

November / December 2009

Combat Edge

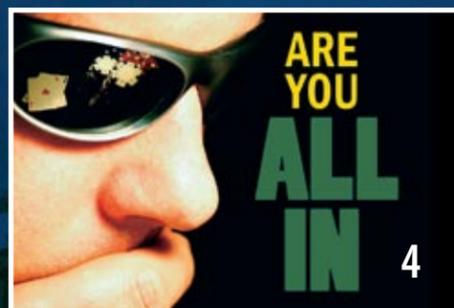
Air Combat Command's Safety Magazine



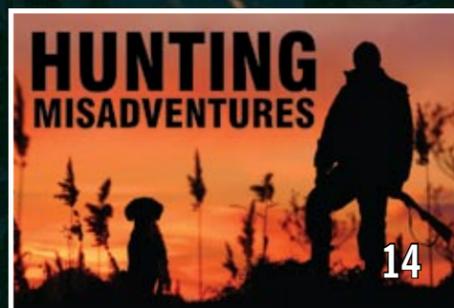
THE **LURE** OF
**FRESH
POWDER**

Combat Edge

Volume 18 Issue 4 , ACC SP 91-1



ARE YOU
ALL IN
4



HUNTING
MISADVENTURES
14



DON'T JUST
WING IT
20



GENERAL WILLIAM M. FRASER III, COMMANDER
COLONEL ROGER L. WAGNER, DIRECTOR OF SAFETY

4 | **ARE YOU ALL IN**
by Lt Col Catherine Hallett, Langley AFB, Va.

10 | **THE LURE OF FRESH POWDER**
by TSgt Jon Griffin, Edwards AFB, Calif.

14 | **HUNTING MISADVENTURES**
by SMSgt William Haught, Langley AFB, Va.

20 | **DON'T JUST WING IT**
by TSgt James A. Daugherty, Dyess AFB, Texas

22 | **AUGUST MONTHLY AWARDS**

26 | **SEPTEMBER MONTHLY AWARDS**

30 | **STATS**

31 | **FLEAGLE**

COLONEL J. ALAN MARSHALL
EDITOR

MRS. BARBARA TAYLOR
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

MSGT KURT REILLY
ART DIRECTOR

THE COMBAT EDGE

(USPS 0531-170) (ISSN 1063-8970) IS PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY BY AIR COMBAT COMMAND, HQ ACC/SEM, 175 SWEENEY BLVD, LANGLEY AFB VA 23665-2700. PERIODICAL POSTAGE PAID AT HAMPTON, VA, 23670 AND ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES. POSTMASTER: PLEASE SEND CHANGES OF ADDRESS TO HQ ACC/SEM, 175 SWEENEY BLVD, LANGLEY AFB, VA 23665.

DISTRIBUTION: F OPR: HQ ACC/SEM. DISTRIBUTION IS BASED ON A RATIO OF ONE COPY PER 10 PERSONS ASSIGNED. AIR FORCE UNITS SHOULD CONTACT THE COMBAT EDGE STAFF TO ESTABLISH OR CHANGE REQUIREMENTS.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS: AVAILABLE TO NON-DOD READERS FOR \$51.00 (\$71.40 OUTSIDE THE U.S.) FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT OF DOCUMENTS, PO BOX 371954, PITTSBURGH PA 15250-7954. ALL SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE CORRESPONDENCE SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO THE SUPERINTENDENT, NOT HQ ACC/SEM.

CONTRIBUTIONS: PLEASE SEND ARTICLES WITH NAME, RANK, DSN PHONE NUMBER, E-MAIL, COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS AND COMMENTS TO:

EDITOR, THE COMBAT EDGE
HQ ACC/SEM
175 SWEENEY BLVD
LANGLEY AFB VA 23665-2700

TELEPHONE: (757) 764-8846
DSN: 574-8846
FAX: (757) 764-8975
E-MAIL: ACC.SEM@LANGLEYAF.MIL

THE EDITORS RESERVE THE RIGHT TO EDIT ALL MANUSCRIPTS FOR READABILITY AND GOOD TASTE.

DISCLAIMER: THIS MAGAZINE IS AN AUTHORIZED PUBLICATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE DOD. CONTENTS OF THE COMBAT EDGE ARE NOT NECESSARILY THE OFFICIAL VIEWS OF, OR ENDORSED BY, THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT, THE DOD, OR THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE. INFORMATION CONTAINED IN ANY ARTICLE MAY NOT BE CONSTRUED AS INCRIMINATING UNDER ARTICLE 31, UCMJ.

ACCent

ON SAFETY



Gen William M. Fraser III
Commander

In the few short months I have been your Commander, I have seen where the heart of our combat capability lies — our Airmen. People are our greatest resource; one we must ensure we are training, equipping and mentoring to produce mission oriented results. We must look after one another in the entire ACC family — active duty, guard, reserve and civilian. With the Year of the Air Force Family upon us the expectation is to deliver safe, secure and successful support to each member of the ACC team.

To be successful as a Command we must set and maintain high standards in all of our actions. We must not let complacency or “combat expedient” actions replace technical orders and written guidance. The standards remain the same from your home station to the front lines — we must train like we fight.

To do so, we must identify, and live by the basics. In our work, it is essential that we pay attention to details and take risk management into account in all of our actions. The same applies in our personal lives — where we must embrace our Core Values, regardless of the occasion. Finally, we should work towards both mental and physical fitness, ensuring a balanced personal and professional life.

It is a privilege to serve with you in Air Combat Command. I need your assistance as we focus on winning the current fight and prepare for the future. I believe your enthusiasm, spirit and professionalism will carry us forward — to deliver *Global Power for America!*

Bev and I wish you a safe and happy holiday season and a prosperous New Year — thank you for your service!



ARE YOU ALL IN

BY LT COL CATHERINE HALLETT

Recently, a SECAF/CSAF letter to all Airmen addressed their deep concern about Airmen who commit suicide. The letter emphasized an “all in” approach for us to support each other in getting the necessary help to prevent suicide. Their stand of ‘one suicide is too many’ is meant to convey that we need to remain vigilant and must not let our guard down in order to prevent the next suicide. Preventing the next suicide requires each of us to be on the lookout for warning signs and then be willing to act accordingly using the **ACE** principle of **Ask**, **Care**, and **Escort** the person to the safety of mental health professionals.

Suicides in the military remain a concern! According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, suicide is the fourth leading cause of death among 25 to 44-year-olds in the United States with a rate of 19.2 suicides per 100,000. Historically, the suicide rate has been lower in the military than among the general civilian population. However, that all changed in 2008 when the Army had 140 suicides at a rate of 20.2 suicides per 100,000 soldiers. This trend was also seen in the Marine Corps who lost 41 marines at a rate of 19 per 100,000. The Navy had 41 deaths at a rate of 11.6 per 100,000 and the Air Force reported 40 suicides at a rate of 12.4 per 100,000. The Air Force numbers continue to be lower than the Army and Marines; however, the 13 suicides last year in ACC increased the rate to 16.2 per 100,000. As of September 2009, ACC has had 12 deaths attributed to suicide in CY09, which equates to a rate of 18.2 per 100,000, mirroring the civilian rate.

These facts underscore just how serious a problem suicide is, and should spark everyone to realize that if any suicide prevention program is going to be effective, it must involve all of us. The "all in" stance our leaders are promoting that even one suicide is one too many, must be adopted by all Air Force members – AD, civilian, and contractors alike.

Statistics regarding the suicides in ACC for CY09 include:

- 100 percent enlisted, 100 percent males
- 60 percent 25 years and older (average age 26)
- 100 percent relationship problems
- 40 percent deployed 12 months prior — 1 was deployed
- 20 percent previous suicide attempts
- 2 percent pending administrative/legal problems
- 10 percent alcohol problems

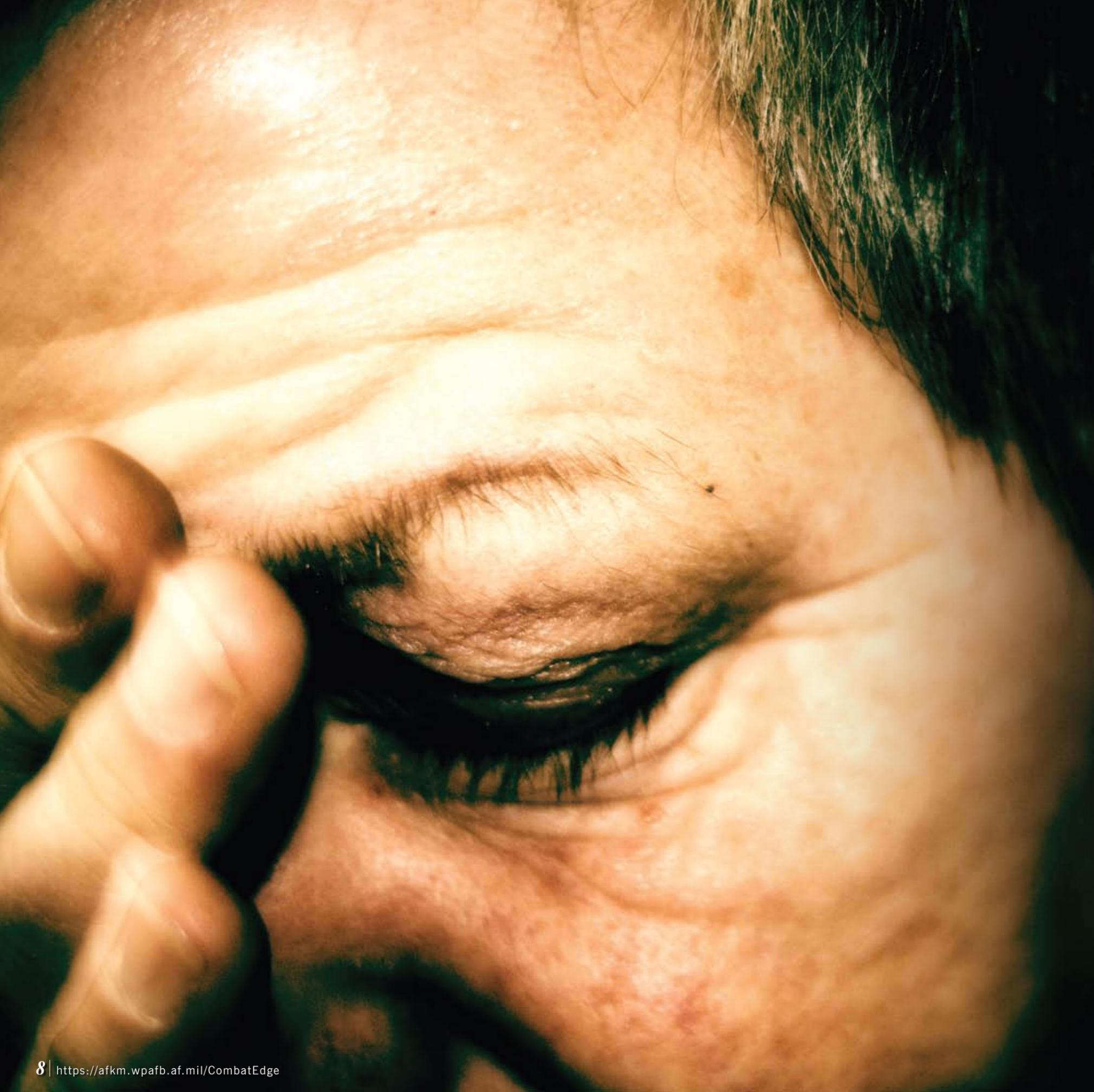
provide support to individuals within the unit, and collaborate with helping agencies. The guide describes a broad range of supportive interventions, resources, and strategies for supporting individuals in distress. The Frontline Supervisors Training is a 4-hour workshop that provides in-depth training on assisting personnel in distress, as well as in suicide prevention. It can be taught by any experienced leader, educator, or helping professional. Commanders' calls and weekly roll calls are also an effective means to promote programs and services and encourage Airmen to get help.

Central to any suicide prevention program is recognizing distress-related behaviors, both in our selves and others. We don't need to wait until a person has reached the threshold of debilitating distress before reaching out. We can't always tell when an Airman is having emotional difficulties. Anxiety, depression, or problems with alcohol or other substances can often remain hidden from others. Angry outbursts at work, relationship problems, increased drinking, accidents, and mishaps can sometimes be warning signs. Sometimes a caring friend who will listen can make a difference. AF and DoD senior leaders recognize that seeking help is a sign of strength and can assist people to function at their peak at work and at home. Everyone needs help with certain aspects of their lives, and we should all seek help when needed and encourage others to do the same. We must eliminate the stigma attached to asking for help and realize there is no shame attached to offering or receiving mental health services. We need to recognize when an individual is clearly in distress and intervene.

The **ACE** model of **Ask**, **Care**, and **Escort** is easy to remember and act upon. Asking a person if they are suicidal shows concern. Caring about the individual enough to listen is being a responsible Wingman. And finally, stay with the person and escort them to the mental health clinic or hospital. That just might make the difference between life and death.

The Air Force Suicide Prevention Program has been around since 1996. Its mission is to reduce the number and rate of active duty Air Force suicides by advocating a community approach to suicide prevention and to develop products, resources, and responses to reduce the impact of such factors. Overall, the program has been very effective in increasing awareness and reducing the numbers of suicides. Since its inception, suicide rates in the AF are down 28 percent. It provides the most effective tools possible and continues to explore innovative approaches to identify Airmen at risk and support commanders in their fight against suicide.

Two products that have been developed can be found at <http://afspp.afms.mil>. These useful tools are the Leader's Guide to Managing Personnel in Distress and the Frontline Supervisors Training. The Leader's Guide is designed to help unit leaders at all levels recognize distress-related behaviors,



The following is a personal account from a former squadron commander, who has asked to remain anonymous:

“I almost died! In fact I came so close to suicide, I’m surprised I’m still around. I had so many problems and felt I couldn’t tell anyone how much pain I was in. Everyone thought I had it all together; when in fact, I hated my life. I kept getting more projects at work and with each additional duty I became increasingly worse. I tried to concentrate but lost focus. I was staying later and later at work, and then going home every night and drinking until I fell asleep, often in the easy chair in front of the TV. My wife knew I was unhappy but she didn’t know how bad I was. I couldn’t tell her just how unmanageable my life had become. I became remote at work, distant to my family, an absent parent to my children, and began having thoughts of killing myself. To this day, I don’t know how I ended up in mental health. I always believed that if you went to mental health your career was over. At the point when I thought I had nothing left to lose, I called to make an appointment.

“The counselor was incredibly kind, but made it clear to me that I needed to go to a hospital where my problems, especially with alcohol, could be addressed. She contacted my chain of command and my wife. My boss drove me to the hospital where I stayed for 28 days. It was there I learned so much about myself, my demons, and how to cope with the day-to-day stressors of my life. My leadership worked very closely with me. They reassured me my career was not over and that they had every confidence I would be back in top form.

“When I was released from the hospital, everyone worked with me to find the right balance between work and home. I accomplished more at work, had time to work out, and had energy left over at the end of each day. I went to counseling and AA regularly and soon felt better than I had in years. I began enjoying life again. I became a better commander and leader, a more loving husband and father, and most importantly, I am alive today.”

The above reflection illustrates the importance of suicide prevention and how the “all in” approach saved a life. If you or someone you know is stressed, don’t be afraid to ask for help. Call the Mental Health Clinic on base or Military One Source at 1-800-342-9647 for assistance. **If you are suicidal, get help NOW!** 🗨️

The following number is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year:

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:
1-800-273-8255 or 1-800-273-TALK (Veterans press 1)**

THE LURE OF FRESH POWDER



THE EVENTS OF FEBRUARY 23, 2009, BY TSGT JON GRIFFIN

It was just a few degrees above freezing that morning at June Mountain, Calif. My wife and I were planning to return home after a disappointing 2-day snowboarding venture. Cold nights, warmer than average afternoons, and a lack of fresh snow did a number on the terrain leaving the existing trails an icy, slushy mess and a disheartening end to our final trip of the season.

As we stepped outside to begin loading up the car, we were stopped dead in our tracks by a scene of pure beauty. The previous night's snowfall had been unexpected; and the surrounding area was blanketed with a foot of fresh powder. The thought of leaving was quickly replaced with, "How fast can we get ready?" Ten minutes later we were on the road.

Arriving at the base of the mountain, we were surprised to discover an almost empty parking lot. In fact, on the first chair ride to the top of the mountain, I counted only three fresh tracks on the hill below. I have boarded this mountain several times the year before and have never seen it this pristine and empty. Only 100 yards to go and we will be carving our own trails!

Shortly after pushing off the chair lift, I discovered the true extent to how much snow had accumulated. I was buried up to my shins. Twenty years of experience reminded me that speed, control, and endurance were essential when plowing through snow this deep. My wife, however, was not as versed in these conditions, and I knew she was going to be in for a rough day. We may have made it 5 feet before she went down, and 40 minutes later we arrived at chair lift number four. The

nice part about June Mountain is once you make it to chair four all the runs from that point funnel right back to it. This gave me the opportunity to catch three or four runs without losing her in the process.

Although it was exhilarating jamming down the mountain in a cloud of white, I was quickly overcome by muscle fatigue in my right leg. When you are blessed with the opportunity to experience un-groomed trails you learn to shift more of your weight to your trailing leg in order to keep the nose of your board up. This constant battle can be very taxing on the quadriceps; and if you let up just a little bit to relax your muscles, you are going to take a dive. I was only about an hour into my day when I succumbed to fatigue; and after a couple of minor wipe outs, I decided it was time to take a breather for a little while.

Meeting up with my wife again, we decided to head for a nearby food shack to relax and take in the sights. She was already burnt out from the constant struggle of trying to get back up after each spill and noted her wrists, knees, and butt had enough torment for the day. I, on the other hand, got my second wind and was ready for another round. Feeling good and rested, I made my way to the chair lift and was quickly whisked off towards the summit. About halfway through my first run, the burning sensation in my muscles returned, and I was forced to sit a minute. Realizing the stress I was putting on my legs from the hard turns, I opted for cruising down the powdery slope in wider S-turns. This did the trick, and I was once again focused on having a good time. After about another hour of riding, a complete loss of feeling in my legs and a few more face plants, I finally came to

my senses and decided I'd better leave while I was still intact.

Discovering my half frozen and slightly irritated wife still sitting on the deck of the food shack, I broke the news that I'd had enough and we'd better hit the road. During our 3-hour exhibition, the snow crews had finally gotten around to grooming the trails that led to the lodge. My wife was able to execute her "falling leaf" form of snowboarding and was back on her feet with confidence. I, too, welcomed the opportunity to relax my muscles and began the slow, but peaceful decent. On the way down, it finally occurred to me that the temperature had increased dramatically. The sun was out in full force, and the trail was a bit slushy in places. After cresting a small hill, I slowed up near a shaded patch to see if my wife was still behind me. Completely off guard, the back edge of my board caught a ridge in the recently formed ice. My helmet impacted the hardened ground with enough ferocity to send my goggles flying. I don't know how to completely explain what I was feeling shortly after the fall other than describing it as an eerie sense of serenity. I recall looking up at the chairs on the lift methodically passing by with no interjecting audible sounds. The sight of other skiers on the chair lift must have struck a chord, because my first reaction was to sit up, and that's when I got sick.

The pain that followed was intense. I have always heard the expression, "feel like I was hit by a dump truck," but to experience it was a different story. My initial thoughts were that I had broken something



because of the dull pain reverberating through the bone in my upper left arm. Since I didn't have time to react to the fall, I didn't get a chance to put my hands out to break my fall. I landed squarely on my left shoulder and my head whipped back into the patch of ice.

The next explosion of pain came from my head. I have suffered from cluster headaches for 12 years, but even my worst episode was nothing in comparison. I felt as if my head was an overinflated balloon ready to pop. To this day, I firmly believe the helmet I was wearing saved me from any permanent damage, if not death itself. Slowly, I returned to my feet; and after a minute and a few functional checks on the limbs, I knew I was

okay, but I wasn't out of the woods yet. My next feat was getting back to the car.

After getting back to my feet and fighting off the waves of dizziness and disorientation, I had just put on my goggles when my wife finally passed by. She was unaware of what just happened and probably for the better at the time. Using her as a guide, I pulled together everything I had in me and shakily made it to the car.

It was at the car that I had my first outburst. I was trying to put my board back in its bag and after some struggle I became blinded with rage and threw everything across the parking lot. Just as quickly as the anger came on, it was gone, and I was probably just as perplexed as my wife. I recovered my items and came clean with her about the fall.

Back at home, I continued to blow up in fits of rage followed by episodes of lethargy. After scaring my wife half to death, I was eventually able to drift off to sleep, but only for short periods as the ensuing pain in my neck constantly woke me. I made a mental note to call the hospital the next morning.

The true nature of my injuries became apparent when I attempted to sit up in bed. I was physically unable to get up due to the damage I did to the ligaments in my neck from the whiplash. My only alternative was to roll over on my stomach and slide my feet to the floor. Again, I was met with dizziness and lethargy. I felt like one of those bobble head dolls, because I had lost the ability to support my head. At this point, I knew I had to seek help.

The call back from the nurse both surprised and worried me. From the symptoms I had described to her, she told me I had sustained a concussion and that I needed to go to the emergency room immediately! She said I could potentially have swelling in my brain and needed a CAT scan to ensure I was all right. At the time I thought, "I was wearing a helmet; it can't be that bad." Yet, unbeknownst to me, only a week earlier Natasha Richardson took a fall while skiing, appeared to be okay, but ended up dying. She would still be here today had she sought medical attention. Fortunately, I was found to be okay.

In the end, I missed out on a week of work; I was unable to participate in any activities for 6 weeks, and I still suffer from chronic neck pain to this day. My physical therapist also explained to me that my injuries are going to stay with me for the rest of my life.

The constant neck pain will always remind me of what could have happened. Although, we can never be certain when we may have an accident, there were some actions that I could have taken to mitigate my incident. First and foremost, had I responded to my physical limitations earlier in the day and took more breaks or just quit after I took my first couple of minor spills, my muscles wouldn't have been so exhausted. With any sport you need to be on your game all the time. If you let your guard down, even for a moment, you are going to get hurt. In my case, I relaxed and failed to keep my edge up on my board.



Second, if I would have exercised some situational awareness, I would have realized the temperature had risen and that the snow would have melted in some areas and turned into ice in the shaded areas. This would have caused me to focus more on the terrain. I have been snowboarding long enough to know what happens when snow melts and re-freezes. Had I paid attention, I would not have entered a shaded area.

Finally, when an accident occurs that results in trauma to the head or neck, don't be oblivious like me and not seek medical attention. There could be an underlying problem that requires urgent care. A helmet may cushion the blow to your skull, but your brain is still moving. The injury sustained from a sudden impact is caused by the brain colliding with the inside wall of your skull which, in-turn, causes the brain to bleed and swell. Bottom line, know your limitations and react to them accordingly. Don't under estimate your surroundings or become complacent and always bring your "A" game. If you do sustain a head or neck injury, seek medical attention right away; it could be the difference between life and death! Don't let your next snow trip be your last. ▀





HUNTING MISADVENTURES

BY SMSGT WILLIAM HAUGHT

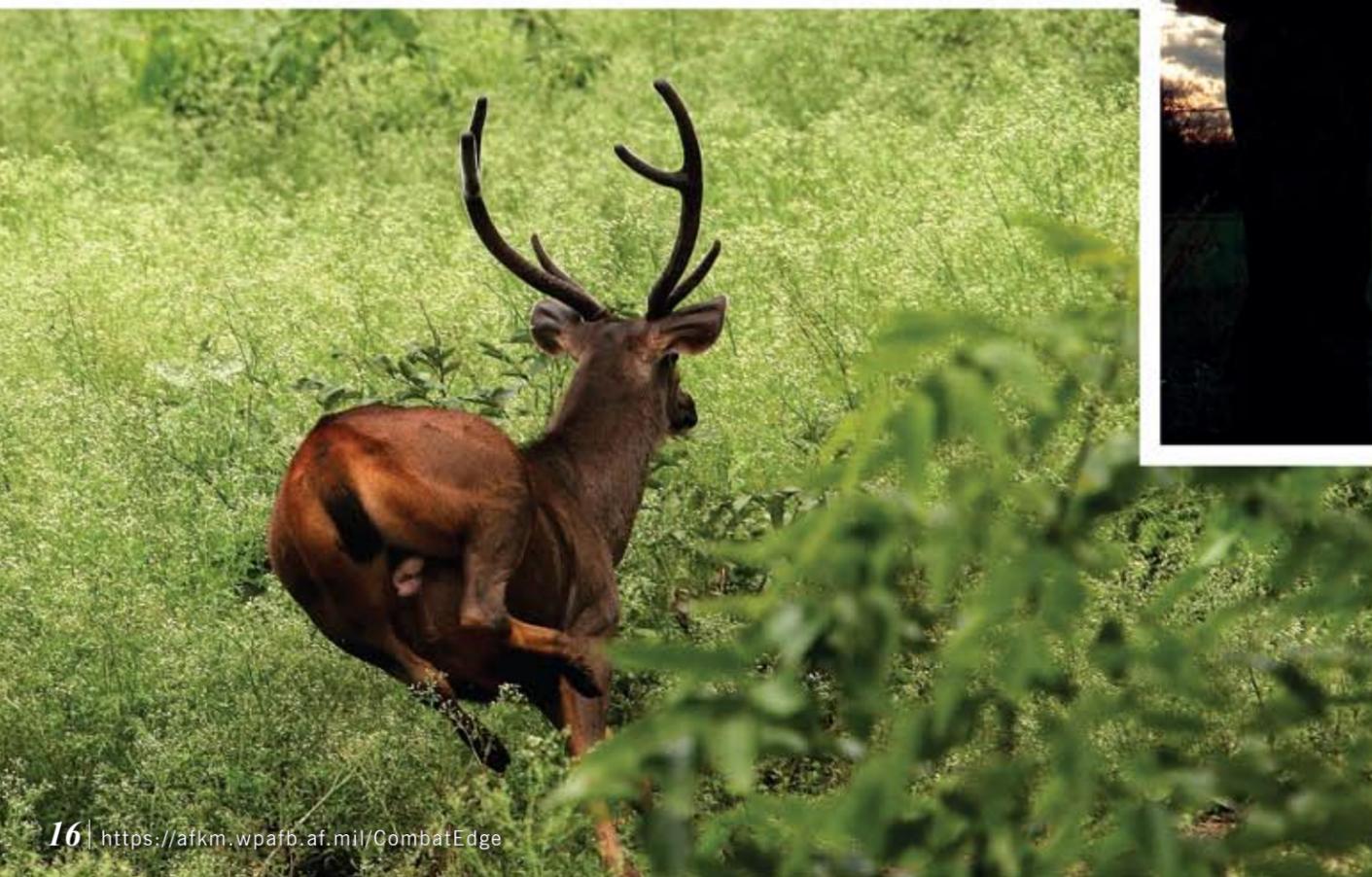
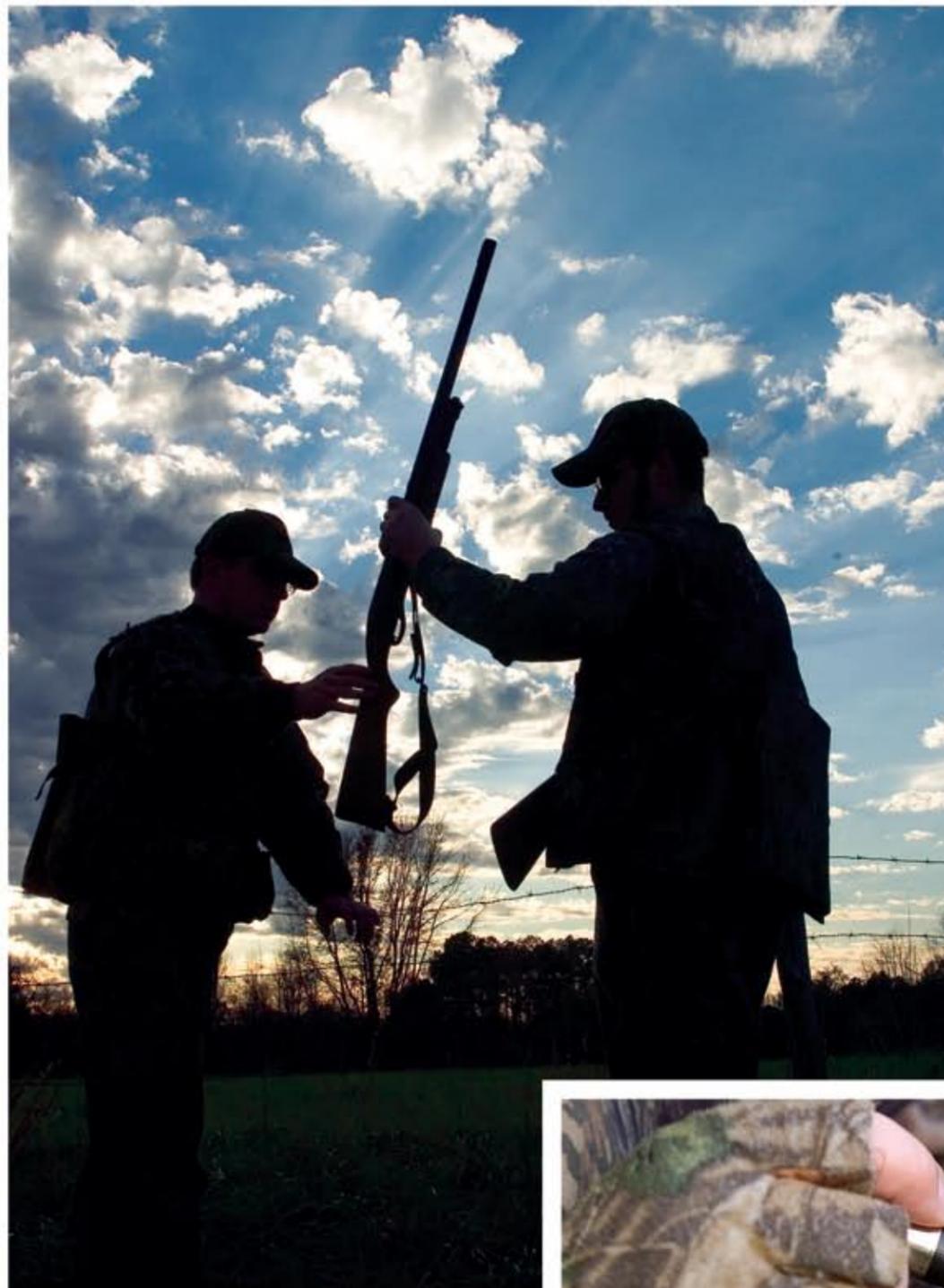
For those of you that do not know me, I am an avid hunter. I hunt big animals mostly, e.g., elk, mule deer, moose, whitetail deer, and turkey. I have hunted in various states for the aforementioned big game animals and have been successful at taking a few species. However, there are those that have eluded me ... for now. So, now that we have gotten my credentials out of the way and you know I am not some safety professional writing about hunting safety from behind a desk, I want to share a couple of safety lessons I learned during two of my hunting adventures.



There I was 10,000 feet inverted communicating with the enemy. Oops, wrong adventure! But now that I have your attention, I do have a story with a happy ending that could have ended badly if the chain of events had gone differently. I made my annual trek from my home at Langley AFB to my uncle's home in Graysville, Ohio, for the 1-week gun season for whitetail deer. My uncle and I hunt on a retired teacher's farm and are fortunate not to see very many hunters. There are other farms around this one, and the owners do let other hunters on their land. The farm layout is made up of rolling hills with hay fields on the tops of the ridges and the valleys are hardwood bottoms. The deer feed on these fields and seek shelter in the hardwood bottoms. The way we hunt on this farm is to place standers along the field's edge and have a driver push the hardwood bottoms, in turn, pushing the deer out to the standers.

Early one afternoon I was a stander and the owner of the farm was going to push this hardwood bottom to me in hopes of killing a deer. This particular area has been a good one because I have always seen deer while standing there. I arrived at the spot I wanted to stand and I could see a large area. I wanted to make sure I could see around the trees and other obstacles, so I raised my rifle and scoped the area and found my shooting lanes. I was ready and waiting on the deer to be pushed my way when, all of a sudden, a gentlemen got up from behind a tree some 50 yards away and started walking off to my left through the trees. Of course, I saw him; but he did not have on any orange clothing (required in the State of Ohio). After he was out of sight, I thought to myself, 'He is a lucky guy because if a deer had come between me and him, I would have shot in his direction'. I had no idea he was sitting there because I could not see him donned in camouflaged clothing.

The lesson to be learned here is that you should always wear orange when deer hunting. You never know when other hunters will show up in your area. The deer cannot see the orange, as some believe; they can only see yellow and blue tones. I have tested this theory by standing 10 to 15 feet from a deer. He could not make me out, but he could smell me and knew something was not quite right. The deer walked around me trying to figure out what I was for about 15 to 20 minutes. So ALWAYS wear your safety gear while hunting so you can return to your family safe and sound and have the opportunity to enjoy the woods another day.





the field to the dirt road I came in on. I wanted to see if anyone was still in the area and then headed to my truck for a much-needed rest. Once I was at the parking lot and saw there was one other vehicle in the lot besides mine, I knew they must have been the hunter to take the turkey.

I sat on my tailgate to reflect back on the experience that had just occurred. I came to the conclusion I was very lucky that I was not shot for I had made some very bad assumptions to put myself in that situation. The first bad assumption, it was late morning and I didn't hear any calling besides mine, so I assumed I was alone in that area and could make a move on this turkey. The second bad decision made was to keep pushing the turkey. If the turkey is headed in the other direction, he will keep going in that direction because you are following him. A hunter should pick a spot to set up close to him, call a few times, and shut up so the turkey will come to you. You'll be more successful and a lot safer if you stay put in your area – especially on public land. Please learn from my mistakes and not your own. Hunt safe, wear all of your safety gear, and know your surroundings. This should help you enjoy the outdoors for many years to come. 🦃



My next adventure begins with my second year of turkey hunting at a Wildlife Management Area (WMA) (public land) in Charles City County, Virginia. It was one of many spring mornings that I went spring gobbler hunting. I have been hunting turkey for about 3 years now and am fairly new to the turkey hunting game. However, I learn something new every year.

It has been said that turkey hunting is the most dangerous of the hunting sports. More hunters are involved in a shooting-related injury while turkey hunting than hunters of any other species. The reason for this is twofold. Hunters are dressed in camouflaged clothing so they can blend into their surroundings and turkey hunters try to call the turkeys to them so they can shoot them at a distance of 50 yards or less. Both reasons are highly dangerous because other hunters can't see you if you sit still and other hunters may come to your calls thinking they are stalking a turkey and shoot at the sound instead of the bird.

I arrived at Chickahominy WMA at O' dark thirty to assure the spot I wanted. When hunting public land, you have to get there before all of the other hunters – or try to, anyway. I had beaten the crowd, but there were a couple of cars in the parking lot already. I gathered my gear and headed for my spot. I was lucky today, and no one was there, so I started setting up my decoys and blind. Once I completed that task, I settled in for the break of dawn and waited for the turkeys to fly down from their roost. As I sat in my blind, I could hear the

turkeys gobbling and yelping from their roost getting ready to fly down. I made a couple of calls to hopefully let the gobbler know a hen was close and was waiting for him to arrive. The gobbler did fly down but he went in the opposite direction from me. I waited for a few hours to see if he would come back to my calls or if another turkey would come in. No such luck that day so I decided to make a move on a turkey gobbling a considerable distance from me.

I located another turkey and started calling to him. He responded to my calls, but he would not come to me; instead he went in the other direction. I did what any hunter would and started stalking the bird. I was not going to let this one get away. The more he was pushed the more he headed in the other direction. I did not let that deter me; so I kept stalking. I was still pretty new to the game, so I didn't know that the turkeys in the WMA were educated and avoided turkey hunters that call aggressively. They would head in the other direction when they heard a turkey hunter calling in this manner.

As a rookie, I kept pushing and pushing until, BANG!!! I ducked in fear I was being shot at because another hunter had mistaken me for a turkey. Turned out that he, or she, was actually shooting at the turkey I was stalking. As soon as I gathered myself, after the shock, I headed in the opposite direction for an open field nearby. I decided it was a good time to take a break, get a snack, and drink some water. I walked through





DON'T JUST WING IT

BE SURE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GETTING INTO

STORY BY TSGT JAMES A. DAUGHERTY | PHOTO BY SRA JONATHAN SNYDER

My safety-related story dates back several winters, sometime in February, while stationed at Yokota Air Base, Japan. As a C-5 crew chief (aircraft maintenance craftsman), one of my duties is to walk the upper surface of the wings to inspect for missing panels or fasteners, corrosion, or any signs of damage that may have occurred during flight.

On this particular night in February, I was dropped off alone to perform a

preflight inspection -- which included walking the wings -- on a transient C-5 on the other side of the runway in an area without airfield floodlighting (ballpark lights). The ambient temperature was 33 to 34 degrees Fahrenheit, just above freezing. The air was moist and wintery-like, although not particularly cold.

In order to gain access to the upper wing surface on a C-5, a common piece of equipment to use is called a Variable Altitude Maintenance Platform, or VAMP stand. It's a

large, wheeled stand towed to the aircraft and positioned using a tug or tow vehicle. It has a gasoline engine, similar to a lawn mower engine that drives a screw and knuckle assembly, allowing it to go up or down from approximately 20 to 50 feet. It's designed and manufactured in such a way, like a "goose neck," to allow the stand to be positioned so that the lower portion is under the wing while the upper portion (platform) extends over the wing about 8 feet, to allow safe access to the wing surface

without the user having to step on or close to the edge of the wing. (The leading edge of the wing is a "NO STEP" area.)

This is exactly what I did on the night in question. I positioned the stand and climbed the roughly 35 feet to the wing root area. Scanning the wing with my flashlight revealed a wet surface I believed to be merely dew and not much of a slip hazard, so I removed the safety chain and stepped off onto the wing. As my boot contacted the surface, my foot

slipped from under me without warning, causing me to fall backward right back onto the platform. It did not occur to me the "dew" was actually frozen! While it appeared perfectly safe and routine, it never occurred to me to test the surface with my bare hand before stepping onto it. Since the ambient temperature was above freezing, the thought of the wing being coated with ice never entered my head. Lucky for me I was wearing the required safety belt and lanyard, which could potentially have saved

my life had I slipped in a direction away from the stand.

The moral of my story is use extreme caution before stepping onto a wet, glistening wing or fuselage surface, regardless of the ambient temperature. If the temperature is at or near freezing, use good operational risk management and remove your glove and test the surface before stepping onto it. If ice is present, take steps to defrost the wing, whether by using a heater or deicing equipment. ▶

MONTHLY AWARD WINNERS – AUGUST

Flight Line Safety



AWARD OF DISTINCTION

SSgt Leloux, an Avionics System Technician, was the Vehicle Test Controller Operator for launch of the RQ-4A Global Hawk Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Aircraft. He completed his portion of the launch procedure and handed over control of the UAV to the mission operators (pilots) located on the opposite end of the runway in a Launch/Recovery Element via normal communication links. The operators issued a taxi command and the aircraft taxied out from the launch spot to the runway. SSgt Leloux proceeded to collect the main landing gear wheel chocks from the launch position of the UAV and noticed a considerable amount of hydraulic fluid had formed a puddle on the ramp where the right main landing gear had been positioned. He immediately notified his expeditor, TSgt Jason Jones, about the hydraulic fluid puddle. By this time the aircraft had taxied to the runway Hold Short Line and was awaiting clearance to enter the runway for take-off. TSgt Jones radioed for Hawk Eye, the UAV chase vehicle, not to release the aircraft for flight or allow it to enter the active runway because of a possible hydraulic leak from the Right Main Landing Gear Brake System. A

prompt inspection of the Right Main Landing Gear Brake System confirmed the presence of a hydraulic fluid leak from the right brake line. The aircraft was immediately shut down and the mission was canceled. His actions prevented any number of scenarios from occurring -- aircraft departure from a controlled surface, brake fire, or a catastrophic loss of an aircraft valued at over \$35M dollars. SSgt Leloux's situational awareness, and quick actions during this launch are commendable and worthy of this recognition.



SSgt Jonathan C. Leloux
9 AMXS, 9 RW
Beale AFB, Calif.

Aircrew Safety



AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Tiger 29 departed Davis-Monthan AFB for a 2.5-hour B-1 ferry flight to Ellsworth AFB after a critical capability-enhancement modification. On takeoff roll, Tiger 29 experienced an anti-skid system caution light. The crew continued to Ellsworth where they planned to burn down fuel and land lighter using modified brake application procedures to prevent wheel lockup. During cruise, they also discovered unusual cabin pressurization indications with the cabin pressure reading over 10K MSL above FL210. The crew requested a descent and flew lower than planned, keeping cabin pressure within limits. Compounding the situation, they had a SEF/SIS system malfunction leading to limited aircraft maneuverability. Upon arrival to the local area, the crew seamlessly coordinated entry into a local MOA to burn down fuel. Meanwhile, an IFE at Ellsworth closed the single runway. Tiger 29 immediately stopped burning down fuel and transitioned to max endurance holding. After an hour of max enduring and near divert fuel, Tiger 29 coordinated for an unplanned air refueling, picking their way through more thunderstorms to get to the tanker. Approaching contact position, they experienced an electric system and CSD caution light. The crew immediately took corrective action and decoupled the CSD, shutting down a primary

generator. During refueling, the airfield was re-opened. Tiger 29 was in a 30-mile descent to Ellsworth when the SOF radioed lightning within 5 nm of the field. The crew adjusted divert fuel calculations to account for weather deviations and the lower cabin pressure altitude limits and diverted to Minot AFB. The crew declared an IFE and successfully landed near min fuel at an unfamiliar field, down one generator, inop anti-skid, and with reduced maneuverability after a 4.7-hr sortie and safely recovered a \$287M asset.



Capt Ryan Simpson, Capt Chris Miller
Capt Adrian Kays, 1Lt Patrick Helton
37 BS, 28 BW
Ellsworth AFB, S.D.

Pilot Safety



AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Capt Sacks demonstrated unparalleled skill and safety awareness while piloting an MQ-9 Reaper assigned to 432 OG/Det 1 (29 ATKS), Creech AFB, during a combat mission. During this mission, when US ground forces made a mortar call on potential enemy forces, Capt Sacks believed the position to be "friendly" and repeatedly called to confirm target identification before US ground forces fired their mortars. The target was confirmed as "friendly" and the mortar attack was disengaged. His situational awareness and ability to act was directly responsible for avoiding a possible fratricide. Additionally, while flying a training sortie in support of GREEN FLAG West, his crew was tasked to support Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTACs) working in concert with a flight of F-16s loaded with live ordnance. As the JTAC passed a 9-line to the F-16s, Capt Sacks and his crew plotted the target coordinates. Immediately, Capt Sacks noticed the JTAC had provided the F-16s with his own location as the target location. Capt Sacks quickly radioed the JTAC and informed him of his error. The JTAC corrected the

9-line and the F-16s successfully dropped two 2,000-pound live bombs (Mk-84s) on the correct target. These quick actions prevented a second possible fratricide. Capt Sacks' ability to recognize unsafe situations, and act quickly to defuse them, is a huge asset to his wing and the USAF.



Capt Elliot A. Sacks
42 ATKS, 432 WG
Creech AFB, Nev.

Ground Safety



AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Mr. Joseph's ceaseless efforts and dedication were recognized during the tri-annual ACC Safety Program Management Evaluation (PME) when the 98th Range Wing's Ground Safety Program earned an "Outstanding" rating and 20 of his safety programs/processes were posted on ACC Safety's Best Practices webpage. In addition to managing his own wing's safety program, he also volunteered time to assist other wing safety staffs. He volunteered numerous off-duty hours as the single investigating officer for a Class B fire investigation and was recognized by the U.S. Warfare Center Commander. At the same time he maintained his workload at the 98 RANW and assisted three other wing safety staffs with over 200 work request reviews during their manpower shortages. Mr. Joseph developed a completely automated safety program, allowing unit safety representatives and wing safety shared access to electronic safety folders. This system streamlined processes, eliminated

duplication of work and improved accessibility by wing and unit safety representatives who routinely operate from multiple geographically separated locations. As the Safety Quality Assurance Evaluator for the second and third largest support contracts in the Air Force, Mr. Joseph developed a strong rapport with safety managers for both contracts and provided exceptional oversight and guidance on a wide range of unique operations pertaining to the 2.9 million acre Nevada Test and Training Range.



Mr. Joe A. Joseph
98th Range Wing
Nellis AFB, Nev.

AUGUST continued

Crew Chief Safety



AWARD OF DISTINCTION

TSgt Campbell assisted the BASH manager in hazing and harassing a total of 10,388 birds, as well as removed a number of mammals, including all coyotes and beavers from the Beale flight line in an effort to reduce and eliminate bird and wildlife strikes. He has utilized data from the on-site avian radar to tailor the wing's flight schedule, eliminating unnecessary flying aircraft during times of identified peak bird activity -- protecting lives as well as a \$2B+ national asset. TSgt Campbell assisted in identifying a deficiency in the SOF's bird radar system training program, and proactively rebuilt the entire training program for the SOFs, as well as re-train existing SOFs ensuring they were able to properly integrate the bird radar into daily flight operations. He led a regionally-based effort to reduce bird strikes off base by coordinating BASH working groups with civilian authorities at Sacramento Intl and Mather Field. His efforts significantly improved the wildlife abatement programs at both locations, which had regional aviation safety implications, beyond the scope

of his AF duties. His initiative successfully identified wildlife attractants that were previously unknown and can now be effectively managed. TSgt Campbell developed a new spot inspection program that identifies deficient areas that require corrections, and hold the appropriate unit fully accountable. His professionalism, innovation and attention to detail have greatly increased the effectiveness of the Beale AFB Flight Safety program.



TSgt Thomas E. Campbell
9 RW
Beale AFB, Calif.

Weapons Safety



AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Airman First Class Kluener exceptionally contributed to weapons safety for the 509th Bomb Wing, 509th Maintenance Group, 509th Munitions Squadron, Whiteman AFB, Missouri. During a periodic inspection of two MAC systems, Airman Kluener diligently discovered the presence of several hairline cracks in the welded joints of the rail conveyor assembly tables and immediately initiated local repair actions with three on-base agencies. His can-do attitude and quick actions eliminated potential catastrophic failure of both MAC systems and prevented serious injuries from occurring to munitions personnel. Additionally, Airman Kluener's efforts to coordinate local refurbishment of the MACs averted shipment to an off-base repair facility and reduced overall maintenance turn around time by 6 months. His prudent and frugal use of available resources saved the United States Air

Force \$83K in replacement parts, labor, and shipping charges. Finally, Airman Kluener's technical expertise was crucial in the proper inspection and load testing of the repaired MACs. His superb attention to detail ensured both units were repaired in accordance with technical orders and were durable enough for strenuous bomb assembly conditions.



A1C Jeffrey S. Kluener
509 MUNS, 509 BW
Whiteman AFB, Mo.

Unit Safety



AWARD OF DISTINCTION

While handling an influx of air traffic as a result of clear weather following 2 weeks of dust storms, the CERAP experienced a catastrophic failure to their command and control capabilities. After validating seven of their eight assigned radio frequencies were rendered useless, they combined Baghdad and Balad approach control sectors and staffed additional controllers to assist with coordination. Utilizing one VHF radio, line controllers gained positive control of all air traffic over the central one-third of Iraq. The controllers quickly realized equipment limitations hampered their efforts as several aircraft under their control were outside the service volume of the radio in use. They relayed instructions through other airborne aircraft ensuring aircraft inbound to Baghdad International Airport (IAP) were separated from aircraft working tactical airspace. The airfield operations flight staff forwarded information to senior leadership, apprising them of the escalating situation. Ground stops were implemented at Baghdad IAP and Joint Base Balad, limiting departures to mission essential military aircraft and civilian airliners. Al Asad and Al Taqaddum airfields were also notified to expect alternate routings or ground delays, as needed to prevent sector saturation. The rapidly deteriorating

situation was compounded when the 727th Expeditionary Air Control Squadron (Kingpin) lost communication with tactical military aircraft working active airspace control measures supporting the Operation Iraqi Freedom mission. Controllers worked with Kingpin personnel to relay airspace assignments, provide traffic advisories and coordinate mission recovery procedures. During the 5-hour communications outage, the decisive actions and teamwork displayed by this team ensured the safe transition of 81 civilian airliners and 68 military aircraft.



Balad Combined En Route Approach Control (CERAP)
332 EOSS, 332 AEW
Joint Base Balad, Iraq



MONTHLY AWARD WINNERS – SEPTEMBER

Flight Line Safety



AWARD OF DISTINCTION

As the 28 BW BASH manager, TSgt Klukas aggressively led the wing's most visible flight mishap prevention program resulting in an 87 percent reduction in bird strike costs this FY. He single-handedly led an out-of-cycle rewrite of the wing's BASH plan, significantly upgrading key elements of the deprecation and migratory impact sections. He also planned and led the Ellsworth AFB BASH working group (a collection of 24 base, state, and federal agency members) activities resulting in zero reportable migratory bird strikes. An ambassador in blue, he led the Safety Office's community engagement program by accomplishing three MidAir Collision Avoidance (MACA) visits and distributing updated 28 BW MACA pamphlets. TSgt Klukas was the Flight Safety POC for a critical aircraft mishap exercise for the Dakota Thunder 09 Air Show ensuring the safety of over 59K attendees. He led Flight Safety's participation in the Bomber Strategic Aircraft Recovery Team exercise resulting in zero flight mishaps.

He also updated the Wing Mishap Response Plan, aligning it with Emergency Operations Center requirements to ensure an effective and efficient response to future mishaps. He was the chief instructor for 15 dedicated crew chiefs during training. His vigilance was highlighted in his leadership of the spot inspection program -- 86 spot inspections year-to-date and a 71 percent reduction in flight line safety violations.



TSgt Jason C. Klukas
28 BW
Ellsworth AFB, S.D.

Ground Safety



AWARD OF DISTINCTION

SSgt Kirby identified and corrected six facility safety deficiencies, helping to transform the squadron's dilapidated facilities into a safe and effective working environment. He developed and implemented Lock Out/Tag Out procedures for Air Traffic Control and Landing Systems (ATCALs) radar facilities. His actions corrected a 6-year safety program shortfall, and safeguarded four technicians from exposure to hazardous energy/high voltage equipment, and ensured the protection of over \$8.4M in ATCALs assets; ultimately ensuring safety of flight for 25,000 aircraft operations and 30,000 passengers. He also identified HV safety boards' shortfalls at two ATCALs radar sites and immediately researched required safety board items and requisitioned them through supply channels. He implemented safety inspections for all 332 ECS work centers. During the 165-item safety inspection, he completed a physical inspection of every work center and checked all section safety binders to ensure AF Form 55s, Job Safety Training Outlines (JSTOs), and other required items were properly

documented and filed correctly. From his inspection, he identified 20+ discrepancies and aggressively worked with safety representatives to resolve them. Three work centers had no safety programs and he helped them create safety binders and JSTOs from scratch. He also conducted weekly safety briefings during squadron Roll Calls, ensuring "safety awareness" is at the forefront of everyone's agenda. During the annual wing safety inspection, the wing safety inspector reported the 332 ECS had an outstanding safety program and lauded the unit's Confined Spaces Program as "one of the best."



SSgt Aaron D. Kirby
332 ECS, 332 AEW
Joint Base Balad, Iraq

Unit Safety



AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Our Security Forces Armors protect \$2.67M worth of assets, account for 36,728 rounds of ammunition, and are the centerpiece for all weapons issue, turn-in, and maintenance for force protection and flight line security forces. This small five-person element oversaw an impressive 6,167 weapons issuance and turn-in with zero mishaps. They ensured proper clearing barrel and weapon handling procedures for 24-hour operations. They corrected and re-enforced proper weapon handling procedures preventing complacency. Within days of assuming duties in the armory, they initiated a thorough review of each program. Their initiative led to the identification of missing grounding rods for the weapons vault and no existing pre-fire plan for their facility. A work order was drafted and a plan established with coordination of base fire officials. They identified hazardous material lockers exposed to temperatures in excess of 160 degrees Fahrenheit. Immediate action was taken to relocate these lockers into a stable environment. Other grounding rods were located in high traffic areas causing tripping hazards. The armory quickly contacted subject matter experts to assess each one of their programs which identified a serious exposed electrical wiring safety risk and

overloaded electrical outlets within a facility servicing 7K personnel monthly. Within 48 hours of identifying these hazards, all discrepancies were either corrected or work order requests were initiated. They provided occupational safety and health training to 76 SF personnel via the local Job Safety Training Outline. Lacking documentation, the armory conducted validation training for 21 unit personnel on proper handling procedures of 1.1 explosives in just 24-hours.



407th Expeditionary Security Forces Sq
Armory Element, 407 AEG
Ali Base, Iraq

Pilot Safety



AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Maj Larsen was flying a U-2 in a normal low-altitude training sortie at Beale AFB in FITS Danger conditions caused by the mid-summer heat. Approximately 20 minutes into the sortie, Maj Larsen, having just broken ground on his fourth touch and go, was swiftly passing through 400' AGL when the engine started to roll back. The loss of thrust quickly became apparent as it decreased rapidly pushing Maj Larsen against his shoulder harness. This was accompanied by decreasing N1 and N2 gauges and a loss of engine noise. He immediately made an aggressive push over to attain his minimum sink airspeed and selected engine mode SEC in accordance with the Low Thrust or Partial Power Loss checklist. He quickly made a turn toward low-key to get established on a segment of the flameout pattern in case the engine failed. The engine in secondary mode started responding to throttle inputs and a possible flameout was narrowly avoided. This allowed Maj Larsen to continue climbing toward a 2,100' high-key altitude overhead the field. He then consulted with his mobile to ensure all applicable checklist items were accomplished. As he approached

his high-key altitude overhead the field he set up for a Precautionary Pattern. Reaching high-key, Maj Larsen reduced the throttle to idle and flew the Precautionary Pattern with textbook accuracy. He recognized that the runway was made and started to shorten up his aim point by deploying the spoilers and speed brake. He arrived over the runway at 10' as planned and safely recovered the aircraft.



Maj Todd Larsen
99 RS, 9 RW
Beale AFB, Calif.

SEPTEMBER continued

ACG SAFETY SALUTES

Weapons Safety



AWARD OF DISTINCTION

During a review of Technical Order 11-1-38, Positioning and Tie-Down Procedures of Nonnuclear Munitions, SrA Glaze identified safety deficiencies in the current positioning and tie-down procedures for the GBU-28 on the MHU-226 trailer posing the potential for a catastrophic weapons incident. The 11-1-38 positioning procedures did not allow for the munitions to be safely assembled on the MHU-226 because the chocks obstructed the installation of the BSG-92 fin assembly. The technical order's current procedures for positioning and tying down the munitions did not allow for the proper unloading from the MHU-226 munitions trailer preventing safe installation onto the aircraft. To alleviate this problem, SrA Glaze investigated, rewrote, and tested new positioning and tie-down procedures for the GBU-28. She coordinated the new process with various outside agencies such as the equipment specialist, item manager, manufacturer, program manager, and weapon load crews. The GBU-28 weapon positioning was changed enabling the asset to be safely loaded and unloaded utilizing MHU-28/E

adapters on the MHU-226 munitions handling trailer. The outcome of SrA Glaze's dedication to the B-2 mission and the safety of her fellow Airmen resulted in a proficient and safe method of loading, unloading, and transportation of the GBU-28. Her keen technical ability averted the possibility of a major weapons safety incident and prevented damage to nuclear certified equipment. SrA Glaze's procedures have been approved by the 509 MUNS, the weapon load training section, and quality assurance. An AFTO 22 has been drafted and awaits final coordination and approval.



SrA Stephanie J. Glaze
509 MUNS, 509 BW
Whiteman AFB, Mo.

Aircrew Safety



AWARD OF DISTINCTION

After initial takeoff, Hawk 61 started a right turn and felt a "thud" on their B-1 aircraft. Both pilots noted the illumination of the #3 EGT and ENG lights. Lt Col Grunden brought the #3 engine to idle. Within seconds, the #4 VIB HIGH caution light illuminated and he was forced to reduce another engine to idle. Maj Gerken began running emergency checklists. Lt Col Grunden accomplished his two-engine climb to altitude in the heavy, thrust deficient aircraft to prevent compressor stalls in his two good engines. Maj Carignan assisted Maj Gerken with emergency procedure checklists. During the approach, the L BLEED AIR caution light associated with the two normal operating engines began to flicker and the VIB HIGH for the #4 engine returned. Maj Gerken immediately shut down the #4 engine. During configuration, the gear extended normally, but the flaps froze at 51 percent. Lt Col Grunden coordinated for maneuvering airspace as Maj Gerken addressed the new emergencies. Maj Carignan provided additional information from the checklist while Lt Smith monitored aircraft parameters. Unable to extend the flaps any further, the crew adjusted their landing

data appropriately and again commenced the approach. Winds gusting, the crew again adjusted landing data and continued the approach now at 190 knots to maintain safe flight. With no additional abnormal indications, the crew performed a perfectly executed high speed landing and stopped the aircraft uneventfully, preserving a \$280M critical coalition asset.



Lt Col Kyle Grunden, Maj Stephen Gerken
Maj Ryan Carignan, 1Lt Mark Stephens
28 BS, 7 BW
Dyess AFB, Texas

SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE

NINTH AIR FORCE

Lt Col Brian Toth
22 EFS
Balad AB, Iraq

Crew of King 21
71 RQS, 23 WG
Moody AFB, Ga.

TSgt David J. Travagliente
407 AEG
Ali Base, Iraq

SSgt Derek G. Martinez
506 ECES
Kirkuk RAB, Iraq

Capt Ruven G. Yarbrough
79 FS, 20 FW
Shaw AFB, S.C.

Capt Michael J. Hardwick
SSgt William R. King
62 ERS, 451 AEW
Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan

SSgt Christopher Arflin
379 EAMXS, 379 AEW
Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar

TSgt Mary Cruz
772 EAS, 451 AEW
Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan

SSgt Nathan R. Filson
362 ERS, 332 AEW
Joint Base Balad, Iraq

Capt Kevin Coughlin
777 EAS, 332 AEW
Joint Base Balad, Iraq

SrA Stacy M. Powell
332 ESFS, 332 AEW
Joint Base Balad, Iraq

EIGHTH AIR FORCE

Capt Keegan McConaughey
Capt Allen Short
Capt Kathleen Merriman
763 ERS, 55 WG
Offutt AFB, Neb.

TSgt David E. Payne
55 AMXS, 55 WG
Offutt AFB, Neb.

TSgt Keven L. Arrington
5 MXS, 5 BW
Minot AFB, N.D.

940 Wing Safety
9 RW
Beale AFB, Calif.

Maj Ross P. Franquemont
99 RS, 9 RW
Beale AFB, Calif.

Capt Alexander DeManss
Capt Joseph Maruska
Capt Lyle Ostrander
Lt Landon Prochnow
95 RS, 55 WG
RAF Mildenhall, United Kingdom

960th Airborne Air Control Sq
552 ACW
Tinker AFB, Okla.

TWELFTH AIR FORCE

SSgt Stephen A. DePugh
820 RHS
Nellis AFB, Nev.

SSgt Christian R. Barnes
7 AMXS, 7 BW
Dyess AFB, Texas

TSgt Ronnie J. Wilshusen
355 EMS, 355 FW
Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz.

MSgt Jason D. Theunissen
28 BW
Ellsworth AFB, S.D.

49th Maintenance Crash Recovery Crew
49 MXS, 49 FW
Holloman AFB, N.M.

Maj Kyle J. Wilson
28 BW
Ellsworth AFB, S.D.

MSgt Joshua D. Lamm
12 AF (AFSOUTH)
Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz.

USAFWC

SSgt Roger T. LeDoux
57 OSS, 57 WG
Nellis AFB, Nev.

SSgt Torrance R. West
57 AMXS, 57 WG
Nellis AFB, Nev.

Capt Kirk D. Adams
Capt Keith R. Altenhofen
1Lt Eric Davis

TSgt Joshua Feters
SSgt Christian Corella
MSgt Steve May
SrA Clint Lentz
129 ERS

Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan

SrA Michael P. Mulvaney
728 ACS
Eglin AFB, Fla.

FY09 Flight

As of September 30, 2009

	Fatal	Aircraft Destroyed	Aircraft Damaged
1 AF			
8 AF			
9 AF	2	2	1
12 AF	1	5	7
USAFWC			
ANG (ACC-gained)			2
AFRC (ACC-gained)			

FY09 Ground

As of September 30, 2009

	Fatal	Class A	Class B
8 AF	4	5	0
9 AF	2	4	1
12 AF	2	3	1
DRU's	1	1	1

FY09 Weapons

As of September 30, 2009

	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 \$2,000,000 or more
 Class B - Permanent Partial Disability; Property Damage between \$500,000 and \$2,000,000
 Class C - Lost Workday; Property Damage between \$50,000 and \$500,000
 (Class Description Effective October 1, 2009)

** Non-rate Producing * Fatality

= Fatal = Fatal due to misconduct

Flight Notes

ACC experienced four Class A flight mishaps in the final 2 months of FY09. An E-3 experienced significant damage when the nose wheel collapsed on landing. A Predator crashed shortly after takeoff on a stateside training mission. We also lost one Predator and one Reaper on separate operational missions. Looking back at FY09, there are some important lessons worth repeating. Mission preparation begins on the ground. There is no substitute for a thorough knowledge of aircraft systems -- even more important with some of today's high technology gadgets. Finally, we can't overemphasize the importance of maintaining situational awareness. Knowing where we are and when we are vulnerable can be the key to preventing a fatal misstep.

Ground Notes

Air Combat Command had its second year in a row of maintaining the best mishap reductions on record. Both FY08 and 09 ended with 13 Class A mishaps. Whereas in FY08 the command experienced 10 fatalities, unfortunately in FY09 it sustained 11 fatal losses. Motor vehicle mishaps are still the leading cause of Class A mishaps with nine fatalities and one Permanent Total Disability. Of the remaining three Class A mishaps two were drowning fatalities, one on-duty and one off-duty and the last mishap was a Permanent Total Disability where an airmen fell off the side of a mountain. As we begin a new fiscal year, now is the time to have all our airmen practice good wingmanship and stay vigilant to protect themselves, their families, and coworkers from harm.

Weapons Notes

We just finished another great year for ACC weapons safety. Instead of providing a bunch of statistics we just want to say thanks for your effort and dedication. We know you saved lives and millions of dollars in valuable AF assets by performing your jobs in such an outstanding manner. However, as the old saying goes we "can't rest on our laurels." We continue to experience mishaps where individuals simply failed to follow guidance. It's our number one causal factor and try as we may, we can't seem to eliminate it. We challenge you all to find better ways to improve in this area. If we eliminated mishaps where failure to follow guidance is the causal factor, we could just about eliminate weapons mishaps altogether. Technical guidance was developed over years of trial and error and serves as our most effective tool against mishaps. If we're waging a war on mishaps, without our most effective weapon, we're fighting a losing battle. Thanks again and we look forward to continuing to work with you to save lives and resources.

Symbols for Mishap Aircraft



