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# Combat Edge

*Air Combat Command's Safety Magazine*

**Motorcycle  
SAFETY**

*Special Edition*





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# Combat Edge

Volume 17 Issue 6 , ACC SP 91-1

## HELP US KEEP MOTORCYCLES OFF THE ENDANGERED SPECIES LIST



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# ACCent

## ON SAFETY



Gen John D.W. Corley  
Commander

I am a motorcycle rider. I enjoy and value the time I get to spend riding although that time has diminished over the years. Nationwide last year, one out of every nine road fatalities involved motorcycle riders. Did you know that motorcyclists are 35 times more likely to die in an accident than four-wheel vehicle occupants? The reason for this sobering statistic is speed — you need to remember this fact every time you strap on your helmet as it might save your life.

As far as statistics, sport bikes continue to be our nemesis and appear to be the most dangerous kind of motorcycle. Sport bikes have a number of attributes that make them attractive to our youngest riders. Number one, they are very affordable when compared with other forms of transportation — for a few thousand dollars, you can easily get the keys to a very powerful piece of equipment. Number two, undeniably, they are fun to ride and can spice up any adrenaline junkie's life with the power available. Number three, with a driver's license, Motorcycle Safety Foundation card and completion of the mandatory one-on-one squadron commander's counseling session, the rider is legal to ride on and around any of our ACC installations.

Recently, seven USAF Airmen were charged with reckless endangerment when they were stopped after being clocked in excess of 140 miles per hour. To put that into perspective, an F-15 approach and landing speed is close to that same 140 mph. The difference is that the pilot of an F-15 has a myriad of support dedicated to ensure his or her safety. There is always an air traffic control crew solely responsible for a safe airfield environment and landing surface. We dedicate a Supervisor of Flying (SOF), also in the control tower, to add extra eyes and ears to the critical flying mission. Finally, we outfit our aircrew with state-of-the-art safety gear each time they strap into an aircraft. Each aircrew has the authority to assess the situation and can always use the trump card of simply going around via a low approach if the situation doesn't look or feel right — the ultimate "do-over." A motorcyclist has neither this depth of support nor options available if a situation becomes dangerous, especially at a moment's notice. On a motorcycle you only get one chance to make the right choice for any given situation, so why not slow down and give yourself a little extra time!

In FY08, we lost six ACC Airmen to preventable motorcycle fatalities. We've dedicated this edition of *The Combat Edge* to give you some tips on how to make your cycling experience safe and rewarding. As a fellow motorcycle rider, the most senior in ACC, I implore you to slow down, drive defensively, and help curb this senseless loss of life.

# MSF Training Rules!

by CMSgt Kevin G. Slater, Langley AFB, Va.

In the immortal words of Steppenwolf's *Born to be Wild*, Get your motor running ... head out on the highway ... looking for adventure ... whatever comes our way. "In the 5 years I've been a motorcycle rider – yes I'm a late bloomer, it took me 20 years to wear down my wife before she finally gave me the okay – the words to this song echo in my head every time I strap on my helmet. Although this great "wind therapy" anthem has my head rockin' as I tighten my chin strap, there are also other words kicking around inside my head – the words of my Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) instructor. He'd constantly remind all the participants in our class: "Time and distance are your friends. Take your time and keep your distance." Thankfully this quote is one I've never forgotten. In fact, this quote may very well have saved my skin.

It was back a few years ago on a dusty patch of Loop 1604 in San Antonio, Texas. With a great deal of encouragement from Steppenwolf, I was motoring south on 1604 at a point where it's only a single lane in each direction. I was trailing a pickup truck straight off the set of "Sanford & Son." You know, the rusted bucket of bolts full of busted up kitchen appliances, copper pipe, and yard trash. As soon as I spotted the truck, the words of my MSF instructor began echoing in my head "... keep your distance." I backed off the throttle, sacrificing speed for distance – in other words, giving myself more time to react should something fly loose from the bungee corded mess not too expertly strapped inside the bed of this wreckage on wheels.

Thankfully, that afternoon the words of my MSF instructor won out over the words of Steppenwolf. No sooner had I backed off the throttle, what appeared to be the twisted carcass of an old washing machine came bounding off the tailgate of the truck striking the road in front of me. Distance truly was my friend that day, as I was easily able to avoid the twisted shell of metal by simply steering my bike out of its path.

Air Force leadership may also have saved my skin that day. I wonder would I have taken the MSF Basic Rider course if it wasn't mandated for all Airmen. Would I have heard the words "time and distance are your friends"? Would Steppenwolf's words have been the only ones on my mind when I rolled up behind that bucket of bolts? Would I have been too close to respond safely when the washing machine fell off the truck? These questions will go unanswered.

While I can't be sure what might have happened on Loop 1604 that day if I'd not attended MSF training, I am sure of one thing: I'm glad my leadership was looking out for me when they mandated MSF Basic Rider training.

**Steppenwolf  
rocks! But  
motorcycle riding  
with MSF training  
rules!**



**CMSgt Robert D. Brooks** is the Command Chief Master Sergeant for the 99th Air Base Wing, Nellis AFB, Nev. He has about 32 years riding experience and currently rides a 2008 Yamaha Raider.

I got on my first motorcycle at the age of 8 ... and promptly crashed 10 seconds into my ride. Thankfully, that was the last time I laid a bike over. This past summer, I put my son Jamison (8) on his first motorcycle (Yamaha 70) ... and he promptly crashed 10 seconds later. I hope and pray that his experience will be the same as mine has been since.



**CMSgt Mark R. Clark** is the Command Chief Master Sergeant for the 5th Bomb Wing, Minot AFB, N.D. He has 35 years riding experience and currently rides a 2007 V Star 1100.

My favorite safety slogan for motorcycle riding is "dress for the crash and not for the ride." This stresses safety over comfort and reminds riders that they must be ready for the worst case scenario. Too many riders think they control their universe and feel invincible on their bike when in reality they are at the mercy of the elements and other traffic.

**CMSgt Brian S. Hornback** is the Command Chief Master Sergeant for the 509th Bomb Wing, Whiteman AFB, Mo. He has 15 years riding experience.

B-2 Bomber - \$2 Billion  
B-2 Chopper - \$250,000  
Airmen - Priceless!

We take great care in providing safe, reliable combat aircraft as lives are on line if we don't. We need to take that same care when we ride, if you ride to live and live to ride then ride safe.



# Motorcycle Safety

by **Jacqueline Blake**,  
Gloucester, Va.

## 5 Steps we must follow:

1. **Get trained and licensed.**
2. **Wear protective gear** – all the gear, all the time.
3. **Ride unimpaired by alcohol or other drugs.**
4. **Ride within your own skill limits.**
5. **Be a lifelong learner** by taking refresher rider courses.

Riding a motorcycle properly is a skill you can learn. It takes thinking and practice. The best thing to do is to take a quality hands-on training course in a controlled, off-street environment. Beginning riders should take the Basic Riders Course developed by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation and experienced riders should also stay up-to-date with motorcycle laws.

## Items you should wear include:

**Helmet** – ensure that it fits properly and is approved by the Department of Transportation.

**Eye Protection** – a full face helmet, a pair of goggles, or shatterproof glasses is highly recommended.

**Jacket** – a leather jacket offers more protection.

**Pants** – should be made of a thick material (preferably leather or heavy jeans). Do not wear light weight or cotton pants that can flap in the wind.

**Gloves** – should be leather and worn at all times.

**Boots** – must cover the ankles, preferably leather. Do not wear sneakers, other slippery bottom shoes, sandals, or open-toe shoes.

**Rain Gear** – will help with keeping you dry. You may want to carry it with you at all times for those summer unexpected showers.

**High Visibility Gear** – this helps others to see you better, especially at night. Clothing that reflects and strips on your helmet and the back of your boots will also help you stand out.

## Are you a Safe Rider?

People of all walks of life enjoy riding motorcycles, sometimes called "bikes" but we must always remember to be safe.

You should be a licensed driver and have adequate insurance coverage. Get to know your motorcycle by reading the manual. Know how the controls work, how the controls shift gears, proper braking and turning techniques. Check your motorcycle out before starting every ride; be familiar with how to perform preventative maintenance, and be prepared to troubleshoot any problems.

## Check before you ride:

**Check the tires.** They are the most important parts of your bike. If your engine quits, you roll to a stop. If a tire quits – trouble!

**Check the controls.** Look for anything unusual in their operation.

**Check the lights;** including turn signals and brakes

**Check the oil and fuel.**

If your motorcycle has chain-drive, **make sure the chain is properly tensioned** and in good shape.

**Ensure the kickstand folds up properly and stays up.**

**As you roll off, check your brakes.**

When riding, follow the rules of the road. Do not ride beside another biker, provide adequate space in following other bikers and cars, and observe proper distance at all times. When you are riding along the road, you should lean motorcycles into a turn. Slow down before you enter the turn; look as far ahead as possible through the turn. There should be no racing, speeding, or horseplay. You should respect other drivers; look out for the other person (car, truck, bike, etc); obey the speed limits; give proper signals and braking.

Get to know your bike, have the proper clothing, check the bike out before starting your ride, follow rules, be safe, be responsible, and most of all enjoy your ride.

For more information see Motorcycle Safety Foundation at <http://msf-usa.org>.



# Thoughts on Two-Wheel Safety

Bicycles, mopeds, motorized scooters, and motorcycles certainly each present their own unique safety challenges. But there are enough commonalities to make it worthwhile to discuss them together. While most current automotive safety technology is either passive or automatic (with the exception of seat belts), many of the critical safety devices for two-wheelers are personal and elective. And, unfortunately, state requirements for personal safety equipment are often less than ideal.

Visibility is a critical problem not easily solved, short of wearing a Godzilla suit. Colorful, reflective clothing is the order of the day for all two-wheel vehicles. Reflective vests, triangles, and helmets help to ensure that no matter what your attire, you'll look like the Vegas Strip going down the road, day or night. The problem is especially acute for bicycles at night, as some 39 percent of bicycle deaths occur between 6 p.m. and midnight, per the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

Personal protection is the other side of the two-wheel equation, which brings up the critical piece of protection ... the helmet. According to the National Highway and Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA), nearly 70 percent of all fatal bicycle crashes involve head injuries. Yet, paradoxically, only 20 to 25 percent of all bicyclists wear a helmet. As serious as the effect of not wearing a helmet can be on a personal level, there are somber repercussions for society as well. The NHTSA tells us that in 2005 the estimated annual cost of bicycle-related injuries and deaths were \$8 billion. The good news is that if you wear a helmet, it is 85 to 88 percent effective in mitigating head and brain injuries.

Back at the gas pump, the sale total continues to climb. I can literally feel my wallet getting lighter. Maybe I'll get that Vespa and all the best safety gear and have a fresh air commute each morning, with 100 miles per gallon to boot. Hey, did that gas pump just take my wallet? ▶

by SSgt Amy N. King, Eglin AFB, Fla.

I was standing at the gas pump watching the sale total ratchet from silly to ridiculous to obscene, and I began to feel a loathing for the very thing that is my car. How could this thing, once a paragon of virtue, my ticket to anywhere in better times, become vehicular non grata? I began to wonder if I really need a ton and a half of recycled toasters and rubber to meet my transportation needs. Could there be a better way?

Like many people these days, my thoughts turn to fewer wheels to carry me along. Not only does this seem practical from a gas mileage standpoint, but it conjures up some compelling images: Lance Armstrong on a grueling climb through the Pyrenees in the Tour de France.; James Bond speeding through Never Say Never Again on a Yamaha XJ650 Turbo; and Gregory Peck and Audrey Hepburn tooling their Vespa through the Italian countryside and the American imagination in Roman Holiday!

The biggest downside to two-wheel travel, even worse than rain and bugs, is safety! While intimacy with the road and the sky are undeniable draws, being on two wheels quickly puts you at a disadvantage on the road. Herein lies the great contradiction in traveling via bicycle, scooter, or motorcycle – you're completely exposed to the environment, yet close to invisible to the four (or more) wheel crowd. So to keep that two-wheel pleasure ride or commute as safely as possible, you need to get all the protection and visibility you can.



# IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE

by 1Lt Joseph D. Langan,  
Eglin AFB, Fla.

August 8th at Eglin AFB began like most other summer mornings in Florida ... hot and getting hotter. I found myself going through my normal routine, walking around the hangar and prepping for the morning production meeting. On our way over to the squadron conference room, my flight chief and I discussed a variety of mundane issues. Between us, we didn't have a single brain cell devoted to anything outside of the ordinary.

All that changed in the blink of an eye. During the meeting, our First Sergeant barged into the conference room and told us that one of our NCOs had been in an accident on his way to work. We immediately left the meeting and rode with the Shirt down to the scene of the accident, barely a half-mile outside the gate. It took very little imagination to assess what we saw, and even less to realize that our Airman was in serious trouble. The frame of his motorcycle was contorted so badly that it more closely resembled a modern art sculpture. A white Buick was parked awkwardly in the grass, its left front wheel and axle completely sheared off.

An elderly woman had turned left from a side street and her vision was partially blocked. Our NCO was traveling at ~45mph in the left lane and was unable to avoid the car that suddenly appeared in front of him. He struck the fender of the vehicle and was catapulted off the motorcycle, finally coming to rest nearly 75 feet from the point of impact.

We contacted his wife and we all headed towards the hospital. Arriving an hour later, we learned just how grave his injuries were – a shattered pelvis and severely broken leg and arm as well as severe internal bleeding. The lead surgeon took on a grave tone, telling us that his family should be called to his bedside as soon as possible.

We spent the rest of the day waiting through multiple surgeries; later on, we learned that on two occasions he had to be resuscitated. Finally, after many days of intense observation and several more surgeries, the internal bleeding was stopped and his bones were set. The massive blood loss he suffered was counteracted by an amazing show of support from Eglin personnel during a short-notice blood donation drive organized specifically for his purpose. We and his family took turns in the waiting room for upwards of 2 weeks until he was finally discharged from the ICU and allowed to begin the very, very long road to recovery. The medical staff told us often that had he not been wearing PPE, he would have had zero chance of survival.

After going through a scenario that no supervisor ever wants to encounter (which is nothing compared to what he and his family experienced), I took several lessons from the ordeal:

1. No one can deny that riding a motorcycle is inherently riskier than driving by other means. Our NCO was riding with all his PPE, in daylight, in dry conditions, within the speed limit, and had been riding most of his adult life. Despite all of this, no amount of experience can defeat physics ... when the other driver doesn't see you, you're at their mercy.
2. Emergencies, by definition, occur with little or no warning. Everyone should have emergency documentation with them at all times. This includes insurance cards, ID, spouse and family contact info, and (especially important) a living will or some other surrogate care document.

***“It took very little imagination to assess what we saw, and even less to realize that our Airman was in serious trouble.”***

3. Leadership must carefully address corrective actions resulting from a series of traumatic events in order to produce constructive change. Sadly, this was not the only incident involving motorcycles over the summer for Eglin. A few months prior to this event, another 33 FW individual was struck in similar circumstances and was partially paralyzed. In the same time frame, an Army TDY student was killed, and a

retired 33 FW maintainer was also involved in a fatal mishap. Our wing leadership reacted swiftly and began sweeping changes to our motorcycle safety program. The focus is education and dialogue, as it should be with all efforts to increase safety awareness. Fire-and-forget shotgun-style blasts of new mandates rarely have any long-term positive effect.

If we were always prepared for emergencies, then they would never happen. The best we can do is to give ourselves the tools to handle a crisis. Individually, that means taking care of ourselves physically and legally. From a leadership perspective, that means instituting policies that are efficient and fostering safety programs that educate and engage, instead of preach.

I implore our motorcycle riders to remember, your overall safety is only partially within your control. We should all be thankful to be part of an organization that will literally spend its own blood to help anyone in need ... when preparedness fails, our Wingmen will be there. ✪

# Dakota Thunder

by SMSgt James Russell, Ellsworth AFB, S.D.

In 2004 I bought my first Harley-Davidson Road King Classic and joined the base Dakota Thunder Motorcycle Club (DTMC). After the required commander's one-on-one brief and motorcycle training course, I completed my first large group ride in 2005 during Sturgis Week in South Dakota. While pondering what to write for this article, it occurred to me an article on a military motorcycle club with an outstanding safety record would be a great way to showcase the DTMC and the experience of riding in the beautiful Black Hills during the famous Sturgis Rally.

Motorcycle clubs provide mentorship, foster skill development and reinforce safe riding practices. Motorcycle mentorship clubs like DTMC provide a forum for safe riding for all active duty, retired military, military dependents, civilian and civilian dependents employed at Ellsworth. The DTMC's purpose and objectives are to support base motorcycle programs for the morale and welfare of all wing motorcyclists and ATV riders and passengers. There are several key functions we promote: establish a common ground from which the members can draw strength; interaction and socializing of its members and their families; motorcycle and ATV safety and regulation compliance; organize safe motorcycle and ATV events; and make available to the commanders the collective knowledge, experience and leadership abilities of the DTMC club. Unit commanders must follow AFI 91-207, ensuring riders are properly informed of club benefits and allowing individuals the ability to join them.

Since spring of 2001, Ellsworth Air Force Base has been at the forefront of motorcycle safety with the creation of the Dakota Thunder Motorcycle Club. The first group ride to Sturgis was in August of that year. DTMC sponsors one large group ride each year during the week of the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. We host anywhere from 200 to a maximum of 500 motorcycles each year with many DVs and celebrities participating in the run. Setting up for this 1-day event takes a year of planning with the DTMC club, civilian motorcycle clubs, and local law enforcement agencies. It is escorted by two motorcycle police officers until the end of the run.

2008 marked the club's 8th anniversary hosting the Dakota Thunder Motorcycle Run from Ellsworth to Sturgis. There has never been a mishap, quite amazing considering the number of motorcycles and differing riding skill levels. The base is open to the general community with multiple B-1 bomber displays, a security forces display, armament displays, and fire department demonstrations. The flight line is open to motorcyclists for pictures in front of a B-1. This past year, the ride started with 300 motorcycles rumbling down the taxiways and runway for the first time in the base's history. In days gone by, heavy bombers like the B-17, B-29, and B-52 used the very same runway that the B-1 uses today. The historic significance was not lost on the many wing guests - this once in a lifetime opportunity will be cherished by all who participated.

The Sturgis run is a scenic 57-mile group ride in the beautiful Black Hills of South Dakota. It offers a wide variety of terrain and views for all riders to the experience. Riders leave Ellsworth with a short stint on I-90 until they meander over to Nemo Road. This route exposes the riders to some of the prettiest scenery in the Black Hills as it ambles over to the famous rally town of Sturgis.

After arrival in Sturgis, participants are treated to a military veteran ceremony where a local veteran is honored and receives an encased American flag flown on a B-1 from the DTMC, a plaque from the South Dakota National Guard, and a proclamation from the City of Sturgis. The Sturgis mayor also reads a proclamation declaring the day as Military Appreciation Day. As a final tribute to the veteran, a B-1 performs a flyover.

The base has not suffered a loss of an Ellsworth motorcyclist or even a serious accident in the 8 years following the inception of the DTMC. I believe the positive efforts of motorcycle club members has had a direct correlation to that wonderful statistic, attributed to the strong mentorship, wing leadership support, and Wingman program and enhanced safety awareness DTMC supports.

My passion for motorcycles has evolved from learning to be a safe rider, to becoming the club president of a first-rate organization dedicated to keeping motorcycle riders safe. I continue to support safety programs and will soon take the Motorcycle Safety Foundation Instructor Course so I can provide even more opportunities to keep motorcycle riders safe. As always, keep the shiny side up and the rubber side down. 🇺🇸





**“That’s right folks, after being punched in the ribs by a 300 lb motorcycle at 45 mph, the bear just got up and ran off.”**

# Deal’s Gap

by MSgt Mark Walker, AFPET

A group of seven Air Force riding buddies from several bases met up for a few days of riding at Deal’s Gap in North Carolina in mid October 2008. This area, known as “the Dragon,” is world famous among sport bike riders for its 318 curves in 11 miles on US 129 between Maryville, Tennessee, and Robbinsville, North Carolina. We came from Washington DC, Dover AFB, Wright-Patterson AFB, Seymour Johnson AFB and Fort Smith, Arkansas. Two retirees, four active duty guys and my dad made up our group of riders ranging from 30 to 60 years of age.

We arrived separately on Thursday the 16th in the late afternoon. The weather was cool but sunny, so we rode the area for a couple of hours before settling in around the campfire with several other riders at the Kickstand Lodge, one of the finest campgrounds in the area for biker hospitality.

Friday morning was cold and foggy, so we rode to the Wheels Through Time museum in nearby Maggie Valley, North Carolina. By the time we finished browsing the museum and had lunch at a nice BBQ joint, the weather was much better, so we headed to the Dragon. The weather was nice on Friday and we did quite a bit of riding. About an hour before sundown, Dennis, my dad and I headed north to Maryville to visit Dennis’ friend Jeff and have dinner. The rest of our group wisely decided to head back to camp to avoid riding over the Dragon in the dark later that night. We had a nice time at Jeff’s house and he cooked some awesome wings!

I dreaded our trip back to camp as it was quite cool on the ride up to Maryville. However, the temperature seemed much better once we headed back at around 9 pm. Except for some fog the first few miles, the trip was going well. We crossed the Dragon with no problems and the temperature was cool but not UNBEARABLE. I began thinking night was a great time to ride the Dragon because there was no traffic. I think we met two cars the whole 20-something miles we traveled before turning off onto Hwy 28 toward our camp. About 5 miles down Hwy 28 we rounded a nice right-hand corner onto a long straightaway toward a bridge. It was pitch black out there. The only light was from the three motorcycles. Just before we crossed the bridge, while traveling about 45 mph, something very black and fairly large bounded directly in front of me. It

was so close that I had no time to brake or swerve to avoid a collision. It was a black bear and it sent me for a little airborne trip over the bars. I landed on my back and flipped one complete time and slid to a stop on my back. Dennis took evasive action but, unfortunately, my bike was not going to let him get away without “crashing” the party. After a short exercise in maximum braking, my sliding bike slid into his front wheel and knocked him down. He bounced on his hip and shoulder and slid to a stop a few feet from me. We were both banged up quite a bit but didn’t sustain any serious injuries. My dad managed to avoid the accident and came to a stop near our bikes and bodies with a huge lump in his throat. My first concern was making sure Dennis was okay. As soon as he began moving and talking, I remembered the bear. Oh my God, where did the bear go? I couldn’t see a thing and worried that he may have survived the collision and could be injured and angry.

Dad turned his bike around so we could see, and low and behold Smoky was gone. That’s right folks, after being punched in the ribs by a 300 lb motorcycle at 45 mph, the bear just got up and ran off. No trace of blood or anything. I was happy he didn’t decide to retaliate. Dennis’ bike was totaled. Mine was bent up pretty bad but repairable. We can replace the bikes. Either or both of us could have been killed or hurt very badly.

I ended up with two sore ankles, one bruised knee and some sore muscles for a few weeks. Dennis had some soreness in his hip and back but he healed up quickly too. Luckily, we both ride with all the gear all the time. Our leather jackets and pants saved us from serious road rash. My helmet took a pretty hard hit on the pavement. I can’t imagine the added pain I could have experienced if I had been wearing jeans and a T-shirt or no helmet. I’m not sure we could have done anything better to avoid the wildlife in the road since he was moving fast and the area was so dark. If Dennis had left a bigger cushion between us, he may have been able to avoid my bike. Next year we will plan to arrive back at camp before dark to reduce the chances of wildlife encounters. I’ll always make sure I wear proper riding gear and a good helmet any time I get on my bike. You never know when something can appear out of nowhere in your path. Be safe and keep the shiny side up. ▶

# Motorcycle Awareness ... For All of Us!

by Rod Krause, Minot AFB, N.D.

Some time ago during one of my routine rides to work, I came across what most fellow riders fear the most, the sudden “Deer in the headlights stare” from an oncoming motorist realizing that they just ran a stop sign (of course while they were talking on their cell phone). Fortunately enough, even at my old age with quick thinking and lightning-fast reflexes, I was able to put my Motorcycle Safety Foundation Rider Coach skills to the test, and once again avoided what could have been a disastrous motorcycle mishap.

The majority of fellow riders know that it's the other motor vehicle operators (more and more SUV drivers) who are at fault in most collisions with motorcyclists. This is a reason why organizations, such as American Bikers Aiming Towards Education (ABATE), and the American Motorcycle Association (AMA), and other riders' rights organizations are fighting for increased penalties for motorists who violate our right-of-way.

A recent study conducted by the University of Southern California (USC) found that approximately three-fourths of motorcycle accidents involved a collision with another vehicle, usually a passenger automobile. It was also found that in the multiple vehicle accidents, the driver of the other vehicle violated the motorcycle right-of-way and caused the accident in two-thirds of those accidents. Furthermore the study by USC found that the failure of motorists to detect and recognize motorcycles in traffic is the predominating cause of motorcycle accidents. The driver of the other vehicle did not see the motorcycle before the collision, or did not see the motorcycle until too late to avoid the collision. Did you know that 40 percent of all accidents involving cars with motorcycles are caused by the car driver that has less than 6 months driving experience? Approximately 70 percent of all accidents are the fault of the car driver not seeing the motorcycle. Motorcycle riders often get an unjustified reputation as being reckless, risk takers, and that they generally disobey traffic laws. This perception is unfounded and there are many statistics that back up the fact that most motorcycle accidents are not the fault of the motorcycle rider, but that of another driver.

These findings go to show that the motorcycle rider has unjustly received a bad reputation from the general public as well as from insurance companies that cover

motorcycle riders. Motorcycles are inherently prone to accidents caused by other drivers because of their small size. Motorcycles easily fit into the blind spot of typical passenger automobiles. The truth is that most motorcycle riders are very good drivers and keep an eye out for motorists who do not see them. This awareness of other drivers, however, does not prevent all accidents.

All drivers can help reduce crashes by paying close attention to the following:

Watch for Motorcycles! The majority of drivers involved in a mishap with a rider stated that they never saw the motorcycle; or when they did see it or the rider, it was too late (basically, they collided with each other). Drivers should expect to see motorcycles at any time and search aggressively for them. Remember that a motorcycle's headlight is on all the time — this helps you see them during the day. A motorcycle can easily be hidden behind a car or truck; so it's particularly important to check your mirrors and blind spot before merging or changing lanes, especially in heavy traffic. Also, look for a helmet above, tires below, or a shadow alongside a vehicle that you can't see around. Make sure your view of the road is unobstructed by removing items hanging from a rearview mirror, or the mirror is completely covered by items such as a mini DVD player. Motorcycles are smaller than most cars and SUVs, which can make it difficult to accurately determine the speed of a motorcycle. Always leave adequate room when entering the roadway upon the approach of a motorcycle. Motorcycles are entitled to the same full lane as other vehicles. While it is legal for motorcycles to ride side-by-side, though not advisable, it is illegal for any other vehicle to share a lane with a motorcycle. Be aware that riders will change position within their lane to see and be seen, avoid surface hazards, and to prepare for a turn. Car drivers must never move into the same lane alongside a motorcycle.



For the riders, never assume that you have been seen and approach each intersection with great care. Choose a lane position that makes you most visible to any cars waiting to turn. Be aware of any drivers behind you who may not have time to stop if you have to brake suddenly. When approaching intersections, slow down and cover your brakes and clutch. Avoid flashing your high beam, and make sure your turn signals aren't blinking — this can send other drivers the wrong message. Consider a short beep of your horn and try to make eye contact. Riding side-by-side reduces your space cushion and limits your escape routes, suggesting to other motorists that it's legal for them to share a lane with a motorcycle. When traveling with other motorcyclists, it is best to ride in a staggered formation, using both sides of the lane. When riding in a large group, leave gaps in the formation to allow other vehicles to pass or exit the freeway.

In closing, all of us can share the road and do it safely as long as the “Rules of the Road” are followed; we keep our eyes open for each other, and use common sense while operating any type of vehicle. Play it Safe, Keep it Smart, and remember ...

**Take a second and double check – motorcyclists are dying to be seen!**



# SHARE THE ROAD

by Bill Pennell, Eglin AFB, Fla.

It's a great morning. I checked the weather and it really looks like a nice day in Northwest Florida, even though Texas has a hurricane approaching. I've been looking forward to riding my motorcycle to work for several weeks. I haven't ridden to work in a few months. The summer months make the roads around here crowded with tourists, and Highway 98 is always hazardous. Don't get me wrong, I love riding my motorcycle, but I hate the early morning rush hour traffic between Pensacola and Ft Walton Beach. There are just too many people in a hurry and they're not paying attention to driving. I usually reserve my bike riding for the weekends in the less traveled rural roads in the northern half of the Florida panhandle.

I had planned riding this day because I'm the additional duty unit safety manager and motorcycle safety representative. I had been planning a mentorship ride with fellow riders from my squadron for weeks, but recent events had forced the cancellation of the ride until a later date. If you have never been on a group ride, like a mentorship ride, it is very rewarding and builds skills, boosts morale, and comradery. The ride to work was uneventful, except for a brief shower

on the way in. It was a pretty normal Tuesday, with a morning squadron staff meeting. Among the subjects was the discussion of safety and the 101 Critical Days of Summer awareness campaign. Our squadron has a very strong commitment to increasing safety awareness across Eglin AFB, and for the past 2 years has been a leader in spreading the word of being especially aware during the summer months.

As the day went on, I enjoyed riding to lunch and between several base buildings, feeling exceptionally safe when compared to my travels on Highway 98. I know the base personnel, military, civilian, and contactors, are more aware of driving safety than the general public downtown. We are continually drilled and briefed on safety, which is job one!

Later in the day I sat in on a CPR class that was held in our conference room. It seems today has been jammed packed with safety stuff. As I help put up the CPR mannequins, I see it is about time to call it a day. As I get my riding gear on, I hear retreat sound. The base has been in an exercise most of the day, and we are in a simulated threatcon Delta, but since it is a simulation, we have been cleared to leave. It's about 1640 as I walk out the door, and I look to the east and see some very dark clouds over the Niceville area. This is pretty typical for northwest Florida, afternoon thunderstorms. I think to myself, great, gonna get wet. I start up my bike and head out on Wizard Way on Eglin. I turn north onto Nomad Way to exit out the ACC gate. Speed limit is 15 mph, so really slow going out. As I come up near the mobility processing facility, I notice another motorcycle rider on a nice Harley Davidson stopped behind a smaller Honda car across the street and to my left. I'm glancing over at the other bike rider, and I can't believe what I begin to see. The car in front of the

bike begins to pull out. My awareness shifts and I'm looking right at the car, and it keeps pulling out! I can't believe this, as I get an instantaneous surge of adrenaline in my body. I'm in the middle lane position and as the car pulls out I swerve over to the far right position. I'm still looking right at the car, and as I swerve, my left thumb is frantically trying to find the horn button. I think I am hitting it, but it's just the turn signal cancel button I keep pressing. The car is now across the south bound lane and about to enter my lane. I glance over to my right and see the 5 to 6 inch concrete road curb and think this is gonna hurt one way or another. As I glance back over at the car, I see it stopped in the south bound lane; I guess he finally saw me. The car that was behind me almost took his front end off too.

***“I’m glancing over at the other bike rider, and I can’t believe what I begin to see.”***

Wow, I was lucky! Thank God it was a slow area of road. I didn't even have time to think about braking, just swerving to try and avoid the collision. I could have probably stuck my left leg out and kicked the front end of the car. A split second longer and I would have attempted to ride up and over the curb. My heart rate began to return to normal, and for the most part the rest of the ride home was sort of normal.

I would have never thought I could not be seen. I have a fairly large bike, a 2003 Honda Shadow ACE, and I am 6'2" and wear a bright red Tourmaster Flex 2 jacket, with a white and red full face helmet. With my headlight on and brightly colored gear, how could I be missed? I didn't stop to ask the driver of the car what he was doing or if he saw me. My adrenaline was such that I might have said some things that were not appropriate to say.

I know this is a long story, but my point is: car drivers, please share the

road. Be aware of your surroundings. Motorcycle riders usually get a bad rap when it comes to safety. It's true; there are some very poor bike riders out there that give all of us a less than stellar reputation. But believe me; most bike riders are very aware of their surroundings. People who ride on base are especially aware of the hazard of riding and take prudent precautions such as bright colored clothing, full length pants and shirts, helmets, and sturdy footwear. We actually do our best to make ourselves visible to other motor vehicles. It's hard to look as large as a small compact car; so car drivers please look twice to make sure the path is clear. With fuel prices continuing to rise, increased number of smaller cars and motorcycles will be on the road, so please be courteous and share the road.

As I mentioned before, the rest of my ride home was normal, but it is unfortunate that my definition of normal includes a mini van operator who rolls down the window and tosses out a cigarette butt that I watch whiz past my head. As I pass this mini van, I look over to see it operated by a mother who has her infant in a rear facing car seat installed in the front seat! A few minutes later I see an Airman with a cell phone jammed in her ear as she is driving, just a few miles west of Hurlburt. With the mandatory use of hands-free devices on base, I was really surprised by this. Just as I approach Navarre, a small car darts out from a Circle K convenience store, cutting across west bound traffic to head east. I had to slow down quickly, and as I approached, again it was someone with a cell phone stuck to their ear. Lastly, I see several motorcycle riders out on the road in shorts, sandals, tee shirts and no helmets. I guess I will never understand some people.

Let's all use some good common sense and arrive alive! Share the road! ▶

**Spotting a motorcycle on the road can be just as hard as finding one in this picture.**

*Keep an eye out for motorcycles.*



# The Deer and I

by James N. Dibble, Langley AFB, Va.

There I was. Beautiful June day and I was “in the wind” with two of my closest buds. We just finished lunch, I topped off and we were off for the last part of our 4-day ride. I was the lead of a “three-ship” and we crossed old bridge over John Kerr Reservoir outside of Clarksville, Virginia, and hooked back up to State HWY 58 eastbound for home. As we crested the rise outside of the reservoir, I looked over my right shoulder to make sure I had room to change lanes to get out of the passing lane. My world was about to change.

As I looked back forward, I noticed a spot of brown fur in the tall grass of the median. I thought it was a dog or small animal. What it turned out to be was an insane doe with a death wish, getting ready to spring DIRECTLY INTO MY 60 MPH PATH!!!!

Time does move in slow motion. I remember three things. Each individual brown hair on the side of the doe I smashed into, the thought “my riding day is over” and “wouldn’t it suck to get killed by a stupid deer after flying over 400 hrs of combat in bad-guy land.” There was no time to even think about swerving or even touching a brake. BANG!!!!

I spent a moment or two in a first-class seat on a “la-la land” airliner as I was unconscious from the 60 to 25 deceleration when I T-boned the doe. As I regained functionality, I watched the Heritage sliding down the road on her left side in a shower of sparks and grinding metal. I was sliding on my left side as well, rolling over and over actually. My face was inches away from my forearm as it met the 120+ asphalt. I said to myself “that just hurts like a B\*\*CH” as I watched the

skin disappear. I tried to push myself up and promptly lost all the pads on my right fingertips.

When I came to rest, I was sitting upright with my feet pointed toward the huge drainage ditch, and my

buddy Ed trying desperately not to crush me with his Soft tail, or go off the road into the 10-foot deep drainage ditch full of 4-foot boulders. I looked down and noticed a tear in the right leg of my Levi’s above my boot, and my left little finger seemed to have disappeared. Very nasty gash in my leg, broken right tibia, badly dislocated little finger from hitting the pavement the same time the left handgrip did, and some sweet road rash on my left arm.

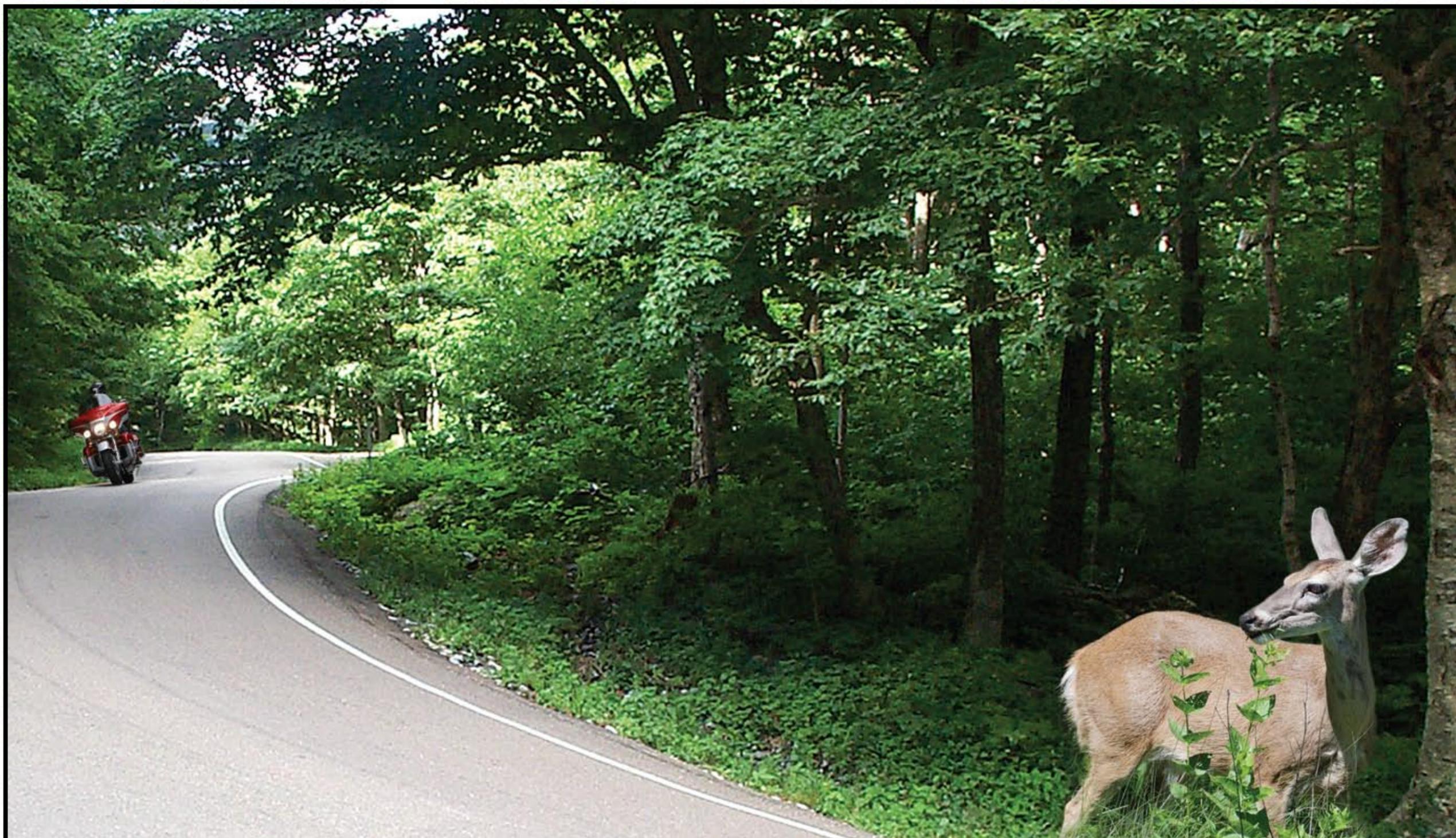
I got a cool helicopter ride to Duke University Trauma Center, spent 11 days in their expert care, and finally made it home from my 4-day rally. All told, it was \$4K damage to the bike (all cosmetic), \$80K damage to me (at my age all cosmetic as well) and, hopefully, my last “Life Flight.”

Moral, or bottom line, or whatever take-away you need ... You just never know, nor can you be prepared for all that may cross your path. If I would have taken a bit more time that morning

doing ANYTHING, I might have missed that deer. It was a perfect T-bone which in some ways was much better than a glancing blow into the boulder filled drainage ditch.

I rode in November, 5 months after the accident. Bike runs as good as ever. I never, ever once thought about not riding again.

**Ride Hard, Die Free ... Dibbs** 🏍️



# MOTORCYCLING is a LIFESTYLE

by CMSgt Ric Cromer,  
Creech AFB, Nev.

It's no secret that the mortality rate for motorcyclists has been going the wrong direction for the last 10 years. Before you break into a hissy and start harping that the number of motorcyclists has also risen, please grant me a moment. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the number of registered motorcycles has risen from 3.8 million in 1997 to 6.7 million in 2006. Meanwhile, the fatality rate per 100,000 accidents has leaped from 55.3 to 71.9. The sudden increase in the fatality rate is the figure we need to focus on. Let's face it, typically there's a certain type of person that rides a motorcycle. The risk taker ... the guy or gal that tends to take a few more chances than others. It's like the part of the brain that concerns itself with mortality is a little smaller with some. Below the surface, there's a deeper reason for alarm than the casual observer sees.

The Air Force currently mandates the following before an Airman can legally ride a motorcycle: license, Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) Basic Rider Course, high-risk activity briefing from your commander, and everyone's favorite, wearing all of your personal protective gear. We collectively put great emphasis on taking care of our Airmen and are looking for ways to reduce the number of fatalities suffered in 2008.

"Motorcycle Accident Cause Factors and Identification of Countermeasures" was a study conducted by Harry Hurt of the University of Southern

## Not Everyone Can Relate

California. No matter what type of bike you ride, deficient training was cited in 92 percent of the accidents investigated. I'm going to pick on sport bikes because I happen to ride one and can more readily identify with that group of riders. Whether we want to admit it, not everyone that buys a 150-horsepower 400-lb motorcycle will be the responsible rider we want them to be. After all, a bike like that was engineered to race, not do 65 mph in a straight line. I'm not in any way advocating being reckless, because on the right kind of road, an experienced rider could have an awesome day on a bike like that without ever breaking the law. The key to keeping that individual alive is to help him/her learn their limitations in a controlled environment. Track time is a great way to do that. Nothing against the MSF courses, but they barely go beyond the basics. Instructors, although well-intentioned, usually do this as a hobby. Time with an experienced instructor on a track is absolutely the best teaching tool there is, in my opinion. How to make that mandatory and available for all riders will be quite the task.

The Hunters of the 432d Wing at Creech AFB, NV, are looking into just how to best do that. By the time this is published, if all goes well, we will have partnered with an advanced motorcycle clinic out of California to

provide a tailored briefing to all of the wing's motorcycle riders and an all-day advanced riding clinic to 36. I understand this is just the tip of the iceberg, but I am absolutely convinced it's a huge step in the right direction. A lot of good can come from the common effort between this clinic and the Air Force's push to establish motorcycle clubs at installations. These clubs are a great way for riders to share their experiences with those less experienced ... and much better than some alternatives. To quote a friend of mine, "there must be some serious motorcycle mentoring going on in that bar because there are about 30 bikes parked outside." Not the place you want to be.

While looking for the silver bullet, institutionally we must be careful not to jump at band-aid fixes thrown on the table by people who have little to no motorcycle experience or passion for motorcycling as a lifestyle. Here is a quote from Malcolm Forbes, publisher and inductee of the American Motorcycle Association Hall of Fame, that captures my feelings better than I can myself—

"I think legislative assaults on motorcyclists are totally emotional, disproportionate, and totally unfair ... They are instigated and implemented by people who know nothing about motorcycling, but have a prejudice. It's easy to curb the freedoms of others



**“ We cannot lose credibility with our riders by arbitrarily throwing ad-hoc ‘fixes’ at this dilemma. ”**

when you see no immediate impact on your own.”

I've been witness to past events like mandatory recurring MSF training and interval supervisory inspections of subordinates' motorcycles. Unless

he/she is part of the 2 percent of Americans who ride, usually the supervisor knows little more than where the front of the bike is. We cannot lose credibility with our riders by arbitrarily throwing ad-hoc fixes

at this dilemma. Instead, we have to attack it the same way we preach to our most junior ranking Airmen to solve problems — at the root. In this Airman's opinion, the root of the problem is training.✈

# MONTHLY AWARD WINNERS – DECEMBER

## Flight Line Safety



AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Fort Wayne IAP began major reconstruction of runway 5/23. This forced its closure for over 2 months and sent all F-16 traffic to runway 14/32, which is not normally used for fighter aircraft. A trend started to develop related to Foreign Object Damage (FOD) involving three separate aircraft. Damage was noted on two separate Pratt and Whitney 220E jet engines. Additional damage was discovered on the exterior of the aircraft at the ventral panel and on the right strake area of the aircraft. A considerable amount of foreign object material was also found in the aircraft tires. SSgt McMillen gathered this information and began an investigation. Using sample material taken from aircraft tires and utilizing "Fast FOD" procedures, the material was determined to be paint with a high metallic content. He tested a sample of the marking paint from the approach ends of the runway using the same procedures and a match was identified. Understanding the runway change was contributing to the increased FOD rate, he arranged for the assigned Airfield Manager to contact local authorities to discuss the issue. A plan was enacted to remove the paint

using runway plows, a scraping machine, a pressure washer and a vacuum truck. This process was more than satisfactory and was accomplished in less than 4 days. The proper paint was reapplied to the runways for appropriate marking. Since these actions, the 122 FW has had zero FOD-related incidents while conducting operations exclusively on runway 14/32. SSgt McMillen saved the unit and the Air Force millions of dollars in potential engine damage, loss of an aircraft or even the loss of an aircrew.



**SSgt George K. McMillen**  
122 MXG, 122 FW  
Fort Wayne IAP, Ind.

## Ground Safety



AWARD OF DISTINCTION

MSgt Forster was driving home at the end of the day when he noticed a potential mishap situation in the making. He pulled over and took immediate action to prevent injury or worse to a contractor performing work in an unsafe manner. The contractor had placed an Air Force aircraft maintenance stand on one side of an Air Force forklift and then placed a ladder on top of the forklift. Then he climbed on the top bars of the maintenance stand to reach the forklift platform and hoisted himself up onto the platform. He then retrieved the ladder from the top of the forklift and climbed up the unsecured ladder to reach the roof of the building. After confirming that this precarious configuration was indeed what he had seen, MSgt Forster immediately called the 7 BW Ground Safety Manager (GSM), who called one of the on-call safety specialists to confirm the report. Once confirmed, the GSM arrived and took charge of the situation. The contractor was wearing hearing protection and did not notice the growing crowd as he continued his work. The GSM got the attention of the contractor and told him that he could not come down the same way

he had gone up. The GSM called the Fire Department to bring a ladder so the contractor could come down from the roof in a safe manner. Once off of the roof, the contractor admitted his actions were dangerous and confirmed that the proper equipment would be on site the following day. MSgt Forster's attention to detail and quick actions prevented potential injury and possible death of the contractor had he fallen from his makeshift climbing apparatus.



**MSgt Sydney J. Forster**  
7 CMS, 7 BW  
Dyess AFB, Texas

## Weapons Safety



AWARD OF DISTINCTION

MSgt Kreyling's efforts resulted in zero Class A, B or C weapons mishaps at Bagram during AEF 5/6. He improved combat capability across Afghanistan. MSgt Kreyling re-designed the MSA at Kandahar Airfield by siting 25 new facilities that will boost storage capacity by 1.8 million lbs NEW of 1.1 munitions. He identified and sited a new parking spot for EOD response vehicles with HC/D 1.1 explosives, thus mitigating risk to personnel living in close proximity. He uncovered a critical weapons safety deficiency at Jalalabad Airfield and oversaw the implementation of an ARMCO revetment barrier to mitigate frag hazard to inhabited buildings. He led a Joint Service working group that developed a bed down plan for 12 US Army AH-64 Apaches, increasing the Army's helicopter capability in Afghanistan. He sited two CAPA's which increased allowable explosive weight by 41 percent and nearly doubled combat aircraft capability. MSgt Kreyling assisted Army planners in designing a future ammunition storage point by incorporating earth covered igloos, reducing the number of existing maga-

zines by 68 percent, quadrupling storage capacity and reducing the cost by more than \$10M. He accomplished 12 rotational safety assessments and conducted over 40 spot inspections resulting in the identification and mitigation of over 20 discrepancies directly contributing to the Wing's impeccable weapons safety record. MSgt Kreyling's outstanding dedication to the Weapons Safety profession greatly improved safety for the 455 AEW and improved the Wing's ability to conduct its non-stop combat mission.



**MSgt Christopher D. Kreyling**  
455 AEW  
Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan

## Pilot Safety



AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Capt Grayson was flying an F-15C as #2 of a two-ship cross-country sortie from Nellis AFB to Eglin AFB. During the flight, his flight lead notified him of an engine oil light and requested a Battle Damage check. Upon inspection, Capt Grayson noticed oil streaming from the left engine of his flight lead's aircraft and recommended that the faulty engine be shut down according to the checklist. Capt Grayson determined the closest suitable landing field was Albuquerque International Airport, nearly 100 miles away and recommended that the formation divert there. En route to Albuquerque, Capt Grayson noticed that his flight lead was no longer proceeding to the field and queried his flight lead about the condition of his nav aids. Shortly after his inquiry, Capt Grayson realized that his flight lead's radio was inoperative, and ascertained that #1 was experiencing a complex emergency procedure with only one engine operating and unknown electrical problems. Capt Grayson accepted the lead of the formation and was required, with limited information, to lead the wounded F-15C to a successful

visual straight in at the emergency airfield. At the time, Capt Grayson was a certified Wingman with only 250 hours of experience in the F-15C. Without the quick and decisive actions of Capt Grayson, his flight lead would not have been able to find the emergency airfield and make a successful landing. Capt Grayson demonstrated exceptional situational awareness, airmanship, and pilot resource management to safely help recover a vital Air Force asset and prevent loss of life.



**Capt Jonathan T. Grayson**  
60 FS, 33 FW  
Eglin AFB, Fla.

# DECEMBER continued

## Crew Chief Safety



AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Sgt Courtaway and his assistant crew chief prepared a B-1B for an afternoon sortie. He double checked the assistant crew chief for hearing protection and gave the crew okay for APU start. The crew started APUs for normal preflight checks prior to engine start with no abnormalities noted on APU power. After checking the safety and security of the area in the vicinity of the aircraft, SSgt Courtaway cleared the crew for engine start. In accordance with checklist procedures, the crew started the #2 and #4 engines first. SSgt Courtaway monitored the operating engines for any anomaly with none noted and then cleared the crew to start engine #1. As the aircrew started the #1 engine, he checked the #1 engine for any problems with none noted. While looking at the #1 engine, SSgt Courtaway scanned the #2 inlet as well, and noticed a potential problem. He moved to get a better view of the #2 engine and saw an inlet guide vane vibrating excessively. SSgt Courtaway alerted the crew to shut down engines, due to the #2 inlet guide vane excessive vibration. The crew shut down all engines and deplaned, at which point, SSgt Courtaway quickly safed the aircraft for maintenance. He thoroughly inspected

the inlet guide vane and surrounding structures for any damage with none noted. He then investigated the cause of the vibration. He confirmed that the attachment points on the inlet guide vane were previously installed with incorrect hardware. SSgt Courtaway initiated corrective action to completely re-install the inlet guide vane correctly. The keen situational awareness and quick reaction of SSgt Courtaway prevented catastrophic foreign object damage of a \$3.7M engine, the potential loss of a \$280M B-1B, and four aircrew members!



**SSgt Matthew E. Courtaway**  
7 AMXS, 7 BW  
Dyess AFB, Texas

## Aircrew Safety



AWARD OF DISTINCTION

The crew of "Topcover 35" recovered their emergency C-130E aircraft safely and saved the life of a stricken crewman. The flight engineer noticed smoke and fumes begin to fill the cockpit. MSgt Butts went underneath the flight deck to investigate — he concluded the crew and its JABS radio operators were in danger. The aircraft commander then directed all members to don emergency oxygen masks and EPOS. Navigator 1Lt Hejny, gave the pilot a snap vector to Balad AB and set up the defensive systems to protect the aircraft on approach. Copilot 1Lt Hampton coordinated for the emergency return with air control, and the flight engineer ran applicable emergency checklists while the pilot executed a maximum speed tactical approach to mitigate the surface-to-air threat, and to recover the aircraft as soon as possible. Loadmasters MSgt Opdenhoff and TSgt Davila ensured all four JABS crew members donned their emergency equipment. During landing roll, MSgt Opdenhoff observed a JABS member slumped over and determined the member had passed out and was no longer breathing. He immediately removed the member's EPOS and administered mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. After a few breaths, the injured member began to breathe again, but was still unconscious. With CPR in progress, TSgt Davila reported the dire situation and the pilot told the copilot

to request expedited emergency response. The pilot then directed a shutdown of all four engines as soon as the C-130 cleared the runway. The injured crew member was extracted to the ICU and subsequently aero-evac'd to Landstuhl. The timely responses by the crew safely recovered the aircraft and saved the life of an AF member.



**Capt Kevin Eley, 1Lt Courtney Hampton**  
**1Lt Jason Hejny, MSgt Loren Butts**  
**MSgt Richard Opdenhoff, TSgt Jose Davila**  
777 EAS, 332 AEW  
Joint Base Balad, Iraq

## Unit Safety



AWARD OF DISTINCTION

The men and women of the 447 EOSS oversaw the final stages of the installation/activation of 1,100 pieces of airfield lighting equipment worth \$550,000, lighting 1.6M square feet of runway pavement. They trained nine CE personnel on Baghdad International Airport's lighting configuration, further enhancing Sather AB and BIAP's ability to garner International Civil Aviation Organization certification. These Airmen corrected numerous critical apron lighting safety issues by recycling old runway edge lights and installing them on the apron edge to illuminate the paths for passengers/vehicles. They also initiated the repair and replacement of the pre-war ballpark lighting infrastructure. This 400 percent increase in ramp lighting turned a dark ramp into a safer movement area for the 3.7K aircraft/33K passengers/5K tons of cargo moved monthly. As the squadron's construction experts, they were instrumental with implementing the \$725K helo parking construction project to bed-down the MNF-I CG's six UH-60 Blackhawks. In order to

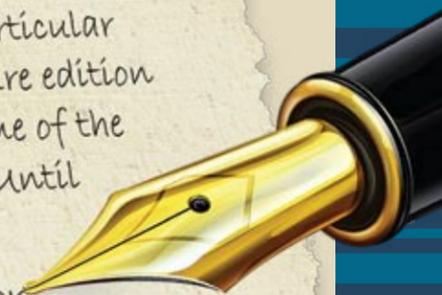
enhance the overall safety and security of Sather, they designed a 2.5-mile fence and oversaw its installation between the civilian terminal and the military runway, reducing avenues for unauthorized airfield access. These warriors administered the airfield driving program by training 200+ USAF, USA, CF, and civilian contractors and randomly checked 60 flight line drivers to ensure compliance with all directives, steps critical in preventing CMA violations. As part of an Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron-led, base-wide effort to reduce non-mission essential ramp movements, they reissued 380+ licenses, reducing vehicle and pedestrian hazards by 300 percent!

**447th Expeditionary Operations**  
**Support Squadron**  
447 AEW  
Sather AB, Baghdad, Iraq

## Thanks ...

To each and every one that contributed an article for this special "Motorcycle Safety" edition! We received so many submissions that, unfortunately, we were unable to publish them all. So, if you don't see your article in this particular edition, stay tuned ... it just might appear in a future edition down the road. Feel free to submit an article on some of the many other safety issues that need to be shared. Until then, stay safe and keep the rubber on the road.

~ Editor



# MONTHLY AWARD WINNERS – JANUARY

## Unit Safety



### AWARD OF DISTINCTION

The Operation Crystal Skull Det., formed by the 964 AACCS, was deployed to a FOL for POTUS support during the APEC. Upon arrival, it was discovered no BASH program existed and poor airfield control was evident as dogs, goats, birds, and people roamed the airfield. There was a trash dump 3 NM from the approach end, brush on the east side of the runway filled with roosting vultures, and large 6 to 10-pound vultures constantly soaring above the airfield. A more stringent plan had to be made to ensure safe flying ops! All together, five members of the Det. collaborated to prevent a major mishap. The major concern was the inability for the FSO (positioned in the tower) and flight crews to discern bird activity from their tower and hold short position respectively. An improvised plan was devised/executed where the FSO and DETCO, located at the departure end of the runway, used binoculars and radioed real-time bird condition to flight crews during TO&L. To further mitigate the risk, the E-3 crew coordinated with 12 AF and KC-10/C-17 contingents, also at the FOL, for concurrence to separate TO&L by at least 15 minutes to ensure

all flight paths were free of birds. The procedures were proven one morning when the DETCO called BIRD SEVERE as a “Tornado of about 100 birds circled over the departure end between 500 and 1,000 feet.” The flight crew could not see the birds from their hold short position and would have taken off had the improvised BASH plan not been in place. Once the birds cleared the area, BIRD MODERATE was called, and the aircraft took off without incident. The proactive thinking by the Operation Crystal Skull Det. prevented damaged/lost airplanes of the entire FOL contingent and quite possibly saved lives while ensuring POTUS protection was unwavering force.



**964th Airborne Air Control Squadron**  
552 ACW  
Tinker AFB, Okla.

## Crew Chief Safety



### AWARD OF DISTINCTION

SSgt Archie Burchard and team were tasked to perform F-15E Strike Eagle follow-on maintenance after replacement of a faulty utility hydraulic system reservoir. The final portion of the follow-on maintenance required an aircraft engine run to perform leak checks of the associated systems. On engine start, SSgt Burchard noticed smoke coming from behind the surrounding access panels. He immediately investigated the cause of the smoke and informed his assistant, SrA Pegues, of the situation. The Jet Fuel Starter (JFS) assembly began making an abnormal sound and ultimately seized. The JFS then broke apart internally and ejected several pieces from its exhaust. SSgt Burchard managed to avoid injury as debris from the JFS struck his steel-toe safety boot. At this point the JFS area erupted into flames and quickly spread across the bottom of the aircraft. SSgt Burchard took charge of the situation and instructed his fire guard to charge the fire extinguisher and ordered all non-essential personnel to evacuate the area. After

initiation of a ground emergency, SSgt Burchard began fighting the fire and continued until it was safely under control. When emergency responders arrived, SSgt Burchard turned over control of the area and provided a detailed accounting of the incident. SSgt Burchard's keen situational awareness and quick action prevented excessive damage to a vital combat asset valued at \$54M and secured the safety of himself and his fellow Airmen.



**SSgt Archie H. Burchard III**  
4 AMXS, 4 FW  
Seymour Johnson AFB, N.C.

## Pilot Safety



### AWARD OF DISTINCTION

While departing from JBB for a Close Air Support sortie in support of OIF, Maj Winters' F-16CJ had a potentially severe engine system malfunction. While on takeoff at 130 KCAS, Ninja 11 experienced a Master Caution Light, an Engine Fault Caution Light, and an ENG HYB MODE PFL indicating certain failures of the Digital Engine Control module. DEC-related failures may result in significant thrust loss and the inability to takeoff or maintain level flight. Further, Turbine blade temperature limiting is not provided, compressor Variable Stator Vane reset is not active-decreasing stall protection, and maximum fan speed is limited. Weighing the risk of an abort vs. becoming airborne with a potential loss of thrust, Maj Winters executed the Abort Critical Action Procedures. He retarded the throttle to IDLE, applied maximum braking, and put the cable arrestment hook down. Demonstrating superior situational awareness, Maj Winters waited until past the approach end cable to put the hook down, eliminating the risk of collision with his Wingman. After slowing to a safe taxi speed, prior to the

departure cable, Maj Winters raised the hook and taxied clear. Based on his abort speed, Maj Winters declared an emergency, assessing per-brake absorption of more than 15 million ft-pounds of energy – in the danger zone for high risk of hot brakes and potential fire. Crash and Rescue confirmed Ninja 11's hot brakes and provided fire suppression until he could safely shut down. Maj Winters' skillful execution averted the destruction of a \$36M F-16CJ, and ensured continuous coverage of 14 EFS combat assets ISO OIF.



**Maj Jesse Winters**  
14 EFS, 332 AEW  
Balad AB, Iraq

## Ground Safety



### AWARD OF DISTINCTION

SrA Keferl provided safety oversight for the recovery of a Navy aircraft that had crashed off the end of the runway adjacent to a mine field. He personally conducted more than 100 rotational ground safety inspections that revealed nearly 200 safety deficiencies, and ultimately reduced hazardous conditions at Bagram Airfield. He also conducted program assessments and inspections of the Expeditionary Maintenance Group to assist them in preparing for a Multi-MAJCOM Staff Assistance Visit. His efforts contributed to the group receiving zero safety deficiencies and reduced the group's Safety Technical Violation rate by 77 percent. SrA Keferl provided oversight for the Wing's mishap entry and tracking program which ensured that more than 100 non-reportable mishaps were properly investigated. Additionally, he confirmed all reportable Class C and D mishaps were properly investigated and fully documented in AFSAS. He helped develop a comprehensive Material Handling Equipment safety presentation following several flight line mishaps and provided daily surveillance of high hazard areas on the flight line and in the cargo yard.

His aggressive vigilance reduced the Wing's MHE mishap rate by 60 percent within a month. SrA Keferl conducted a safety inspection of the 451 AEG in Kandahar where he identified numerous deficiencies and prescribed proactive mitigating actions to abate the hazards. He provided expert oversight in the identification, tracking, and reporting of electrical safety deficiencies throughout Air Force-owned and occupied facilities on Bagram Airfield which resulted in AFCENT attention to correct many electrical safety deficiencies that had existed, in some cases, for many years.



**SrA Daniel P. Keferl**  
455 AEW  
Bagram AB, Afghanistan

## Flight Line Safety



AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Capt Saar's crew set out to perform a normal training sortie. The sortie was routine, but the show time was not and their early takeoff time required the crew to show at the squadron by 0245 in the morning. The temperature was -8 degrees Celsius this particular morning. The early show time and cold weather did not hamper his effective pre-flight walk-around. During his inspection, Capt Saar noticed a large ice patch approximately 10 feet away from the #1 engine that appeared to be caused by someone who had dumped a large jug of water on the ramp. It is a common procedure after most sorties for the mission crew to dump the remaining water from the water jugs onto the ramp; however, the issue with dumping water on the previous evening was that temperatures were below freezing. Capt Saar noticed that the water had frozen, and some of it had broken up into large chunks of ice. Capt Saar was persistent that maintenance sweep the ice debris away from the area to prevent a FOD/engine ingestion

hazard. Capt Saar was also concerned about the safety of maintenance personnel who would be walking about and could very easily slip on the ice and gave a verbal caution. Even after the ice was swept far enough away from the engine, Capt Saar started the #2 and #3 engines, then conservatively taxied out of the parking spot, clear of the ice hazard, prior to starting the #1 engine. Capt Saar's actions set in motion a policy change that will help maintain flight line safety and prevent engine FOD damage.



**Capt Mark J. Saar**  
963 AACCS, 552 ACW  
Tinker AFB, Okla.

## Aircrew Safety



AWARD OF DISTINCTION

While on a routine FTU training sortie, the E-3 AWACS crew (Sentry 61), experienced a total loss of their utility hydraulic system immediately after takeoff. The instructor FE noted a sudden loss of hydraulic quantity, followed by low pressure lights for both utility pumps. Knowing that an IFE would need to be declared, the crew elected to climb to a safe altitude and immediately entered a holding pattern near Tinker AFB in order to complete the multiple emergency checklists necessary to safely recover the E-3. The student FE and the instructor FE began to run the "Utility Hydraulic System Loss" checklist and calculated emergency landing data while the nav and co-pilot coordinated with the Tinker AFB SOF for an emergency return. Since the utility hydraulics controlled the landing gear, the crew then had to complete the manual gear extension checklist. The crew then ran the fuel dump emergency checklists to adjust their gross weight by 55,000 lbs to be at a safe landing weight. As they began to dump fuel, a rain storm moved into the local area hindering Sentry 61's emergency return, thus compounding the situation further. With the loss of flaps and the outboard spoilers, coupled with a

wet runway, the crew was required to divert to another airfield, because a longer landing distance was now required. En route to Little Rock, Sentry 61 was notified the airfield could not support their emergency. If the E-3 landed at Little Rock, the airfield would have been shut down and all other aircraft would have to divert because the E-3 would be stuck on the runway. Quick action and superior CRM allowed the crew to safely recover the \$330 million E-3 asset and crew of 30+.



**Maj Larry C. Miller, Maj James R. Gongwer**  
**Capt Nathan D. Dever, Maj Dwight A. Justus**  
**2Lt Nicholas R. Smith, SSgt Jason D. Peters**  
**TSgt John O. Cremer**  
966 AACCS, 552 ACW  
Tinker AFB, Okla.

## Weapons Safety



AWARD OF DISTINCTION

On cursory inspection of Hot Pits for an F-22A, SSgt Monroe noticed a crack in the lower right chaff/flare door and had the pilot open it to see what may have caused the damage. After the door was cycled opened, SSgt Monroe discovered there was a hung flare half way out of its receptacle, which was bent causing damage to the lower right chaff/flare door. He informed the pilot and hot pit crew of the ground emergency and initiated an immediate safing and shut down of the aircraft. SSgt Monroe directed the pilot and all other non-essential personnel to evacuate the area. He also coordinated with the fire department and

explosive ordnance disposal to bring the situation to a safe environment. Had this condition gone unnoticed, this aircraft would have potentially flown its next sortie allowing the pilot to expend another flare, possibly igniting the hung flare, causing damage or loss of aircraft or life. His quick actions averted potential damage to a 133 million dollar aircraft while ensuring personnel safety.

**SSgt Andrew Monroe**  
49 AMXS, 49 FW  
Holloman AFB, N.M.

## ACG SAFETY SALUTES

## SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE

### USAFWC

**Maj Geoff Romanowicz**  
**Maj William Hepler**  
325 WPS, 57 WG  
Nellis AFB, Nev.

**TSgt Denise M. Patterson**  
926 GP Det 2, 57 WG  
Nellis AFB, Nev.

### NGB

**Maj Randal Morris**  
**Capt Greg Amig**  
**Capt Christopher Banks**  
**Capt Wayne Holbeck**  
**Capt Matt Mazzarello**  
**Capt Carolos Pena**  
**Capt Jason Teague**  
**2Lt Thomas Avant**  
**SMSgt Heinz Thompson**  
**TSgt Ingo Christl**  
**TSgt Donn Duvall**  
**SSgt Jacob Besze**  
**SSgt Wes Fraker**  
**SSgt Eric Holtz**  
**SFC Sidney Griffith**  
**SrA Tyler Davis**  
**SrA Vincent Montojo**  
**SrA Shaw Vangorder**  
**7 EACCS**  
Al Udeid AB, Iraq

### NINTH AIR FORCE

**SrA Sean M. Lamneck**  
**A1C Dominic Ojinnaka**  
**A1C Colin R. O'Leary**  
455 EAMXS, 455 AEW  
Baghran AB, Afghanistan

**Capt Jeremy Vanderhal**  
**A1C Charlie Saelee**  
46 ERAS, 332 AEW  
Balad AB, Iraq

**447th Expeditionary Logistics**  
**Readiness Squadron**  
447 AEG  
Sather AB  
Baghdad IAP, Iraq

### EIGHTH AIR FORCE

**Capt Jason M. McCarty**  
966 AACCS, 552 ACW  
Tinker AFB, Okla.

**Capt David Kendall**  
**Capt Michael Sullivan**  
**Capt Richard Verica**  
**SSgt Erwin Wogau**  
**SSgt Edward Dooley**  
41 ECS, 55 WG  
Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz.

**MSgt Kenneth Palmer**  
963 AACCS, 552 ACW  
Tinker AFB, Okla.

**TSgt Robert C. Kennedy**  
5 LRS, 5 BW  
Minot AFB, N.D.

**963d Airborne Air**  
**Control Squadron**  
552 ACW  
Tinker AFB, Okla.

**Capt Thomas D. Jones**  
343 RS 55 WG  
Offutt AFB, Neb.

**SSgt Marcus A. McKee**  
**SSgt Regis R. Reddinger**  
2 AMXS, 2 BW  
Barksdale AFB, La.

| FY09 Aircraft <span style="float: right;">As of January 30, 2009</span> |       |                    |                  |
|---|-------|--------------------|------------------|
|   | Fatal | Aircraft Destroyed | Aircraft Damaged |
| 1 AF  |       |                    |                  |
| 8 AF  |       |                    |                  |
| 9 AF  |       | ✈                  |                  |
| 12 AF   |       | ✈** x 4            |                  |
| USAFWC  |       |                    |                  |
| ANG<br>(ACC-gained)   |       |                    | ✈                |
| AFRC<br>(ACC-gained)  |       |                    |                  |

| FY09 Ground <span style="float: right;">As of January 30, 2009</span> |       |         |         |
|---|-------|---------|---------|
|   | Fatal | Class A | Class B |
| 8 AF  | ♂♂    | 2       |         |
| 9 AF  | ♂     | 1       | 1       |
| 12 AF   | ♂     | 1       | 1       |
| DRU's   |       |         |         |

| FY09 Weapons <span style="float: right;">As of January 30, 2009</span> |         |         |
|--|---------|---------|
|  | Class A | Class B |
| 8 AF   | 0       | 1       |
| 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  
 \* Fatality

♂ = Fatal    ♂ = Fatal due to misconduct

## Aircraft Notes

ACC had two Class A mishaps during Dec and Jan. In Dec, a deployed MQ-1B was destroyed shortly after takeoff. In Jan, a deployed HH-60 was severely damaged during landing. Fortunately, there were no major injuries. Some of our mishaps this year have involved personnel deployed to an AOR from multiple units. This is a key part of our AEF process. Solid home-base training procedures, in concert with strict adherence to Air Force Instructions and Technical Orders, help ensure our forces maintain the synergy that keeps us safe, whether during combat or when handling an emergency. It is imperative that you know what the fellow Airman working next to you will do in a given situation. Will the job require an unknown local procedure or the T.O.?

## Ground Notes

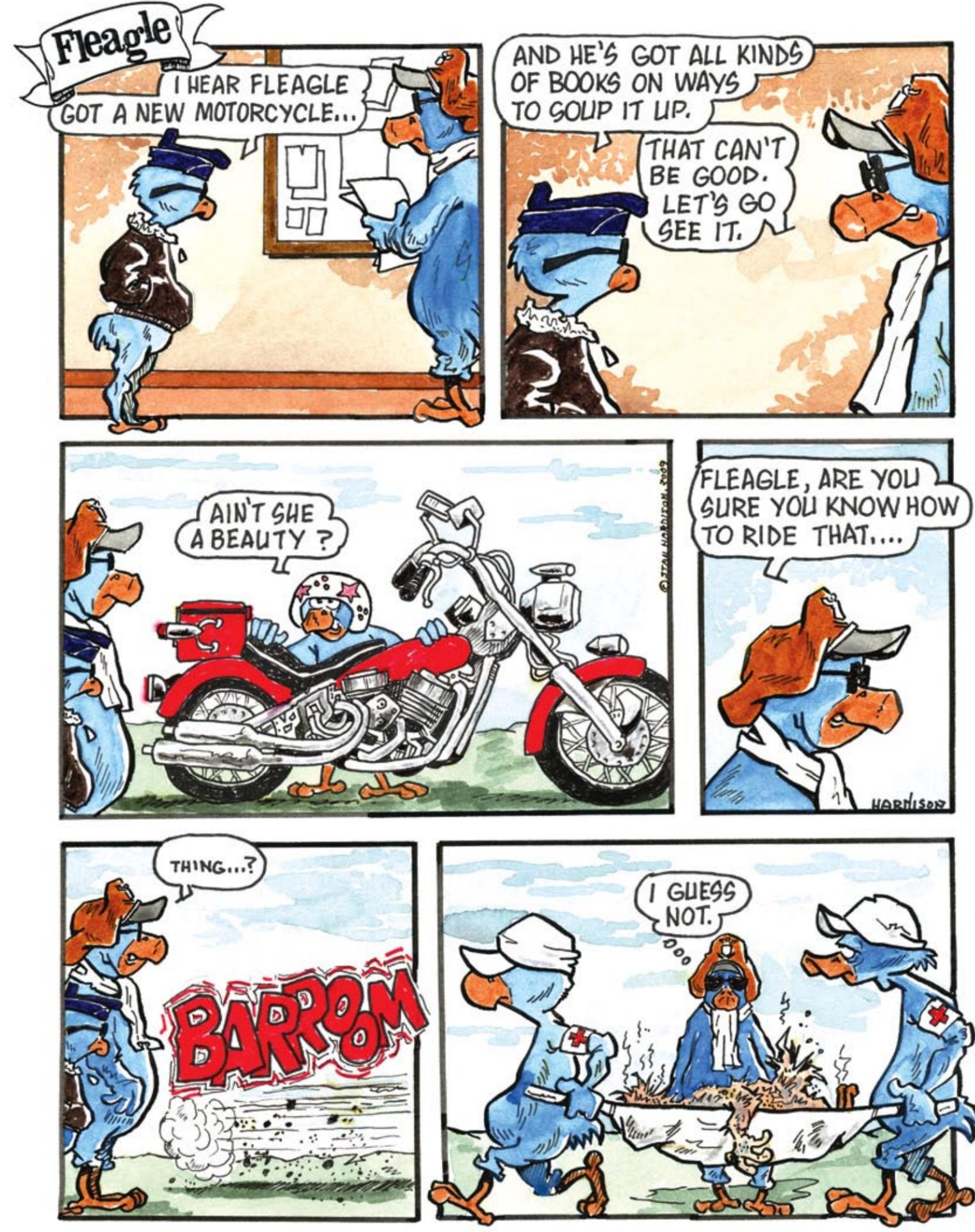
ACC has experienced four fatal mishaps this fiscal year, an increase of one over the same time period for FY08. Three of the four mishaps were motor vehicles and involved speed. Springtime is fast approaching, and with that an increase in motorcycle operations. Please ensure your motorcycle training program is ready to go, and that all new riders receive the commander's one-on-one briefing.

## Weapons Notes

Since 1 Dec 2008, ACC has experienced two weapons safety mishaps. The first, a Class E TGM-65 mishap, and the second, a CATM-88 with the class to be determined. The TGM-65 mishap was caused by a lack of situational awareness. The radome was struck while installing the casket lid, resulting in a broken dome. The CATM-88 mishap was caused by the same factor as the mishap we just discussed. A load crew sheared a CATM-88 umbilical during download. We need to instill in our weapons troops that situational awareness is paramount in preventing mishaps. Always pay close attention to the task at hand, follow technical directives, and we won't have anymore "accidents" such as these in the future. Thank you for all you do for weapons safety every day.

**Symbols for Mishap Aircraft**

|          |        |         |         |            |        |
|----------|--------|---------|---------|------------|--------|
| ✈ A-10   | ✈ B-1  | ✈ F-16  | ✈ B-2   | ✈ U-2      | ✈ E-8  |
| ✈ RQ-1/9 | ✈ F-4  | ✈ HH-60 | ✈ F-15  | ✈ RQ-4     | ✈ T-38 |
| ✈ F-22   | ✈ B-52 | ✈ E-3   | ✈ C-130 | ✈ AEROSTAT | ✈ E9   |





**U.S. AIR FORCE**

