numbers are always against the gambler. Gambling may pay off one or two times, but eventually, the gambler comes up short. When gambling with safety, coming up short can mean significant losses to the Air Force.



Courtesy Photo

Exceeding skill levels is commonly seen in the sports and recreation arenas. Climbing on motorcycles, bikes, all-ter-

rain vehicles, kayaks, snowboards, skis, etc., without building experience and skill is a great recipe for disaster. All of us have heard the stories and seen the results walking around on crutches.

Lack of training or preparation mishaps include: sports injuries, destroyed or damaged equipment, materials, supplies, and wrecked vehicles. A good preventative for this category would be: "Read all instructions before starting!" We have all learned from the past mistakes of others. It is how many of our safety manuals and operating instructions have been written. Now we just need to read them and save the Air Force from any further personnel or equipment losses.

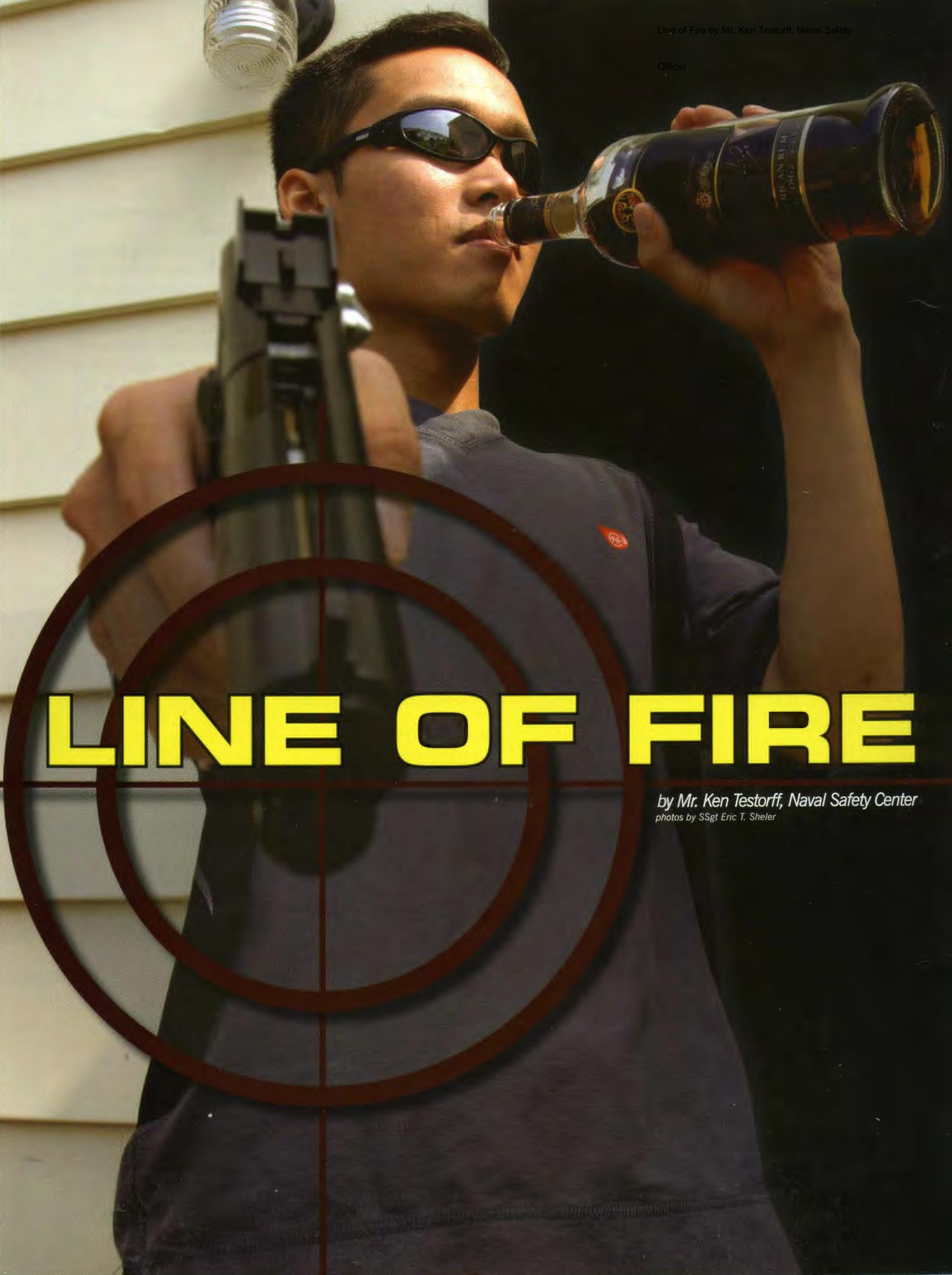
Loss of faculties can include: losing one's temper (just had a Class C in this category), loss of concentration, mind on other things, and cell phone conversations while driving. All of these and many others can lead to personal misery and embarrassment.

The final category has been addressed many times over by many well-known companies and consultants. "Stop," "Take Two," and "Think Before You Act" are just a few of the popular buzz words that have helped counteract this impulsive behavior.

What I've been discussing for each of these behavioral characteristics are basically Operational Risk Management (ORM) concepts. ORM is the real key to success in behavioral mishap prevention. We must be mindful of the risks around us all of the time, every day, without exception. In doing this, we must ask ourselves this simple question: "Is what I am about to do (or am doing) going to hurt or endanger me, someone else, or assets?" Using this simple question tool would seriously reduce mishaps for all of us and would definitely pay huge dividends for the Air Force. Let's all keep our "Safety Awareness All the Time." ✖



Photo by SSgt Joshua Strang



# LINE OF FIRE

*by Mr. Ken Testorff, Naval Safety Center*  
*photos by SSgt Eric T. Sheler*



**L**ocked and loaded ... the way it should be,” declared a gun owner, as he showed his Beretta .40-caliber handgun to guests at his home for a barbecue and birthday party.

The homeowner had taken the guests on a tour of his residence. While in the master bedroom, he took out his handgun and showed everyone the clip

and handling a firearm while under the influence of alcohol. He also was charged with a gross misdemeanor of aiming and discharging a firearm at a human being where a person might be endangered.

This mishap demonstrates that drinking and driving isn't the only mix that doesn't work; booze and firearms are another. As noted in the mishap report, "As long as our people continue

- Assume they are loaded until proven otherwise.

- Never clean a weapon while it's loaded.

- Ensure the safety devices are engaged. Remember the saying, "If you see red, you're dead." This statement refers to the red color on most safety mechanisms. A red dot or red switch usually indicates safety locks are off.

was full of hollow-point bullets. He then put one of the bullets into the chamber and walked out on the patio to where other guests were gathered, including a PO3 who was sitting on the patio stoop.

While standing in the doorway messing with his gun, the owner started pointing it around. When he aimed it at the Petty Officer 3rd Class (PO3), she told him not to, but, about 5 seconds later, the gun accidentally discharged. The round hit her upper right thigh and traveled into her lower abdominal area before exiting through the left buttock.

Alcohol was present at the party. In fact, the PO3 said when she first met the homeowner at the barracks, he had appeared to be very intoxicated — a fact borne out in his 0.132 BAC. He pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor violation of pos-

to use alcohol and irresponsibly expose themselves and others to hazardous situations, we will continue to see these types of unnecessary incidents."

In a separate case, another PO3 was trying to free a round that was jammed in the slide of his roommate's .25-caliber pistol. He pulled back the slide, which, in turn, repositioned the round, and the gun discharged. The bullet hit the PO3's foot, and he lost 4 workdays. He also spent 30 days on light duty and required physical therapy. The victim was counseled on the importance of never trying to clear a loaded weapon indoors and always knowing exactly where a gun is pointed.

Here are some other tips to remember when handling firearms:

- Stay alert while cleaning a weapon. Fatigue plays a big role in any evolution. For example, you never would want to get in your car and drive a long distance without being well rested. The same principle applies to handling weapons.

- Read the instructions, mentally review safety precautions, and take classes on weapons handling.

- Never take a gun for granted.

Whether you use a gun for recreation or on the job, planning is the key to avoiding mishaps. The solution may be as simple as asking for help or using the right safety equipment. Take time to evaluate the precautions and risks of a task before you start it. ❖

Street Racing by MSgt Gerardo Delagarza, Langley AFB VA

# STREET RACING

by MSgt Gerardo Delagarza, Langley AFB, Va.  
photos by Adam Komatz

Vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death for people ages 16-21. According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, 42,636 people died in motor vehicle crashes in 2004; 13 percent or 5,610 of those fatalities were teenagers. Those 5,610 teens will never know what it's like to become a mother, father, grandparent, or get the chance to hold a grandson/daughter in their arms. It's senseless but unmistakably real. One contributor to this growing problem is illegal street racing.

Illegal street racing has recently drawn national attention from the three popular "Fast and Furious" movies. Illegal street racing, as featured in films, is both popular and incredibly dangerous. In 2001, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reported that police listed street racing as a factor in 135 fatal crashes. This total

is up from 72 street racing-related fatalities reported in 2000. Unfortunately, people die everyday because there are those who believe it is "cool" or "fun" to illegally race cars on public streets.

Some people might say, "Street racing isn't that big in my town," or "I don't have to worry; my kids would never do that." You might want to think again because illegal street racing is more common than what you may think. For example, in 1999, the Florida Department of Highway and Safety for Motor Vehicles reported 28 accidents related to illegal street racing, resulting in two fatalities and 27 injuries. In 2000, the same agency reported 39 racing accidents, resulting in one fatality and 55 injuries — an increase of 39 percent. In 2002, there were 48 racing accidents, resulting in one fatality and 60 injuries: an increase of 71 percent as compared to 1999. Another example is San Diego, California. In 2001, it reported

290 cases prosecuted for illegal street racing, up from 147 cases in 1999; an increase of 97 percent. A total of 7,216 citations were given to motorists for illegally racing on the highways in 2001. Of these citations, how many teens do you think went running to their parents to let them know that they were street racing? I would guess it is pretty safe to say that the number is pretty close to zero. Unfortunately, the first time some parents find out their child is involved in illegal street racing is when they're notified that their young one was killed or injured in a "racing mishap" like the ones listed above.

What can you expect if you get caught street racing? Penalties vary from state to state and are consistently changing because of the dangers involved with street racing. Currently, in California, if a driver is engaged in illegal street racing and causes bodily injury to another person, that driver can



only be charged with a misdemeanor. Under a new proposal, that driver could be charged with either a misdemeanor or a felony. Additionally, if a driver is responsible for another person's death while engaging in illegal street racing, that driver may receive a state prison sentence for a term of 4, 6, or 10 years. Spectators aren't exempt, they can be fined and their cars impounded as well.

Florida is another state cracking down on illegal street racing. In Florida, street racing is a misdemeanor criminal offense that is punishable for up to 1 YEAR in jail and a \$1,000.00 fine. If convicted, your drivers license will be suspended for a minimum of 1 year. A second offense within 5 years and your car is forfeited to the state (this means that your pride and joy now belongs to the state of Florida). The bottom line is clear — while street racing might seem fun and can be a "rush," it is illegal. It can drastically change you and your passengers' lives in the short time that it takes to reach the next stop light. That's too high a price to pay for this type of illegal activity! However, there are safer alternatives.

The National Hot Rod Association has a program that offers safer racing alternatives. This organization sponsors thousands of legally-sanctioned events that occur across the United States each weekend through its "Street Legal" program. Only street-legal machines are permitted to participate. Though it varies from track to track, most Street Legal events feature time trials and grudge racing. Grudge racing permits participants to choose their competition rather than participate in an organized eliminator. Win or lose, participants may return to the staging lanes for more racing.

Another option is Qualcomm Drags (located in the Mission Valley section of San Diego). It's 100-percent legal, you can race all the way until 1 a.m., have your fun and not worry about getting in trouble, losing your license or getting a ticket. The course is an enclosed side-by-side 1/8-mile strip that can accommodate the launching of 480 race cars per hour. There are two separate Christmas trees and at the end of the run, you get a time slip complete

with 60-foot increment times. Typically, the track sees 200-plus race cars on a Friday night, and some 2,000 spectators per event.

Illegal street racing, sooner or later, will get you hurt and even killed. The consequences, if you get caught, will cost you time in the slammer, an impounded car, and put a serious dent in your wallet. Although we only covered two legal racing options in this article, search your local area for an officially sanctioned drag strip and see what they offer.

Remember; drive conservatively on the streets and put the pedal to the metal on sanctioned drag strips or raceways. Live to race another day!

### Author's Note

Below is a list of basic NHRA safety rules. Be advised that this information is presented as GENERAL information only. You should always refer to the current official NHRA rule book or your local track safety rules before heading out to the races.

- **License:** Valid state driver's license or waiver signed by both parents.
- **Auto Trans Reverse Lockout:** Prevents shifter from accidentally being put in reverse.
- **Roll Bars:** Required on all cars (including T-tops) running faster than 100 mph.
- **Roll Cages:** Roll cages required on all cars running faster than 100 mph.
- **Helmets:** Car running over 100 mph, must meet Snell 90 or SFI 31.1, 31.2 specs.
- **Nitrous Oxide:** Securely mounted and stamped with minimum DOT 1800 pound rating.
- **Liquid Overflow:** Cars must have a recovery system or catch can for the car's radiator.
- **Seat Belts:** Cars must be equipped with an accepted quick release type driver seat belt.
- **Wheels & Tires:** Must have ALL lug nuts in place and securely fastened. All street tires must have minimum 1/16-inch tread depth. 🏁



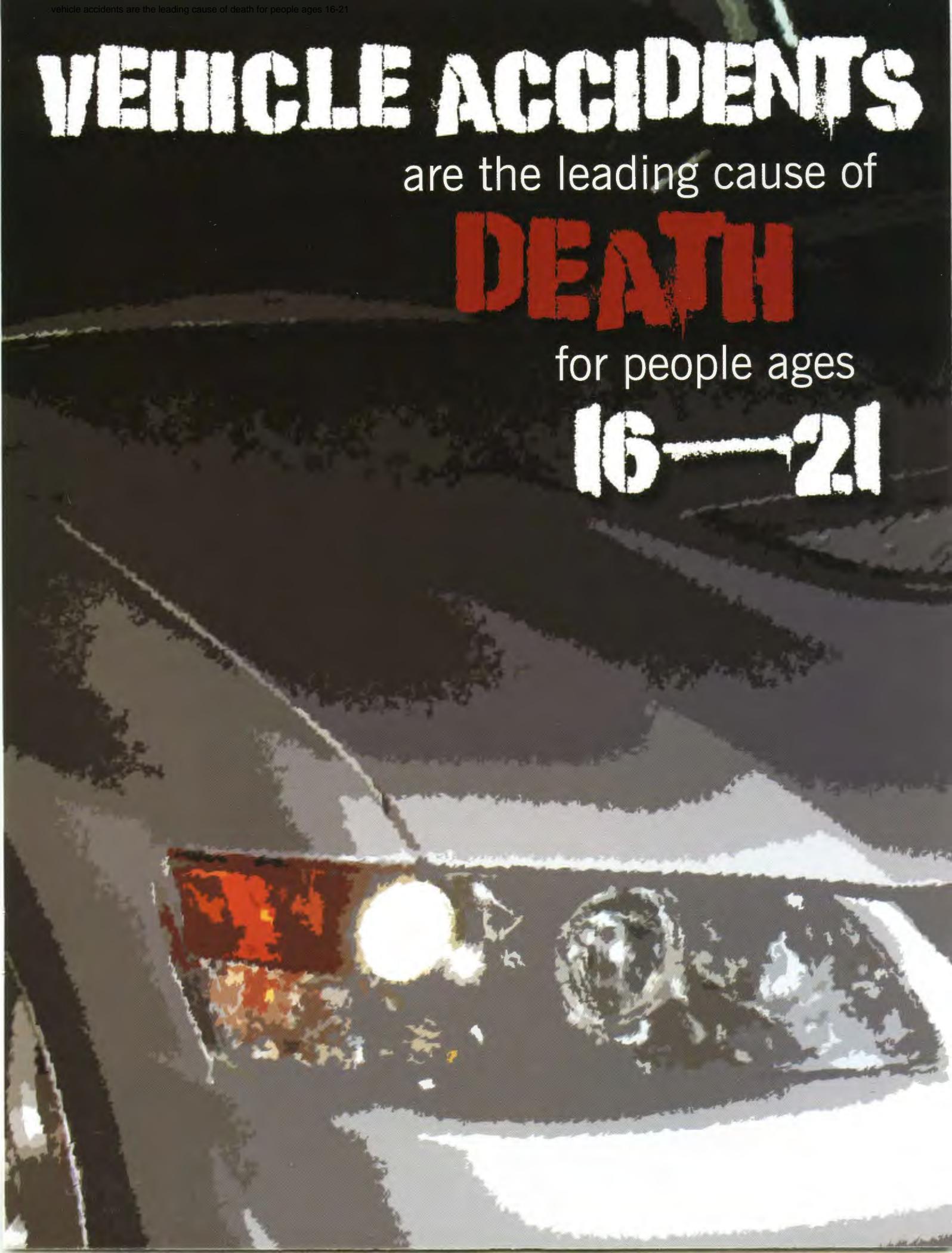
# VEHICLE ACCIDENTS

are the leading cause of

# DEATH

for people ages

# 16—21



*"... we see things that tend to make us stop and think about how precious life is and how our whole world can change ..."*



by Mr. Larry Stulz, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio

# IN AN INSTANT

In our society, it seems that those who are injured or have long recovery periods tend to disappear from life's normal day-to-day activities, and we tend to forget about those individuals and then fail to learn from their experiences. But every now and then, we see things that tend to make us stop and think about how precious life is and how our whole world can change in an instant.

My wife and I own two registered therapy dogs, and we visit local hospitals and nursing homes to help brighten the day of those who need all the love and attention that they can get. I can't take photos of them and use those as examples of making a wrong choice ... I am only left with the opportunity to tell the story of two people that I met whose worlds were changed in an instant, by not taking a second of time to make a choice that would have made a world of difference.

Last weekend was one visit that I'll remember for a long time. In the room normally filled with senior citizens was a 30-something man sitting at a table with a lady. The man stood out from all the others by wearing a muscle shirt which revealed tattoos on both arms from hands to shoulders. Mean tattoos. The lady at the table waved for us to bring the dogs over. As I neared, I noticed the man had huge rings on his

fingers. Mean rings which were emblazoned with skull and crossbones, knives, and guns. Once at the table, the lady introduced us to Ron. She stated Ron was recovering from a brain injury from a motorcycle mishap 5 months prior.

Since I am the safety manager at work, I knew there was more to this story and thought quickly on how I could learn more about this mishap without seeming too forward. "Did the motorcycle helmet malfunction during the motorcycle mishap?" I asked. "He wasn't wearing one" was her reply. Finally Ron said something while petting the dogs that I could not understand at first because his spoken words sounded like those from a person who was intoxicated from alcohol. "I had dogs once" were his words. The lady at the table stated he was not expected to live at the time of the mishap but hopefully will be able to recover to the point he can take care of himself in the future.

We were then directed to a 30-something lady with a shaved head who was rocking back and forth in her wheel chair but had a smile that would brighten anyone's day. Since her body was curled into a partial fetal position, I gently placed one of the dogs on her lap and her face lit up with excitement and she tried her best to laugh. I was concerned that the dogs may be too lively for her as I noticed a fresh surgical incision with staples that ran from one ear across her head to the other ear. My wife, who is also a nurse, took over and made sure that the dogs were not hurting her. I stepped back and talked to one of the nursing assistants and asked about the

lady's condition. I learned that the lady in the wheel chair was a typical soccer Mom several months ago. She was in a vehicle mishap while not wearing a seat belt and suffered a brain injury. She will likely not recover. I learned that her two young children and husband were in earlier that day to visit, but she does not recognize her family members.



I had a hard time concentrating for the rest of the day as my thoughts often went back to those two people. I thought of the lifestyles that they led and their families that are now suffering and recovering as much as they are. Thinking of their unfortunate examples, it is frightening to realize how fast one's whole world can change in an instant.

**A**ttention to detail and self-discipline are a couple of important actions required while working on the flight line. As you read this article, you'll recognize how a lack of attention to detail/self-discipline and complacency can negatively affect how you accomplish a routine task.

As a weapons load crew expediter, it is my job to oversee the weapons work being performed on the flight line. One particular night, I tasked my load crews to load AIM-7 missiles on the aft AERO-7 missile launcher stations of our F-4G Wild Weasels in preparation for the next day's sorties. During live loading, an expediter is always on site in case something goes wrong, and he has to call an emergency. This happened to be one of those nights, and I happened to be that expediter.

The load crew I tasked was experienced and very familiar with each other. All of them knew their load crew position responsibilities, and they also knew what the other crewmembers would be accomplishing at any given time during the load. It was as if they could read each other's minds. But, on this night, the #2 person on my most experienced load crew was on leave, and his replacement was relatively inexperienced, and he was not familiar with the rest of the crew.

The loading procedure began when the #1 and #3 person on the load crew brought over the first missile on a bomb lift truck. It was positioned and loaded by the #1 person, then locked in by the #2. What the #1 person didn't realize was that the #2 person didn't assist in the positioning of the missile, like his regular #2 person did, and the #2 person failed to properly lock the forward missile lug. As a result, the front hook was sitting on top of the lug and pushing down on the missile instead of being properly locked! Luckily the aft hooks caught the missile. These hooks were the only things holding it in place. To complicate the situation, the #2 person failed to install the safety pin in the proper

*“My heart stopped ... as I realized that this missile was as close to falling off the aircraft as it could possibly be.”*

# ATTENTION TO **DETAIL**

by TSgt Deryk Johnston, Nellis AFB, Nev.

Attention to Detail by TSgt Deryk Johnston, Nellis AFB, Nev.



Photo by TSgt Shane A. Cu

mechanical locking hole. The pin was mistakenly installed into a missile launcher side plate cutout. Instead of serving as locking safety pin, it was just dangling there ineffectively.

Unaware of this situation, the load crew proceeded to finish uploading another missile on the other side of the aircraft to complete the loading operation. As they were walking away to start another job, I was performing a post-loading inspection on the aircraft when I noticed that the forward missile lug wasn't properly locked in. Upon further investigation, I also noticed the

safety pin was not installed properly. My heart stopped (at least it seemed that way) as I realized that this missile was as close to falling off the aircraft as it could possibly be. I quickly pinned the missile and immediately called the crew over to reload the missile.

As you can see, attention to detail is vital. This potentially disastrous incident would have been avoided if the #1 load crew chief had ensured the #2 person knew what was expected of him during the load operation. Also, the #1 load crew chief should've had the self-discipline to follow his loading checklist to ensure the missile was properly

post loaded. Finally, complacency set this load crew up for failure because they were too comfortable with each other's loading knowledge and took a loading operation for granted. When the new variable of a new load member (#2 person) was thrown into the mix, the load crew didn't adjust their operation as needed to ensure success.

Remember, anytime you feel complacency growing in your work environment, you must fall back on attention to detail and self-discipline to get your operation back on track. Hopefully, this will help you and your fellow workers avoid a possible incident. ✎

# MONTHLY AWARD WINNERS

## **F**light Line Safety Award of Distinction

**D**uring a routine F-16 post-flight inspection, SSgt Soto discovered a quarter-inch sliver of metal chips on the engine magnetic chip detector (MCD). He took a Joint Oil Analysis Program (JOAP) sample and the MCD to Non-Destructive Inspections (NDI) for examination. A1C Reed, an NDI technician, found that the JOAP sample revealed no discrepancies, but the MCD chips were so abnormal that she requested the assistance of her supervisor, SrA Delacruz. SrA Delacruz and A1C Reed analyzed the MCD using a Jet scan which resulted in a LEVEL 3 MCD condition (significant amount of hostile material). An M-50 metal (#4 bearing material) was also detected. Despite the NDI findings, engine technicians were skeptical about the results because one of the detected metals, M50Ni1, would not normally be found anywhere inside the engine, and commented that the machine must be malfunctioning. To verify the results, TSgt Colon (NDI section chief) recalibrated the Jet scan and ran the sample again. The same LEVEL 3 MCD with M-50 bearing material result was found. This condition was promptly relayed to SSgt Soto on the flightline. For this condition, F-16 technical orders required them to accomplish an engine isolation run. However, with the large amounts of debris on the MCD and the NDI test results, they suspected there was a major engine problem. Realizing an

isolation run could cause further damage, they elected not to run the engine. Senior maintenance officials supported their decision and had the engine removed from the aircraft for tear-down. Technicians found the #4 bearing had large gouges and wear grooves. Over time, the #4 bearing uneven wear caused the bearing to ride on the fan rotor shaft. The direct contact between the bearing and the shaft gouged the bearing race and produced the large quantity of LEVEL 3 material found on the MCD. It was determined if the jet had flown just one more flight, it may have been its last.



**SSgt Bryan S. Jones  
SSgt Robert G. Soto  
SrA Johnny A. Brown  
SrA Janelle L. Delacruz  
A1C Sherrika L. Reed  
27th Maintenance Group  
27th Fighter Wing  
Cannon AFB, N.M.**

## **G**round Safety Award of Distinction

**W**hile deployed in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, what seemed like a routine intelligence gathering mission on the flight line soon turned into a harrowing situation. After parking his vehicle, SSgt Kamrad began walking toward the rear entrance of the airport terminal and found himself faced with a split-second decision. Following a brake failure, an unattended 8,000 gallon Host Nation fuel truck began rolling toward a Russian IL-18 aircraft that was

being fueled by another Host Nation fuel truck. Neither the airport ground service crew nor the aircrew on board the aircraft were aware of the developing situation. SSgt Kamrad ran toward, and leapt into the runaway fuel truck. His quick actions allowed him to apply the brakes and bring the fuel truck to a stop a mere 30 feet from the aircraft.



**SSgt James R. Kamrad  
376th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron**

## Pilot Safety

Award of Distinction

Lt Dietrich was flying an F-15C as number two of a two-ship Basic Fighter Maneuvers (BFM) sortie with Capt Bobnock in the lead. During the setup for a BFM engagement, Lt Dietrich noted the master caution and oil pressure lights illuminated, and the number two engine oil pressure gauge had dropped to 3 psi, well below the minimum required. Lt Dietrich immediately brought the right engine to idle in accordance with Dash-1 guidance and notified his lead. Capt Bobnock rejoined for a battle damage check, where he observed fire coming from the number two engine. He immediately informed Lt Dietrich of the fire and directed him to accomplish the "engine fire in-flight" checklist. Capt Bobnock still observed the fire burning in the aft section of the engine despite the engine being shut down with no fire indicated on the cockpit instruments. The flight immediately turned towards the closest airfield which was 60 miles away. Lt Dietrich led the formation while dumping gas to adjust landing weight, while Capt Bobnock coordi-

nated with ATC for the emergency recovery and reviewed the appropriate checklists to ensure completion. The pilots developed a plan and informed the supervisor of flying of their intentions to fly a straight-in landing, then egress the aircraft on the runway. Lt Dietrich performed an on-speed, single-engine approach, landing normally with the engine bay still on fire. After bringing the jet to a stop, he shut down the left engine and successfully egressed the aircraft.



**Capt Paul A. Bobnock,  
1Lt Lawrence A. Dietrich**  
60th Fighter Squadron  
33rd Fighter Wing  
Eglin AFB, Fla.

## Weapons Safety

Award of Distinction

SrA Rowley and SrA Dougherty connected a Bobtail tow vehicle to a munitions trailer loaded with 30MM TP inside the flight line Holding Area Munitions (HAMS). As they were inspecting the trailer, they noticed smoke coming from underneath the dash of their vehicle. SrA Rowley immediately removed the vehicle keys from the ignition and turned off all electrical items. Five seconds later, more smoke started billowing out from the vents on top of the dash. Recognizing an electrical fire, they immediately notified Munitions Control, quickly disconnected the vehicle from the trailer, and pushed the Bobtail 300 ft from the explosives loaded trailer and the HAMS. At the time of the incident the HAMS contained: 214.95 lbs. of 1.3 (750 M206 Flare), 2,679.12 lbs. of 1.4 (8K 30MM TP, 107 BDU-33, 6 CATM-9M, and 810

RR-188 Chaff), 2 TGM-65K, and a TGM-65D. The Fire Department concluded that the wires underneath the dash somehow crossed and melted the insulation around them. Due to the proximity of the fire to munitions, the quick actions of these two Airmen prevented an incidental explosive detonation.



**SrA Michael B. Rowley  
SrA Samantha Dougherty**  
23rd Maintenance Squadron  
23rd Fighter Group  
Pope AFB, N.C.

# MONTHLY AWARD WINNERS



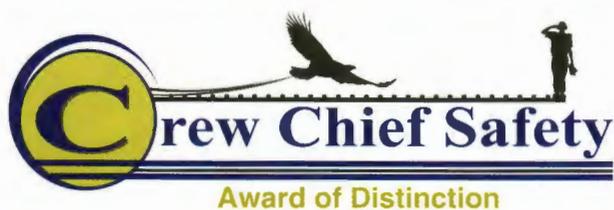
Flying a KC-135, the crew of Spark 23 was 2 hours into a night, Operation ENDURING FREEDOM combat mission, when both Horizontal Situation Indicators (HSIs) failed; leaving the crew with no navigation guidance. Quick analysis revealed that Integrated Processing Center (IPC) #1 had failed. In addition to the HSIs, the center Multi-function Display (MFD) indicated a loss of all data and the following items indicated failure: weather radar, Identification Friend or Foe (IFF), radio #2, navigational receivers, as well as ground and air collision avoidance systems. The crew implemented dead reckoning procedures, and split the electrical buses to prevent any further loss of their remaining navigation information. The bus split procedure recovered the copilot's HSI, but the crew continued using dead-reckoning procedures as there were no land-based navigational aids available to ensure accuracy of their navigation system. The operating IFF was providing accurate information, and the crew deduced that the remaining navigation database was providing reasonable output. They attempted to shut down Embedded GPS/INS (EGI) #1 and re-power it but were unsuccessful and it resulted in the loss of the pilot's ADI. The crew then coordinated with command and control to request alternate refueling options as the risk of conducting low altitude refueling in mountainous terrain was too great to complete the

mission as planned. The crew also asked for a chase plane due to a lack of information on the recovery of lost systems in the emergency checklist section of the Dash-1, combined with concerns about the continued reliability of the remaining navigation information. While the instructor pilot coordinated the rendezvous with the B-1 chase plane, the aircraft commander and jump seat pilot established a conference call with their duty IP, Boeing, and Rockwell Collins via HF radio. The systems experts confirmed that pulling the IPC #1 control circuit breakers would allow "rebooting" of the pilot's systems. While flying visual formation behind the B-1, the crew pulled the IPC #1 circuit breaker and rebooted the system. They were able to regain navigation information at the pilot's position, and verified its accuracy with the copilot's information. Outstanding crew resource management over a combat zone allowed the B-1 to depart the formation, and Spark 23 to return to base under its own navigation without further incident.



**Maj Jeff Myer  
Capt Matthew Flynn  
1Lt Kevin Haynie  
Capt Marc McMannon  
A1C Joseph Ware**

**908th Expeditionary Air Refueling Squadron**



Mr. Jason Schommer distinguished himself as a dedicated crew chief when a U-2ST aircraft returned to Beale AFB with a repeat discrepancy for a fuel pressure low light on the Primary Boost Pump. This discrepancy only occurred at altitude and could not be duplicated on the ground or during low altitude sorties. Mr. Schommer was still not satisfied, even after electrical and fuel specialists finished troubleshooting, replacing the low level pressure switch, and completing all mandatory checklist items. He started to check the routing of the wiring prior to paneling up the aircraft and his keen eye identified approximately 1/18 of an inch of bare wire

where the wire connects to the switch. He immediately called for another electrician and began to re-troubleshoot the fault. While moving the wire, it was confirmed that the bare wire was the culprit for the fuel pressure low light for the primary boost pump. He assisted with the repair and the aircraft returned to Full Mission Capable status.



**Mr. Jason Schommer  
9th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron  
9th Reconnaissance Wing  
Beale AFB, Calif.**



**D**uring the award period, the 3 WS produced 3,208 mission execution briefings, allowing rotary and fixed-wing aircraft to modify their mission profiles to avoid hazards. This resulted in zero in-flight or ground aircraft mishaps. Additionally, 5-day forecasts and hourly current temperature readings allowed local commanders to tailor outdoor activities for over 60,000 Fort Hood soldiers. Despite 3+ weeks of 100-degree temperatures, leaders were able to avoid a single heat-related incident. The 3 WS also provided critical weather briefings to the 1st Cavalry Division in support of their mission as the Army ready-unit for firefighting support. This was instrumental in ensuring aircraft were available and ready to respond to a local fire at Henson Range, which was suppressed after burning only 1600 acres out of a potential fuel source region of 15 million acres. The 3 WS's dedication to safety was also evident during a recent field training exercise. By identifying and mitigating hazards associated with nighttime night vision goggle movements through a wooded, stream-filled region, 3

WS was able to accomplish their goals with zero mishaps. Additionally, in the case of a mishap, the unit created and implemented a mishap response process. This included primary and backup modes of communication, signal devices, and the availability of first-responder trained personnel and basic lifesaving equipment. 3 WS also improved personnel safety by implementing new procedures and ordering protective equipment for use in its Cold War-era storage areas. These included a buddy system for hazardous activities, proper protective equipment, and updated training in hazardous material spill procedures. 3 WS personnel also deployed with the 21st Air Cavalry Brigade to Brownwood, Texas, for 2 weeks, providing weather support to leaders and aircrews. While in the field, 3 WS suffered zero mishaps and were responsible for providing up-to-the-minute information on flight hazards and ground safety concerns.



**3rd Weather Squadron**  
**3rd Air Support Operations Group**  
**Ft Hood AIN, Texas**

## ACC Safety Salutes Superior Performance

**Maj Richard R. Mehl**  
 U-2S Instructor Pilot  
 99th Expeditionary Refueling Squadron

**Maj William L. Gottenberg**  
 U-2S Aircraft Commander  
**Maj Todd A. Ernst**  
 Backup Pilot  
 99th Expeditionary Refueling Squadron

**TSgt Michael D. Leach**  
**SrA Dennis A. Rutledge**  
 Crew Chiefs  
 455th Air Expeditionary Wing

**Mr. Stephen Schweitz**  
 Videographer  
 1st Reconnaissance Squadron  
 9th Reconnaissance Wing  
 Beale AFB, Calif.



**TSgt David M. Hareh**  
 Expediter  
 9th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron  
 9th Reconnaissance Wing  
 Beale AFB, Calif.

**SSgt Michael S. Hawkins**  
 NCOIC Ground Safety  
 552nd Air Control Wing  
 Tinker AFB, Okla.  
**SSgt Edward A. Maloney**  
 IMPAC Monitor  
 57th Equipment Maintenance Squadron  
 57th Wing  
 Nellis AFB, Nev.

**TSgt Daryl F. Klepsa**  
 Weapons Safety Manager  
 55th Wing  
 Offutt AFB, Neb.

**Mr. James T. Warburton**  
**Mr. Fred M. Rebujo**  
 Add'l Duty Weapons Safety Reps  
 388th Range Squadron  
 388th Fighter Wing  
 Hill AFB, Utah

## FY06 Aircraft

As of September 31, 2006

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

## FY06 Ground

As of September 31, 2006

	Fatal	Class A	Class B
8 AF	 	2	5
9 AF	       	7	3
12 AF	  	4	3
DRU's		1	2

 = Fatal     = Fatal due to misconduct

## FY06 Weapons

As of September 31, 2006

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

### 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

## Aircraft Notes

ACC had zero Class As this month. We wrap up the year with the lowest Class A rate in ACC/TAC history going back to 1980! It is critical that we ask ourselves what made our programs safer and how we can improve them. If you think you were just lucky, then ask why. Find the nuggets that keep your unit safe. Review your approach to ORM, leadership, and personal accountability. There is more to it than LUCK. Safety belongs to you! Find out what it takes, and then share the news.

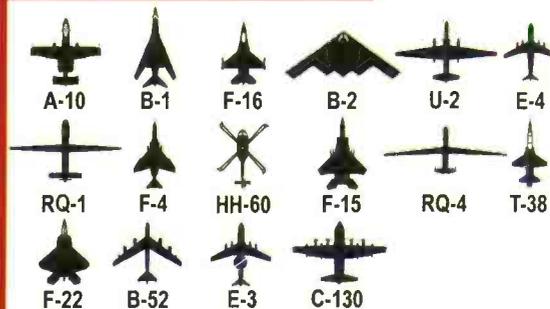
## Ground Notes

ACC had a banner year for ground mishaps. The command ended the year with 14 Class A mishaps, a reduction of six over last year's 20. This figure is the lowest number of Class A mishaps the command has had. Unfortunately, we still lost 14 valuable Airmen. We must keep the trend going. We cannot afford to lose one more person from the command.

## Weapons Notes

Our weapons safety mishap rates are on track to be one of our best years ever. If we continue on this path, we will have gone 5 consecutive years without a Class A and all categories will decrease from past year's averages. Bottomline, your efforts are reaping results. Although we've had a great year, we can still improve. Our nemesis continues to be not following technical data. The best way to correct this is to get out and observe explosive operations and ensure our Airmen are being trained properly and operations are being conducted IAW applicable guidelines. Now, more than ever we need to protect every Airman and every piece of equipment in the AF inventory to ensure combat capability is maintained at its peak. In the weapons safety arena, our best tool to assist in this effort, is technical data ... ALWAYS follow it!

### Symbols for Mishap Aircraft





**B  
L  
A  
M!**



# *“Why did you join the service?”*

I've been asked the same question many times since joining the Air Force over 18 years ago, and always had a difficult time answering it. I could never put my finger on it or really respond well, until I visited Arlington National Cemetery. I stepped off of the bus and was hit with a wave of emotion that enveloped me as I took a long, hard look at my surroundings. For several seconds I heard nothing, but felt everything, and came away with my answer to the question and a bit of shame for it having eluded me for so long.

The answer is: **“To serve.”**

The ACC Safety Team and **The Combat Edge** staff urges everyone to take time this Veterans Day, and every day, to honor those who have served.

— Lt Col Anton Komatz, Editor



# VETERANS DAY